



Archdiocese of Birmingham

INSPECTION REPORT

ST ANNE'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL BIRMINGHAM

Inspection dates 19th- 20th June 2012
Reporting Inspector Brenda Beale

Inspection carried out under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

Type of School	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4-11 years
Number on roll	201
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governors	Mr Michael McConnell
School address	Lowe Street Camp Hill Birmingham B12 0ER
Telephone number	0121 675 5037
E-mail address	enquiry@st-annes.bham.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	October 2008
DFE School number	330 3335
Unique Reference Number	103434

Headteacher Mrs Bernadette Keenan

DIOCESAN EDUCATION SERVICE



Evidence

The inspection was carried out by 1 Diocesan Inspector. The focus of the inspection was on the effectiveness and use of the school's self evaluation of religious education (RE) and Catholic life. To validate the effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation of teaching and learning, the inspector observed 3 RE lessons with the headteacher. In addition the inspector completed a work scrutiny and held a discussion with pupils to evaluate the impact of teaching on their learning over time. She held meetings with the chair of governors, staff, and parish priest. She attended Mass, observed a class liturgy, and undertook a learning walk to look at aspects of learning and teaching in RE, the presentation of the Catholic life of the school, and pupils' behaviour. She looked at a range of evidence related to the school's self evaluation such as RAISEonline, the development plan, teachers' planning, and learning journals. Alongside the validation of school self evaluation, the inspector gathered evidence about good teaching and learning, evidence which will be shared with other diocesan schools.

Information about the school

St Anne's is an average size Catholic primary school serving the parish of St Anne in Birmingham. The school is in an area of high social deprivation. The proportion of Catholic pupils is currently 15% and that of ethnic minority pupils is 97%. Mobility plays a significant part in the school due to location and social context. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is high; 25% of the children have special needs and/or disabilities. Attainment on entry is well below the national average.

Main Finding

In its self evaluation the school judges that its Catholic life and RE are predominantly outstanding. The school judges that attainment in RE is good; whilst the way in which the subject is monitored and evaluated is also good with some outstanding aspects. These judgements are wholly reliable. The headteacher, her senior leadership team and the governors have a highly rigorous and self critical approach to monitoring all aspects of the life of the school, which has led to a powerful and effective Catholic ethos in which children of all faiths prosper and are led to an excellent knowledge of Christ and his Church.

School self evaluation

The strength of school self evaluation lies in the headteacher's thorough and accurate knowledge of her school. She and her senior leadership team are painstaking and meticulous in their monitoring and evaluation of both RE and the Catholic life of the school. The school enjoys a culture of openness, collaboration and desire to continually improve in order to provide the very best for its pupils and their families. Monitoring of RE lessons is carried out both formally and by the headteacher's regular visits to the classrooms. The RE leader has only recently been appointed and is beginning a process of shared lesson observations with the headteacher to ensure rigour and consistency in her judgements. Commentaries on lessons focus not only on teaching but on its impact on pupils' learning, progress and attainment. Whilst making positive comments and suggestions for improvement, feedback from lesson observations does not shy away from delivering harder messages about weakness in teaching and learning. Judgement that teaching is good with a considerable amount being outstanding is further supported by detailed scrutiny of books which show consistently high progress and achievement throughout the school. Discussions with pupils reveal that they have been taught well in their RE lessons and have gained a great deal of knowledge through the spiritual and worship life of the school. Pupils have a very strong grasp of the meaning that RE has in their own lives.

The evaluation of the RE curriculum is very thorough and the headteacher and her leadership team, along with the parish priest, are always seeking ways to enrich and develop opportunities for children to learn. The headteacher is very astute and has taken advantage of the multicultural nature of the school and wider community to enrich the curriculum. Great emphasis is placed on similarities between faiths and used to good effect in developing the curriculum whilst maintaining its distinct Catholic nature. The school judges its assessment procedures to be good. Assessment is meticulous in following diocesan guidelines but its real effectiveness lies in the intimate knowledge the headteacher and her staff have of all the pupils. This impacts strongly on the quality of teaching and learning.

The way in which the headteacher, senior leaders and the governors monitor and evaluate the Catholic life of the school is rightly judged to be outstanding and leads to effective change and strengthening of practice. All acts of worship are reviewed and discussed in detail and strengths and weaknesses identified. The same approach is taken regarding practices that consolidate the pupils' spiritual, moral and vocational development.

The quality of self evaluation, the analytical skills of the headteacher and the clearly focussed plans for development demonstrate an outstanding capacity to improve. The RE leader, though only recently appointed, has the generic skills and capacity to lead and develop her subject effectively. All members of staff are fully supportive of the headteacher's ambitious vision for the school. Whilst the governors, including the parish priest, are well informed and fully immersed in the life of the school, they take a critical and objective approach to monitoring and evaluating RE and the Catholic life of the school.

Overall effectiveness of the school¹

Outcomes for pupils in RE are consistently good and predominantly outstanding throughout the school. Pupils enter the school with little or no knowledge of the Faith. There are very few exceptions. Whilst attainment in all key stages is good, progress and achievement are outstanding. The children are interested, engaged and motivated in their lessons so they enjoy learning. The children's exceptional behaviour does much to enhance their learning. Children of all faiths are able to talk knowledgeably about the scriptures, the teachings and events of the life of Jesus, the Church and its liturgical seasons, and the impact that this knowledge has on the way they live their lives. The high level of literacy in the school enables the children to express and record their thinking in RE very effectively. There are a high proportion of children with special educational needs; these children make good progress particularly in Key Stage 1. Work is differentiated and the levels of support are high. There is very little difference in achievement between religious groups across the school.

The pupils' attitudes, values, relationships and commitment to the school community demonstrate that their spiritual, moral and vocational development is outstanding. The way in which pupils participate and respond to the Catholic life of the school is exceptional. The most vulnerable pupils in the school community are particularly well supported by the staff and their peers. There is a strong culture of forgiveness and reconciliation. The pupils' contribution to charities and the wider community is very good. All children value and actively participate in the worship life of the school; their behaviour is exemplary and they act with reverence during all Masses and services, they contribute to the preparation and celebration of Masses, class liturgies and assemblies. They learn a variety of hymns which

¹ As the quality of the school self evaluation has been affirmed, the judgements in this section of the report conform to those of the school.

they sing beautifully. Children of other faiths support their friends in their sacramental preparation and celebrations.

Provision overall is outstanding. Good or outstanding teaching promotes purposeful learning, enjoyment, progress and attainment of pupils. Teachers have good subject knowledge, link learning to real life experiences and are skilled in challenging children through the use of effective questioning and clear explanations. Where teacher's knowledge is weaker, strategic support is put into place. This includes joint planning between the teacher and the subject leader or mentor. Assessment for learning is very good and is reinforced by teachers' intimate knowledge of each child and their progress. The curriculum is very well planned and tailored to meet the needs of the pupils. It is powerfully enriched by visits and speakers. A particular strength is the way in which all pupils learn about and from other religions, respecting lives, cultures and beliefs of others in and beyond the school community. The provision of collective worship is outstanding in its quantity and quality. It is very inclusive and Masses and liturgies are attended by parents of all faiths.

St Anne's is an outstanding Catholic school in which all pupils and their families benefit and thrive. In the words of the parish priest, because of its multi-faith intake, 'it is a school that seeks to evangelise but not convert.' It is a school that makes Christ known to its whole community.

Recommendations

- Provide even greater opportunities for the most able pupils to achieve the higher levels of attainment.
- Involve pupils to a greater extent in the evaluation of the Catholic life of the school.
- Develop the skills of the recently appointed RE subject leader in evaluating the quality of teaching and other aspects of her subject.