



Diocesan Education Service,
Don Bosco House,
Coventry Road,
Coleshill
B46 3EA

March 2012

Dear Parents and Carers

Section 48 (Diocesan) Inspection of St Gabriel's Catholic Primary School, March 2012

I am writing this letter to share with you the findings of the diocesan inspection of your children's school. Diocesan inspection now explores in detail the school's own view of itself as expressed in its self-evaluation. For this reason, much of the report is more technical than used to be the case. You are still entitled to have a copy of the full report should you want one and it will be available on the school website or by request from the school office.

The school has an outstanding Catholic life. The level of care and encouragement your children receive from the headteacher and his dedicated and experienced staff team is excellent. The children are fine ambassadors for the school. They are friendly, cheerful, courteous and welcoming and demonstrate a great pride in showing their school to be the best. This can be witnessed by exemplary behaviour and attitude to their work. The children enjoy RE lessons and, because of the high quality teaching and support they receive, they make excellent progress. Pupils achieve very well in Religious Education throughout the school. They are able to apply their learning to their own daily lives.

In order to broaden learning in RE I have recommended that the school increase opportunities to develop children's knowledge and understanding of other faiths and extend the excellent quality of collective worship by encouraging the children to be more involved in planning and leading it.

It was a pleasure to inspect St Gabriel's school. I enjoyed my visit very much and was made most welcome by all. Your children are a credit to the school, to their families and those who care for them.

Yours sincerely,

Dominic Collins
Diocesan Inspector



Archdiocese of Birmingham

INSPECTION REPORT

ST GABRIEL'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL STAFFORDSHIRE

Inspection dates 29th February/1st March 2012
Reporting Inspector Dominic Collins

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	365
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governors	John Taggart
School address	Winecote Lane Belgrave Tamworth B77 2LF
Telephone number	01827 475045
E-mail address	office@st-gabriels.staffs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	July 2007
DFE School number	860/3482
Unique Reference Number	124373

Headteacher John Hayes

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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 two full RE lessons, one with the headteacher and one with the RE subject leader. The inspector also visited several other classes across the school where RE lessons were being taught. In addition the inspector completed a book scrutiny and held a discussion with pupils to evaluate the impact of teaching on their learning over time. He held meetings with the chair of governors, staff, and parish priest He observed a hymn practice, attended a whole school Mass 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. He 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 collective worship, which will be shared with other diocesan schools.

Information about the school

St Gabriel's is a larger than average Catholic primary school serving the parish of St John the Baptist in Tamworth, Staffordshire. There are 365 children on roll of whom 67% are baptised Catholics. Most of the pupils are from White British origin. The proportion of ethnic minority pupils is 8%. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average and the number with special needs and/or disabilities is broadly average. Baseline assessment in RE shows that attainment on entry is below the national average overall.

Main Finding

In its self evaluation St Gabriel's judges itself to be an outstanding Catholic primary school. This view is brought about by the evaluation of its Catholic life and religious education by the school leadership, through the application of firmly embedded systems of rigorous and effective monitoring. The strength of the schools self evaluation lies in the way outcomes are analysed and used to inform areas for development. There is clear evidence of how the cycle of monitoring, evaluating and effective planning builds a strong chain of impact. Pupils are happy and eager learners who are able to articulate the school's distinctive mission through living out Gospel values and by their positive attitudes and awareness towards others. They understand the importance of prayer and worship that underpins the Catholic life of the school. The school's judgements are accurate overall and fully justified. The Catholic life of the school is excellent, though the school has understated it a little in its self evaluation. St Gabriel's has a strong Catholic identity where faith and practice are central to school life.

School self evaluation

The school has effective and well established systems for monitoring and evaluating the quality of its Catholic life and religious education. These include observations of teaching and learning, assessments of pupils' work, questionnaires and audits of spiritual life and prayer, the outcomes inform future planning which is shared and implemented at all levels. There is clear evidence that because of thorough developmental lesson preparation, good subject knowledge by the teacher and

excellent relationships within the classroom, there is a sound basis for effective teaching and learning to take place. The quality of RE lessons is monitored annually by the subject leader and senior leadership. Feedback to staff is developmental and receptive; support and guidance is always included where appropriate. The subject leader meets on a weekly basis with the RE link governors, who are also involved in the monitoring cycle. Evidence of written reports confirm a consistently high level of effective teaching that focuses on pupils' learning outcomes and progress, by using a number of strategies, for example intervening when necessary to encourage deeper thinking. Non-Catholic teaching staff are particularly well supported by the headteacher, deputy headteacher, and subject leader. The school evaluation that the teaching of RE has a very positive impact on pupil learning and progress is fully supported by observations made during the inspection. This is further evidenced by the consistently high quality of pupils' written work in their RE books, which they perceive as 'special' and the way they are able to talk confidently about what they have learned. Class discussions are characteristic of RE lessons and are also used to evaluate teaching and learning. Evaluation of pupils' work linked to the quality of marking is excellent and acknowledges spiritual as well as academic progress.

The quality and outcomes of the RE curriculum are a major focus of the school's evaluation process and this has been very well addressed. The school has identified a range of additions to the existing RE scheme of work that will provide further enrichment and development. The insertion of opportunities for children to consider how new knowledge or understanding impacts upon their own lives will enhance their moral awareness and actions. Evaluation has highlighted cross-curricular opportunities for broadening the RE curriculum in areas such as literacy, art and music. The quality of lesson planning and curricular content is closely monitored by the RE subject leader, who provides excellent support and direction, thus ensuring that all pupils can access the curriculum. The developmental needs identified as a result of the evaluation process feature as a priority for future planning; this to include staff training in the analysis of assessment results.

Monitoring and evaluation of collective worship is thorough and the leadership team is constantly seeking ways to improve and develop it further. The school correctly judges that prayer and worship underpin its Catholic life and both provision and quality of collective worship are excellent. Children are at ease when praying and they clearly enjoy opportunities to pray together. Collective worship plans are drawn up for each year group and pupil responses are sought through conversations and questionnaires. Although there is already a high level of pupil involvement in planning liturgy at Key Stage 2 this is now an intended focus to further encourage pupil involvement in the lower school.

In view of the high quality of the school self evaluation and the areas for development that have been identified therein to build upon the already effective practice, the capacity for sustained improvement in both Catholic life and religious education is excellent. Leadership by the senior leadership team is inspirational and RE is exceptionally well led and managed by the subject leader who supports a dedicated staff team. Governors are fully involved in the life of the school and make a significant contribution to the evaluation of its Catholic life and RE. The parish priest is a frequent visitor and has formed an effective liaison with the school, especially as a key partner in planning and sacramental preparations. Together they form a powerful combination with a shared vision and passion to drive the school forward.

Overall effectiveness of the school¹

Outcomes for pupils in RE are excellent and consistent across each key stage. Taking into account the low starting point of the majority of children on entry, progress in RE is outstanding. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 is good and at the end of Key Stage 2 the patterns of consistent improvement show good or better attainment related to national criteria. Those pupils with learning needs receive excellent support and achieve well following a structured programme, while more able pupils are encouraged to tackle higher level challenges and work more independently. This is reflected by the high quality of work recorded in RE books. Pupils clearly enjoy their RE lessons because they are stimulating and involve plenty of discussion and interaction.

Pupils are very open about their faith and personal spirituality which they are eager to share with others. The school has an extremely positive Catholic ethos. Pupils are able to articulate its distinctive mission and the evidence of their attitudes, values, relationships and commitment to the school community, is testimony to the way they embrace it. They demonstrate a growing understanding of their faith and are able to relate their own daily lives to the way Jesus lived, showing love, trust and forgiveness; behaviour is exemplary. Pupils recognise how much they are valued and that they too have a responsibility to show respect and care for each other. As a result pupils' spiritual, moral and vocational development is outstanding. Collective worship is well planned and pupils' response is very positive. They are attentive and reverent in prayer and liturgy and participate enthusiastically, especially through their inspirational and joyful singing. Collective worship at home is also encouraged through the 'Prayer Bag' initiative.

Provision overall for RE is excellent and there are effective systems in place for monitoring and evaluating the impact it has on the pupils. Lesson planning is crisp and developmental. The consistent high quality teaching of a rich, exciting and well matched curriculum ensures good learning outcomes and a very encouraging momentum of progress and attainment for the pupils.

Recommendations

- Provide opportunities for the children to plan and lead their own collective worship to embed practice across the school
- Improve analysis of assessment results, by all staff, to inform their future planning
- develop children's knowledge and understanding of other faiths, through increased opportunities in school and by visits to places of worship

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