



Archdiocese of Birmingham

Section 48 Monitoring Visit

ST JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

[Part of the St John Paul II Multi-Academy Company]

Little Sutton Lane, Sutton Coldfield, B75 6PB

Inspection dates	27 th April 2016
Reporting Inspector	Joseph Skivington

Monitoring Inspection carried out under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

Type of School	Primary Academy
Age range of pupils	4-11years
Number on roll	270
Appropriate authority	Archdiocese of Birmingham
Chair of governors	Dr Kirsty Hill
Telephone number	0121 354 6270
E-mail address	enquiry@stjosutton.net
Date of previous inspection	June 2011
DFE School number	330 3401
Unique Reference Number	140528

Headteacher	Mr Gerry O'Hara
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Last inspection:	1
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This inspection:	1
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DIOCESAN EDUCATION SERVICE





30th April 2016

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

Mr G O'Hara
Headteacher
St Joseph's Catholic Primary School
Little Sutton Lane
Sutton Coldfield
B75 6PB

Dear Mr O'Hara

Section 48 Monitoring inspection: 27th April 2016

Thank you for the welcome you, your staff and pupils gave to me when I inspected your school on the 27th April and for the information you provided both before and during the inspection. I am grateful for the time given by all including the chair of governors in speaking with me.

The inspection was a "light touch" monitoring inspection because your school was judged at the last section 48 inspection to be an outstanding school and because it is now five years or more since you last received a diocesan inspection.

The purpose of the inspection was to assess the quality of the school's self-evaluation and improvement planning for Catholic life and religious education. In order to make this judgement I read school documents, including a summative self-evaluation, interviewed senior leaders, the chair of governors, the parish deacon, the subject leader for RE, and the pupils, conducted a learning walk jointly with SLT, and looked at a sample of pupils' written work. In addition, I gathered evidence of some of the outstanding practice in the school as part of a diocesan wide survey of good practice in Catholic life and religious education.

Catholic Life

In its self-evaluation, St Joseph's Primary School judges its overall effectiveness as a Catholic school to be outstanding. This evaluation is fully justified based on the evidence gathered during this monitoring inspection, which validated the school's own judgement as accurate and dependable. The pupils benefit enormously from the Catholic life of the school. They make an animated contribution to their collective worship, evident in their wholehearted engagement with the rich opportunities for prayer and worship as well as their outstanding behaviour both in and out of lessons. They have a strong understanding of the relevance of what they learn, which comes across in their reflective written work, but more importantly in their day to day relationships with staff and peers. Year 6 for example, commented "we treat each other as equals and try to set an example." The successful introduction of the Catholic Pupil Profile virtues has had a real impact, because they can reflect on their actions and responsibilities more clearly. The excellent work through the UNICEF project has made the pupils more aware and involved in global issues and responsibilities. Their input on Catholic life comes through responses at pupil interview, where their opinions are heard and acted upon, but also in their self monitoring of prayer life, leading liturgies, the Mass, class and house assemblies, and checking of prayer altars. They are at present involved in the planning of the school mission in June. They are also proactive in organising their charity fundraising events themselves.

Governors and senior leadership play a very hands-on part in nourishing and enabling a vibrant Catholic ethos. They are frequent visitors and challenging, critical collaborators, as evident from a scrutiny of the governing body minutes and the responses to the headteacher's and subject leader's RE reports and reviews. These are also fed back to the full academy committee at the end of each term. All the outcomes



from feedback from pupils, parents, and staff are then fed into the school improvement plan, which is very much a live, working document constantly being re-shaped and updated. Because the school is part of the local Catholic academy group, St John Paul II Multi Academy Company, it benefits from, and contributes to, best practice and healthy accountability in partnership with other schools' staff and governors, resulting in fruitful joint assessments and planning which leads to its exemplary provision and outcomes. These rigorous processes and the overarching academy group supervision are the surest touchstone for the reliability of the school's self evaluation. The school is open to change and willing to embrace new challenges. The staff play a vital part in the nurturing of the school's spiritual life through their excellent modelling, for instance, their reverent demeanour at prayer and their full involvement in every liturgical event whether they are leading it or not. This is clearly mirrored in the pupils' comportment and attentiveness at prayer. Staff attended a very fruitful retreat at Alton Castle last year focussed on reflection, and this provided them with skills and resources which they have successfully used to incorporate reflection time into their class worship.

The close links with the parish, where many pupils serve and read at Mass builds their understanding that the school mission is part of the wider mission of the Church. A good percentage of parents attend these Masses and attendance at the parish Sunday Mass has grown, as a result of this and the parents' deeper commitment to the First Communion and Confirmation preparation programmes. The use of prayer bags sent home each night is also a powerful example of the home-school partnership. The school leadership rightly sees parental involvement as vitally important and is a key area for development in the school's planning. During the inspection the pupils in assembly behaved with attentiveness and reverence, singing enthusiastically. Likewise in the Reception class prayers the younger children prayed and shared their thoughts with remarkable ease and seriousness. Pupils are enthusiastic in helping to plan and present their own assemblies, but could take on even more ownership of their prayer life and what they contribute specifically to the Catholic aspect of school life. To increase pupil involvement and ownership in their prayer life is one of the identified objectives of the school development plan. Already pupils, collaborating with their peers, have contributed to the writing of an inspirational joint academy prayer which is very much 'theirs'. The growth in confidence of pupils planning their own liturgies is duly documented, and as a result the quality and impact of these occasions are improving, but also provide the leadership with a very clear grasp of the impact provision is having, and how better it can be improved.

Religious Education

The school judges provision for religious education as outstanding, including the impact of teaching, assessment, and the curriculum. The reason it knows this is because it has embedded robust processes for monitoring the quality of the impact of teaching on learning, which crucially elicits feedback from the pupils. The RE subject leaders from the other academy schools meet frequently to exchange notes, peer assess and moderate provision and outcomes, a rigorous process which is ensuring the reliability and quality of the school's own evaluation process. Teaching over time is consistently good with much that is outstanding. Lesson observations and particularly work scrutiny during the inspection confirmed this judgement. As a result, the achievement of all pupils, including those with special educational needs, across both key stages, consistently meets, and for a significant number of pupils, exceeds expectation. The evidence from lesson observations and work scrutinies amply bear this out, as well as the school's own helpful analysis of attainment and progress data. Pupils very readily contribute to their own learning by their real enjoyment of the subject, regardless of their faith background. In conversation, pupils were unanimous in expressing their enjoyment and interest in RE and could think of nothing that could make it better. They feel at ease and can question their teachers to get clearer answers that are relevant to their lives. This feedback in turn enables teachers to re-shape the lesson learning objectives to meet the pupils' learning needs. The leadership in RE provides very effective support through targeted CPD as well as rigorous monitoring and specific RE performance management, which enables staff to review their practice and its impact. Pupils receive fruitful feedback both orally and through dialogue marking which is increasingly more effective in its impact on progress over time. The school is already aware that the impact of marking could be enhanced with more consistent challenging comments and higher expectation of the



quality of the pupil's written response, so that smarter marking becomes an effective driver of progress. The curriculum and schemes of work are constantly being reviewed. The school reacted quickly to the previous inspection's comment on the need to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of other faiths. This is now a real strength of the school with its interesting approach to the study of the other major world faiths, colourful displays, visits to different places of worship and its very successful Multi Faith Weeks. In short a truly open and inclusive school and parish community.

St Joseph's stands out as an inspiring example of a Catholic school, which has the capacity to constantly self review, to sustain and deepen its commitment to its mission through its dedicated leadership, and its openness to change for the best through the supportive challenge from its sister schools in the academy, while restlessly seeking the best practice to ensure the highest level quality of provision for Catholic life and religious education.

Yours sincerely

Joseph Skivington
Diocesan Inspector