



# Archdiocese of Birmingham

## Section 48 Inspection Report

### ST MARY'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Vivian Road, Harborne, Birmingham. B17 0DN

Inspection dates:

21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2019

Lead Inspector:

Debbie Huxtable

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**OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS:****Outstanding**

Catholic Life:

Outstanding

Religious Education:

Outstanding

Collective Worship:

Outstanding

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*Overall effectiveness at previous inspection:*

*Outstanding*

### SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

This is an Outstanding Catholic school because:

- Catholic Life, Religious Education and Collective Worship at St Mary's Catholic Primary School are all outstanding because of the commitment and dedication of staff, pupils, parents and governors.
- The headteacher, her deputy and Religious Education subject leader have a clear vision for the school and what it means to be part of a strong faith community.
- Pupils experience of Catholic Life is rich and meaningful. They are proud of their school and believe it helps them to live their lives according to the teachings of Jesus.
- Staff are committed to delivering high quality teaching and learning experiences that develop pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding of their faith.
- Professional development is well planned and focused to enable staff to develop their personal skills in order to plan and deliver high quality lessons and Collective Worship.
- Behaviour is outstanding and pupils demonstrate very high levels of respect to each other, as well as to adult members of the school community.
- Acts of Collective Worship are varied, and pupils respond with enthusiasm and interest to all opportunities of community prayer.
- Pupils have an in-depth knowledge of the Bible and the key teachings of both the Old and New Testament appropriate to their age and stage of development.

**FULL REPORT****What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Develop a more coherent and systematic process for monitoring and evaluating outcomes and provision across all areas. This should be well planned, offer searching analysis and lead to explicitly focused key areas for future improvements.
- Enable a greater number of pupils to take on Collective Worship and Chaplaincy positions of responsibility and leadership.
- Develop pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding of other faiths and cultures appropriate to their age and stage of development.

**THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL**

The quality of the Catholic Life of the school.	<b>Outstanding</b>
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school.	Outstanding
The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school.	Outstanding
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision of the Catholic Life of the School.	Outstanding

**The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school.****The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school.**

- Pupils know and understand their school mission statement, "To love God above all things." They can confidently explain how they should do this, ".....by learning together, loving ourselves, loving each other, loving all people, loving life itself and constantly striving for excellence worthy of our God given gifts."
- The Catholic School's Pupil Profile (CSPP) has been effectively integrated into the Catholic Life of the school through assemblies, lessons and displays.
- St Mary's Catholic Primary School is a diverse and distinctive family community where all pupils have a strong sense of belonging. The outstanding Catholic Life is a testimony to the trust and confidence parents have in this special school.
- The school has a welcoming and engaging environment. Displays around the school and in the classrooms are of a very high standard and reinforce the Catholic identity of the school, as well as providing pupils with resources to support their learning.
- All members of the school community and parish are committed to providing a spiritual and meaningful experience when they celebrate the Eucharist together.
- Relationships with the parish are very strong and all opportunities for the parish and school to come together are taken and built on. Pupils regularly and enthusiastically engage with parish and school celebrations.
- The school priest chaplain is a key part of the relationship between parish and school and is a regular visitor. He provides ideas and advice, as well as pastoral

- care for pupils, families and staff. When appropriate, he contributes to the delivery of the Religious Education curriculum and liturgies for special occasions.
- Pupils are highly appreciative of the Catholic Life of the school. They have positive attitudes and engage enthusiastically with activities that reflect its Catholic character.
  - Relationships between pupils are extremely positive. They value and respect each other as equals and recognise that, although they come from different backgrounds, this diversity makes the school stronger.
  - Pupils feel their views and opinions are considered as part of the evaluation of Catholic Life. Opportunities for less formal feedback with individuals or small groups also takes place and is acted upon.
  - The school is a happy and joyful community where pupils demonstrate very high standards of behaviour. They feel valued and as one pupil said, "We're all special here."
  - Each class has a Catholic Life book that documents experiences pupils share during the year. This enables pupils to reflect deeply and contribute their own thoughts and feelings on their spiritual journey.
  - Pupils value the school as a community of justice where they are treated with patience and fairness. They recognise that sometimes things can go wrong with relationships, but they have a deep understanding of what it means to forgive, be forgiven and try again.
  - The introduction of the Mini Vinnies group has been highly successful and encourages pupils to consider their roles and responsibilities within school and the larger community. Consideration should be given to ways of extending this programme in order to engage more pupils and further develop their understanding of vocations and the call to serve.
  - The school provides many opportunities for the moral and spiritual development of pupils through the curriculum and positive role models of staff. This is demonstrated in the way pupils and staff apply the Gospel values in their daily lives.
  - Staff feel a shared responsibility for the well-being and welfare of all pupils. Extra provision and support are provided for pupils and their families during times of need. The school is highly inclusive and the pastoral care of pupils is embedded into the school ethos.
  - Pupils enthusiastically engage in fund raising activities for a variety of charities, as part of their developing understanding of social justice. They are aware of the needs of others both locally and globally.
  - The school plans and delivers Relationships and Sex Education in line with diocesan expectations, through a bespoke scheme of work. Leaders ensure it adequately prepares pupils for the next stage of their physical, emotional and spiritual development.

### **How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision of the Catholic Life of the school.**

- Governors are highly committed and have a clear a vision for Catholic Life. They know the school well and are dedicated to its role within the local parish and the

wider community. They invest considerable time and energy in supporting and challenging the leadership of the school.

- The leaders of the school demonstrate a strong determination to develop, at all levels, the distinctive nature of a Catholic school and how it is part of the daily lives of the pupils.
- The headteacher has a clear and focused understanding of her role as leader of Catholic Life. She works with all members of the school and parish to ensure that pupils' experience of Catholic Life, is rich and meaningful.
- Governors and senior leaders provide outstanding role models for all staff and parents as they demonstrate that the Catholic Life of the school is their key priority and responsibility.
- All staff are highly committed and dedicated to promoting Catholic Life. Investment in training opportunities, staff retreats and opportunities for reflection place Catholic Life at the very core of the school.
- The headteacher, through her termly report, provides governors with a variety of information about Catholic Life. However, governors and leaders would benefit from a more formalised and robust evaluation of this information, focusing on impact and leading to well targeted improvements.
- Pastoral care of staff by the leadership team, governors and priest is seen as a high priority for all leadership. Staff feel that they are well cared for by each other, as well as by the school's leaders.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The quality of Religious Education.	<b>Outstanding</b>
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education.	Outstanding
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education.	Outstanding
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education.	Outstanding

### **How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education. The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education.**

- Pupils enjoy their Religious Education lessons and look forward to, "Learning about Jesus and all the people he helped." They recognise that these lessons are special and different.
- Many pupils start school with low levels of knowledge in Religious Education. They make at least good progress in the early years, particularly pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds and those with English as an additional language. By the end of key stage 1, most are at least in line with diocesan expectations.
- This progress accelerates in key stage 2, so that a large majority of pupils exceed diocesan expectations at the end of the key stage. Significant numbers of pupils with English as an additional language achieve broadly in line with all pupils.
- Teachers' marking and feedback is consistent with school policy. Pupils' response to challenging questions shows their deeper understanding and how they can apply their learning to their everyday lives.

- Pupils appreciate the variety of activities staff plan for them, particularly opportunities for drama and debate. This leads to high levels of motivation and engagement of all pupils during lessons.
- Assessment data is used by the Religious Education subject leader, assessment leader and senior leaders to effectively track pupil performance. It enables teachers to accurately identify those pupils, or groups of pupils, who need extra support.
- Teachers skilfully use probing questions and partner talk during lessons to challenge and develop pupils' thinking. Opportunities for collaboration are built into most lessons and pupils respond with high levels of focus and concentration. Behaviour is therefore outstanding across all year groups.
- Some lessons include opportunities for pupils to discuss and learn about equality and diversity in our world. However, this could be greatly enhanced by the school developing the curriculum to include occasions when pupils further explore and build their knowledge of other faiths and cultures.
- Teachers recognise the importance of developing key vocabulary and this is now an integrated part of their planning and delivery of lessons. As a result, pupils are highly articulate and demonstrate high levels of religious literacy.
- Moderation of pupils' work is ongoing and takes place in school as well as with other schools across the diocese. This moderation, as well as staff training on assessment, means that leadership are confident in the accuracy of end of unit judgements and outcomes for all pupils.
- Pupils' are proud of the work in their books. Comparison with other subjects shows that most pupils take great care of their Religious Education books and have high regard for their presentation.
- Readings from the Bible are a key part of many lessons and pupils can quickly find appropriate references, particularly in the New Testament. This has led to excellent knowledge of key Bible stories by all pupils in line with age related expectations. In key stage 2 pupils confidently make links between readings and can apply their learning to how we should live our lives today.
- Lessons are well paced. Teachers use time and resources well to maximise learning in individual lessons and across units of lessons, achieving a balance of activity and recording.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and are enthusiastic about how they can inspire and motivate pupils in their lessons. Less experienced staff feel they are well supported and can seek advice and help from the Religious Education subject leader, headteacher and other members of staff.
- Support staff are well deployed to offer support to both teachers and pupils. Most provide high quality input and have good subject knowledge. They question skilfully to extend learning and clarify misconceptions.

### **How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education.**

- The Religious Education subject leader is very committed to his role and has a clear vision of high-quality teaching and learning. He works closely with staff to accurately identify strengths and areas for development offering both support and challenge where appropriate.

- The headteacher, deputy headteacher and Religious Education subject leader are committed to ensuring that all pupils experience the best possible teaching and learning through a well-planned curriculum and high-quality teaching.
- Professional development is regular and meets the needs of the whole school, as well as being tailored to the needs of individual teachers where necessary. All staff are also given the opportunity to attend training by the diocese and with other schools.
- Monitoring and evaluation of Religious Education takes place and there is some evidence of its impact on teaching and learning. However, a more robust and well organised system of monitoring, would better inform targeted improvements.
- Leaders and governors ensure that Religious Education meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference and that it has full parity with other core subjects in terms of finance, resources, staffing and professional development.
- The chair of governors meets regularly with the headteacher to offer both support and challenge. Other members of the governing body receive information on key aspects of Religious Education during meetings and through termly headteacher reports. The Religious Education subject leader reports to governors on an annual basis. This means that governors know the school well and are aware of standards in Religious Education and how it compares to other curriculum areas.

## COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

The quality of Collective Worship.	<b>Outstanding</b>
How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship.	Outstanding
The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school.	Outstanding
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship.	Outstanding

### How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship.

#### The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school.

- Collective Worship at St Mary's School is outstanding because pupils' experiences of all types of liturgy are well planned, varied, creative and meaningful.
- Collective Worship is integrated and embedded into the cycle of the school day, week, term and year. Pupils show great enthusiasm for all liturgical experiences and see them as part of the identity of the school, making it a prayerful place.
- Close liaison between the school staff and priests mean that the celebration of the Eucharist in the parish, is an inspirational and uplifting experience for pupils, parents, staff and parishioners.
- Over time, teachers have successfully modelled how to lead Collective Worship. They have given age appropriate support to pupils to ensure consistency. As a result, pupils are now confident and eager to lead Collective Worship.

- Teachers ensure pupils experience and learn a variety of prayers appropriate to their age group. Pupils have excellent knowledge and understanding of the traditional and formal prayers of the Church.
- Teachers have a deep and comprehensive understanding of the purpose of Collective Worship and use a variety of methods and prayer styles to engage pupils in deep and reflective experiences. Meditation, spontaneous prayer, singing, atmospheric music and a variety of readings from the Bible are all used to great effect.
- Pupils sing joyfully during the celebration of Mass and other liturgies in school and the parish. Younger pupils enjoy joining in the chorus of more difficult hymns and some older pupils confidently sing parts of the Mass on their own.
- During all times of Collective Worship pupils are fully engaged and show high levels of reverence and respect.
- Displays around the school, including those in the classrooms, follow the colours of the liturgical year. This helps pupils to clearly understand the Church's seasons and feasts.
- The school offers opportunities for parents and carers to attend Mass and Collective Worship. Attendance during the special seasons of Advent and Lent is particularly good. Parents express their enthusiasm for these special occasions and their pride in the pupils and how they conduct themselves.

#### **How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship.**

- Leaders and governors consider Collective Worship to be central to the life of the school and a key component in the daily lives of their pupils.
- Leaders, governors and teachers have a deep understanding of the Church's year, its seasons and feasts. This enables them to develop meaningful themes for the Mass, assemblies and other liturgies.
- Some monitoring and evaluation of Collective Worship takes place and has led to improvements in this area. The next step would be for the school to develop a more consistent and robust system of monitoring and evaluation that leads to targeted improvements.
- The headteacher, deputy headteacher and Religious Education subject leader are all very committed to providing high quality experiences of worship that lead pupils closer to God.
- Governors regularly attend Mass and other liturgies. They provide feedback to all governors so that they are aware of the high-quality experiences' pupils receive.
- Leaders and governors have invested highly in training and support to develop teachers' skills of planning and leading Collective Worship. This has made significant impact on the quality of Collective Worship at all levels.

**SCHOOL DETAILS**

Unique reference number	<b>103438</b>
Local authority	Birmingham
<i>This inspection was carried out under canon 806 of Canon Law and under Section 48 of the 2005 Education Act.</i>	
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary Aided
Age range	4 – 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on roll	418
Appropriate authority	The Governing Body
Chair	David Collins
Headteacher	Helena Cusack
Telephone number	0121 464 2141
Website address	<a href="http://www.stmaryrc.bham.sch.uk">www.stmaryrc.bham.sch.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:enquiry@stmaryrc.bham.sch.uk">enquiry@stmaryrc.bham.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	8 <sup>th</sup> July 2014

## **INFORMATION ABOUT THIS SCHOOL**

- St Mary's is a two-form entry primary school situated in Harborne, Birmingham serving the Augustinian parish of St Mary's, Harborne.
- The percentage of Catholic pupils is currently 93%.
- The percentage of disadvantaged pupils is below the national average.
- The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average.
- The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic origins is above the national average.
- The percentage of pupils with English as an additional language is above the national average.
- Attainment on entry is in line with age related expectations.
- Since the previous inspection, a new Religious Education subject leader has been appointed.

## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION**

- The inspection was carried out by two diocesan inspectors – Debbie Huxtable and Jean Richmond.
- The focus of the inspection was on the impact, quality and leadership of the school's provision of Catholic Life, Religious Education and Collective Worship.
- The inspectors observed teaching across all classes to evaluate the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. These lesson observations were conducted jointly with the headteacher or senior leaders.
- The inspectors completed a work scrutiny and held discussions with pupils to evaluate their understanding of Catholic Life, the impact of Religious Education teaching on their learning over time and their experience of Collective Worship.
- Meetings were held with governors, the headteacher, Religious Education subject leader, the parish priest, staff, parents and pupils.
- The inspectors attended a whole school Mass, examples of Collective Worship and undertook a learning walk to look at the presentation of the Catholic Life of the school and pupils' behaviour.
- The inspectors reviewed a range of documents including the school's self-evaluation, data about pupils' attainment and progress, Analyse School Performance (ASP) data, the school development plan, the Religious Education action plan and teachers' planning.