



Archdiocese of Birmingham

INSPECTION REPORT

ALL SOULS CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL COVENTRY

Inspection dates 3rd – 4th November 2011
Reporting Inspector Brenda Beale

Inspection carried out under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

Type of School	Primary
Age range of pupils	3 -11 years
Number on roll	197
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governors	Mrs Shirley Langford
School address	Abercorn Road Chapelfields Coventry CV5 8ED
Telephone number	024 76 675836
E-mail address	admin@souls.coventry.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	March 2009
DCSF School Number	331/3433
Unique Reference Number	103724
Headteacher	Mrs Caroline Quinn

DIOCESAN EDUCATION SERVICE



Introduction

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This inspection was carried out by one Diocesan Inspector. The inspector visited 3 full religious education (RE) lessons to observe teaching and learning and pupils' behaviour, and held meetings with governors, staff, and groups of pupils. She observed the school's work, including assembly and prayer services and looked at a range of evidence, including key documentation such as the school's development plan, monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning in RE, and pupils' work.

Information about the school

All Souls is an average sized, one form entry primary school. Presently 197 children attend the school and 27 attend the Nursery. 77% of the children are baptised Catholics. The school serves the parish of The Precious Blood and All Souls. Increasingly, the school profile reflects the changes in the local area. 18% of the children are from an ethnic group other than white British. Children come from a range of ethnic backgrounds, Polish, Pakistani, Slovakian, African, Chinese, Malaysian, but there is no predominant group. 8% of children (17 pupils) have English as a second language. Eleven per cent of children are eligible for free school meals and the number of pupils with special needs (SEN) has risen to 19% (38 pupils). One child has a statement.

Overall effectiveness of the school as a Catholic school

All Souls is a very good Catholic school with many outstanding features. The prayer and worship life of the school is outstanding and the provision of religious education (RE) is good. These impact very favourably on the spiritual and moral development of the pupils and the development of their knowledge and understanding of the faith. The headteacher and her leadership team fully understand and are deeply committed to the Church's mission in education and are a source of inspiration to the whole community. The governing body is very supportive of the Catholic life of the school, as is the parish priest. Overall teaching of RE is good and teachers are supported in their work by a very effective subject leader who is also the deputy headteacher.

Many pupils have little or no knowledge of the Catholic faith when they enter the school but from the start pupils achieve well and overall make excellent progress in religious education. The pupils' spiritual and moral development is outstanding. Their response to and benefit from the rich prayer life of the school are excellent. Behaviour is very good and from a young age pupils know that the choices they make are followed by a series of consequences. The children are proud of their school and have a great respect for the Catholic faith.

The capacity to continue to improve the Catholic life of the school and RE is outstanding. The school have been through challenging times but there is now a strong skilled leadership team in place. Despite difficulties all the issues raised at the last RE inspection have been addressed and successfully resolved. Self evaluation is grounded in accurate analysis based on thorough monitoring procedures. The headteacher has an ambitious vision for the Catholic life of the school and she and her leadership team possess the skills and knowledge to sustain this vision. Morale is high and belief in the school's successful Catholic life is held by all members of staff. The parents have full trust and confidence in the headteacher, her deputy and leadership team.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop the staff's understanding of learning from religion (AT2) so that it informs planning and leads to deeper learning and reflection in RE.
- Review the RE curriculum to include opportunities to deepen children's knowledge and understanding of cultural diversity

How good outcomes are for individuals and groups of pupils

Overall, learning and progress are outstanding. They are strong in Key Stage 1 where, from a very low base of little knowledge and understanding of the Faith, secure and sound foundations are laid upon which pupils can make excellent progress. In Key Stage 2 progress is particularly strong. All pupils are fully engaged by the worship and prayer life of the school and thoroughly enjoy their RE lessons; which along with their excellent behaviour contributes greatly to their learning and progress in RE. They are keen and committed and seek to produce their best work. The quality of provision for pupils with particular learning needs/disabilities and therefore their progress in RE is very good. They are supported by skilled and dedicated teaching assistants. These children are helped in their work by the other pupils' caring and supportive attitude. They feel safe and secure and have high levels of self esteem so like all the pupils they are willing to take risks in their RE lessons.

Standards of attainment in RE are above average. At the end of Key Stage 1 pupils are able to talk about the Bible and its structure and they know some stories from both Testaments and are familiar with some of the events of the life of Jesus. They can talk about Baptism and are looking forward to their First Communion preparation next year. They have a sound knowledge of the liturgical year and its associated colours and are able to talk confidently about prayer and recite several formal prayers which they use frequently in their daily lives. Year 6 pupils demonstrate a good knowledge of the Bible and its structure. Their knowledge of stories and teaching from scripture is good. They are able to reflect upon meaning. During inspection in a discussion with their teacher Year 6 pupils expressed their views on the difference between 'the God of the Old Testament' and the 'loving Father of the New Testament'. Their knowledge and understanding of the sacraments, the liturgical year and signs and symbols is excellent. They know an appropriate range of formal prayers and are particularly skilful in writing beautiful prayers.

The way pupils contribute to and participate in the Catholic life of the school is outstanding. Year 6 all have a 'prayer partner' in Reception who they guide through Mass and liturgies, keep an eye on in the playground and around the school. Some of these friendships extend beyond the primary school with pupils coming back for years to see their prayer partner. The children have a strong sense of right and wrong and fully understand the importance of forgiveness given and received. Pupils have a good sense of self worth and recognise the importance of caring for others. They are able to express their views, opinions and beliefs but highly value and respect the Catholic tradition. They treat others, children and adults alike, with a high level of respect. They enjoy the strong links the school has with the parish and are alert to the needs of others within and beyond the school community.

Pupils' response to and participation in collective worship are outstanding. The children are fully engaged by the vibrant acts of worship provided. They are involved in planning and preparing worship and lead it confidently. During inspection, Year 2 led an excellent assembly about the saints. The children were exceptionally confident and at ease. They have great understanding of public and private prayer. They sing and read with real enthusiasm and joy. During all prayer sessions the pupils were at ease but very respectful and reverent. They are able to be very still and calm and appear completely absorbed during times of reflection. The children expressed their love and enjoyment of prayer and worship and completely understood its purpose and value. They feel it is important to gather together as a whole school, 'because we are one big family', 'we are a Catholic school; this is what it means to be a Catholic school'.

How effective leaders and managers are in developing the Catholic life of the school

The way in which leaders monitor and evaluate Catholic life and plan for and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils is outstanding. The headteacher and her deputy place the spiritual and moral development of the children as their highest priority. Monitoring and evaluation is rigorous and thorough and leads to well targeted planning. This is reflected in development plans

and self evaluation documentation. The senior leaders of the school lead the school by example in the practice of their faith and they successfully communicate their passion and commitment to the whole school community. The subject leader provides very good leadership and is a good role model for other members of staff. She attends training led by the diocese and seeks advice from the school's diocesan primary adviser. The subject leader not only drives the subject forward but seeks to put Christ at the root of the spiritual development of the school and every person within it. She has a positive impact on classroom practice by supporting and sharing her own good practice; she provides exemplary support and induction training for non-Catholic and newly qualified teachers. The subject leader has supported another Catholic school in the City in developing newly appointed staff in leading quality prayer services.

The governing body provides effective challenge and support for the Catholic dimension of the school. Governors discharge their statutory and canonical duties effectively. There is a full complement of committed governors who are dedicated to supporting the school. The governing body expects the headteacher to report on the Catholic life of the school through a termly report. Each academic year begins with a Governors' and staff Mass celebrated in the school. This underlines the commitment of all to the Catholicity of the school. The governing body is aware that they have not always been able to appoint Catholic teachers; they challenge the headteacher as to the support offered to those non-Catholic members of staff both within school and in the form of INSET and the contribution they make to the Catholicity of the school. The link governor, the parish priest, is a regular visitor to the school and to school events. He meets with the headteacher and subject leader to plan Masses, liturgical music and sacramental meetings with parents. The chair of governors meets with the headteacher on a weekly basis and in this way is kept up to date with all that is happening in the school and is aware of the challenges facing the school. She is able to keep the governing body informed of the Catholic life of the school.

Promotion of community cohesion is very good. The school enjoys excellent relationships with the parish. Children serve on the altar on a weekly basis and read and sing at the monthly Sunday Family Mass. Key members of the parish visit sacramental classes and discuss their vocation within the parish. The school helps publicise faith courses run within the parish, more recently children have helped distribute flyers for the *Journey In Faith* course. The parish provide financial support for resources which improve the Catholic life of the school. As the school profile changes more families are experiencing difficulties in their lives. The school works hard to support them during these times and works closely with other agencies to do so. The part time non teaching inclusion leader undertakes much of this work. Communication between school and home is regarded as most important and a strength of the school. Newly arrived children or children from different ethnic backgrounds are made feel most welcome and valued. They make progress in line with children from the majority ethnic group. The school is aware that it must develop pupils' awareness of the diversity of cultures in the wider world. There are also strong links with the local Catholic secondary school, Bishop Ullathorne. The school has a small but very active parent - teacher association: members raise a considerable amount of money to support pupils' learning. The school council are mainly responsible for identifying the charities the school supports and often organise events to fund raise. More recently the school has supported CAFOD, Pattaya Orphanage Trust, Macmillan, Myton Hospice. During the Pakistan floods a Pakistani pupil together with friends organised an event to raise funds. The school liaised with a member of the local Muslim Iqra centre and CAFOD to support those in need.

The quality of the school's work in providing Catholic education

The extent to which teaching promotes purposeful learning, enjoyment, progress and attainment in RE is good. During inspection good with some outstanding teaching was observed. Nothing inadequate was found. The school promotes good and improving teaching in RE through monitoring processes: lesson observations, book trawls, 'learning walks' and pupil interviews and their judgements about the quality of teaching in RE are accurate. Teaching is effective and enables children to make very good progress. A broad range of teaching styles and activities is used, including drama, 'hot seating', looking at religious works of art. This helps to ensure that

pupils are consistently interested in their learning and enjoy their lessons. Teachers, including non-Catholics, have good subject knowledge in RE. Non Catholic teachers are supported by the very good and committed RE subject leader. She ensures they have received training around particular aspects of RE and monitors their work closely. Resources are good and excellent use is made of ICT in RE by both staff and pupils. Since the last inspection, the school has developed its assessment procedures. Learning outcomes are used to assess children's attainment in each unit of work. Termly assessments, based on an annual whole school focus, are carried out and assessed against the levels of attainment. The subject leader collates a portfolio of assessed work from each year group. Consequently, teachers are now more familiar with the levels of attainment and it impacts on planning and outcomes for pupils.

The quality of the curriculum in RE is good. The RE curriculum is based on the Archdiocesan curriculum strategy, *Learning and Growing as the People of God*. Family life and sex education is delivered using the *All That I Am* resources together with the BBC Wales *Health E* resources and is taught in line with Catholic teaching. The percentage of time given to RE is in line with the expectations of the Bishops' Conference. There are many opportunities for cross curricular links to enhance RE including a range of writing styles, drama, art, music and ICT. Children's writing targets are included in their RE books to reinforce the expectation of high standards of writing and to support progress across the curriculum. Learning is enriched by visits to the parish church, St Chad's, Alton Castle, Oscott, the Ukrainian Catholic Church and Coventry Cathedral. Parishioners with key roles in the parish visit classrooms to discuss their vocation. The diocesan vocations officer visits Year 6 to give the children an insight into and an opportunity to consider their personal journey of faith. Sacramental education is based on the strategy units of work. All children partake in these programmes. Preparation is greatly enhanced by the work of the parish priest. He also visits Years 3 and 6 often and supports them in Sacramental preparation. He also leads a series of discussion evenings for parents of children intending to receive the Sacraments. Parishioners also attend these to support the parents and children. The curriculum provides good opportunities for the spiritual and moral development of all pupils. In recent pupil interviews a Year 6 child commented, "RE shapes us, it makes us who we are."

The provision for collective worship is outstanding. There is a wide variety of opportunities for taking part in the quality liturgical life of the school: regular whole school Masses, half termly class Masses, monthly 'Sunday Family Mass', feast days and holy days of obligation are celebrated. During Lent Years 3 and 4 perform a reflection on the events of Holy Week. This is delivered to the whole school and parents a week prior so that it can be used as a teaching tool during Holy Week enabling pupils to empathise and understand more clearly the significance of the events. Weekly class prayer services are held. Each class presents an assembly to the whole school, to which parents and family are invited. During Advent and Lent older children are encouraged to organise, plan and lead weekly lunchtime services, based on *Walk With Me* for those children who wish to attend. During the months of October and March whole school assemblies and fund raising based on the work of CAFOD take place. During October and May children are encouraged to bring their Rosary beads to school and to use them during whole school/class prayer times. The entrance hall, school hall and corridors are filled with quality liturgical and religious displays. The standard of these displays is outstanding, as is the prayer focus in each classroom. Recently classes have visited the newly opened parish prayer garden to gain a different prayer experience. Liturgical music plays an important part in the life of the school. The parish pays for a music teacher to lead the weekly hymn practice and teach a wide variety of hymns. In this way there is a stronger link between parish and school and commonality in the liturgical music shared.