



Archdiocese of Birmingham

Section 48 Inspection Report

ST GEORGE'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Thorneloe Walk, Barbourne, Worcester, WR1 3JY

Inspection dates:

22nd – 23rd May 2019

Lead Inspector:

Mary Daniels

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS:

Good

Catholic Life:

Outstanding

Religious Education:

Good

Collective Worship:

Good

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection:

Good

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

This is a Good Catholic school because:

- Relationships between school and parish are excellent. There is a strong sense of community, which is highly ambitious for the success of the school.
- Pupils enjoy Religious Education and their attainment is strong. It is comparable to the high standards of other core subjects.
- Collective Worship is central to the life of the school and for all pupils, staff and parents.
- Leadership and management is decisive and results in improvements in Catholic Life, Religious Education and Collective Worship.

It is not yet outstanding because:

- Pupils progress in Religious Education is not consistent through all phases of the school.
- All pupils are not involved in evaluating how well they are performing in Religious Education.
- Pupils' leadership and planning of Collective Worship is not fully embedded.

FULL REPORT

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improving the teaching of Religious Education so that it is consistently high throughout the school.
- Involve pupils in evaluating how well they are achieving in Religious Education.
- Develop pupils' role in leading and planning Collective Worship.

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

The quality of the Catholic Life of the school.	Outstanding
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.

- The school motto 'Achieve, Believe and Care' and the mission statement are clear and inspiring. The mission statement has recently been revised and pupils are familiar with the statement, which is prominently displayed around the school. It is evident that pupils value the Catholic nature of the school.
- Pupils evaluate the Catholic Life and mission of the school in a variety of ways. They are involved in auditing the physical environment and prayer spaces and participate in pupil interviews. These responses feed into school developmental planning.
- Pupils explained to the inspectors how they, "Come together as a big family to celebrate". They enjoy school and thrive in its calm and supportive environment.
- Staff are fully committed to the mission of the school and implement it across all aspects of school life. They actively participate in activities that reflect the school's Catholic Life; attending parish Masses, retreats and courses.
- There is a strong sense of community across the whole school. Relationships are very positive between pupils, staff and parents. Parental support is excellent. There is high attendance at school events and parent evenings and there is a strong parent teacher association. Parent views of the school are very positive. For example, "They listen and the head is always there. She is very helpful", "Teachers are loving and kind".
- This sense of community is further enhanced through the school's links with the parish. A musician from the parish voluntary teaches music at the school and parishioners regularly attend school Masses. A monthly parish Mass involves the pupils meeting and greeting parishioners, reading, participating in the offertory procession and leading the singing.
- Sacramental preparation is parish based and there is excellent collaboration between school and catechists.

- The school environment reflects the Catholic nature of the school. In the entrance a display board celebrates work with the wider community and pupils have been involved in creating the school mosaic board. The values promoted in the Catholic Schools' Pupil Profile (CSPP) are shared in the dining room area and the chapel reflects the liturgical year.
- The behaviour of pupils is exemplary at all times. Staff have high expectations of behaviour and are excellent role models, treating pupils and each other with respect. Pupils are encouraged to listen, give thanks, forgive and be forgiven. Any disputes are quickly resolved.
- Pupils take a leading role in supporting those less fortunate than themselves and there are numerous opportunities for charitable outreach. There is an active Minnie Vinnie group, which has strong links with the parish St Vincent de Paul (SVP) organisation. They carry out charitable works and have made pen-pal links with the elderly in the community.
- Pupils enthusiastically participate in activities provided for them. A liturgy group prepares and leads Masses and organises the chapel during lunchtime.
- Chaplaincy provision is a strength of the school. The parish priest is highly visible in school and is the chair of governors. He is supported by two deacons who visit school regularly to support sacramental preparation, train altar servers and support work on vocations.
- Pastoral support is excellent. There are clear policies and structures in place to support all pupils. A nurture group, which is run by a trained member of staff, is well established. Pupils are referred to this group if they are experiencing social or emotional difficulties. Pupils with disabilities are provided with the appropriate support; working alongside experienced practitioners. As a result, all pupils' needs are met in this supportive, caring environment.
- The school is very alert to the pastoral needs of staff and systems are in place to provide care and support for them.
- Pupils have a good understanding of loving relationships. Pupils follow the diocesan programme 'All That I Am'.
- The curriculum is enriched by opportunities to consider, debate and reflect on moral and social issues. Pupils are encouraged to consider how they will contribute to society and their role within it. There is a particularly strong ECO team who have been involved in numerous initiatives to improve their environment.
- An understanding of vocation is developed through a variety of activities. Pupils attend retreats and there are opportunities to pray and reflect on how to serve others. Opportunities to develop self-confidence are provided through virtues work and having roles of responsibility such as house captains, prayer leaders, liturgy leaders and play leaders. Visits by the parish deacons to school provide an excellent opportunity for pupils to witness faith in action as they discuss their vocation.
- Almost all pupils value and respect the Catholic tradition of the school and its links with the parish. They are regularly involved in parish celebrations attending monthly Masses, participating in Benediction and Adoration held at the school.
- Pupils' awareness of other faiths is developed through a focused week when each class studies a different faith. This work is then shared with the school community.

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

- The headteacher was appointed after a period of disrupted leadership and is relatively new to the position. She has created a strong and supportive team. The school is now in a period of stability with an excellent leadership team.
- The provision for the Catholic Life of the school is given the highest possible priority by leaders, who ensure there are rigorous monitoring processes in place. The monitoring of Catholic Life directly informs the focus of the school development plan.
- Governors work with senior leaders to monitor provision and were involved in the writing of the current self-improvement document for Catholic Life. There is a link governor who regularly monitors Catholic Life. In addition, the school has worked with the local Catholic cluster of headteachers as part of a peer review process.
- There are robust processes in place to ensure self-evaluation leads into well targeted improvement plans for Catholic Life. For example, formal monitoring of Catholic Life was identified by leaders as an area for development. This area has been addressed through the school development plan and is now part of the culture of the school.
- Professional development is well planned and organised frequently for staff. This involves a variety of training opportunities, which include courses led by the local Catholic cluster, diocesan courses and training delivered in school by senior leaders.
- The school is very successful in engaging with parents and carers. Communication is generally through newsletter, text, twitter and the website. They are particularly successful in engaging parents with pupils with additional needs including Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). Governors have established a pastoral committee to monitor provision for pupils.
- Leaders are aware of the growing number of pupils with English as a second language and provision for them is excellent. The school employs a Polish speaking teaching assistant who is based in Reception class. She is available for all parents and particularly eases the transition into school.
- Governors make a highly significant contribution to the Catholic Life of the school. They are part of the wider parish and are justly proud of their school, which has been nominated for a local award. The headteacher values their support, experience and challenge. They have a wide skills base, which is used to support the mission of the school. They are very committed and visit school regularly attending Masses and visiting classes.
- Governors regularly complete the Catholic Education Service (CES) self-evaluation tool and this feeds into the governors' strategic plan.
- The governors have very strong links with the parish. The parish priest is the chair of governors and has an excellent overview of the school's Catholic Life. Several governors are also catechists who lead the school's sacramental programme and they also contribute to the school's Catholic Life.
- Governors all share the same vision, commenting, "Christ is truly at the centre of our school".
- Leaders and governors work hard to be inclusive to all pupils. Pupils from a local EBD (Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties) school are invited to plays and assemblies.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The quality of Religious Education.	Good
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education.	Good
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education.	Good
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 enter school below expected standards and make rapid progress in Early Years Foundation Stage. Progress at key stage 1 is less rapid. Progress in key stage 2 accelerates so that the majority of pupils reach expected levels.
- Almost all pupils and pupils with disabilities make good progress in line with other pupils. The school has identified boys' progress as an area to improve and numerous strategies have been put in place to rectify this.
- The Religious Education curriculum is rich with good cross curricular links. Pupils can apply the skills, knowledge and understanding from their Religious Education lessons into the world around them. When considering moral and social issues pupils use their work in Religious Education to inform their decisions, for example, showing forgiveness in the playground.
- Pupils are engaged in lessons and concentrate well. Behaviour is always excellent. Pupils enjoy learning because teachers plan interesting lessons and employ a wide range of active learning strategies. These include collaborative group work, use of video clips and imaginative and creative written activities.
- In discussions with pupils they were very positive and enthusiastic about their Religious Education lessons. They comment that their lessons are always interesting, and they learn about Jesus and how to follow his example in their own lives.
- Pupils' attainment in Religious Education is high. At the end of key stage 2 the vast majority of pupils reach expected levels and a significant number achieve at greater depth. This is in line with other core subjects. Attainment at the end of key stage 1 and early years is lower.
- Current work is good and demonstrates a wide range of activities including drama, art, music, written tasks and prayer.
- Teaching is good with some outstanding practice. Lessons are well planned using the, 'Learning and Growing as People of God' curriculum strategy. There is a good level of challenge for all pupils.
- In a Year 6 lesson the teacher expertly used a variety of images to extend pupils' understanding of the Holy Spirit including the shamrock and the famous icon, 'The Trinity', by the Russian artist Rubler. Pupils were fully engaged throughout the lesson as their understanding of the Holy Spirit was deepened.
- There are good quality resources available in all classes. Additional adults are used expertly. Pupils with additional needs are well supported by well trained staff using braille and signing.
- Teachers are confident in their subject knowledge and this is demonstrated in their questioning, which extends the pupils' thinking. This was particularly evident in a

Year 3 lesson where the teacher extended the pupils' thinking through challenging questions and high-quality feedback.

- Younger children were engaged by the teacher's confidence and enthusiasm when teaching a lesson about the Resurrection and new life. Children were given a seed and told if they look after it, "an amazing thing is going to happen". They were also encouraged to take the seeds home to share the message of new life with their families.
- Most pupils are involved in evaluating how well they are doing in lessons. Teachers closely match activities to the experiences and knowledge of the pupils and begin units of work by establishing prior knowledge.
- The classroom environment is good. There are bright and interesting displays in all classrooms, depicting the liturgical season. The prayer space is the focal point of the room and every class has a display of the CSPP.
- Achievement and effort are often celebrated in class and at achievement assemblies.

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

- Leaders and governors ensure the Religious Education curriculum meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference and is taught for the correct amount of time. It is comparable to other subjects.
- Religious Education is part of the appraisal cycle.
- Self-evaluation of the subject accurately reflects the strengths and areas for development. Religious Education follows a cycle of monitoring and evaluation, this includes lesson observations, book trawls and pupil interviews. Religious Education books are monitored regularly.
- Recently, the Religious Education leader has been allocated a weekly non-contact time to support the subject. During this time, she works closely with the headteacher. They both have a clear understanding of areas for development and how to improve teaching and learning.
- Analysis of teacher assessments and data is rigorous. Staff moderate work together and provide challenge for each other. Improvement points are recorded and fed back to staff.
- The subject leader for Religious Education has an inspiring vision for the teaching and learning of Religious Education and a high level of expertise. She leads by example and has provided training and support for teachers so that all teaching in Religious Education is at least good.
- During the past two years the subject leader has introduced many new initiatives to improve teaching and learning; encouraging the use of thinking skills and active learning strategies. This has been very successful in improving the progress of all pupils, especially in key stage 2.
- Leaders and governors ensure that Religious Education meets the needs of different groups of pupils. Resources are made available to support all pupils.
- Standards in Religious Education are reported to governors regularly. There is a link governor for Religious Education who is involved in book scrutiny and lesson observations. He attends training and cascades information to the whole governing body.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

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

How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship.
The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school.

- Collective Worship is central to the life of the school and praying together is part of the daily experience for pupils and staff.
- All pupils act with reverence and are keen to be involved in acts of Collective Worship. They sing joyfully and join in responses with confidence. There is an excellent school choir, which is supported by staff who are talented musicians. This particularly enhances school masses.
- Pupils lead prayer and Collective Worship with enthusiasm, taking their responsibilities seriously. Class Collective Worship is established with pupils taking an increasingly leading role. During class worship, pupils share their own prayers and a prayerful atmosphere is developed through the use of music, candles and incense.
- Pupils use a variety of approaches to prayer; formal and informal, private and communal and they are encouraged to be still and listen to God. Prayer is enhanced by the use of drama, sacred music, art and guided meditation. Staff use creative approaches to prayer. Bubbles are used to represent prayers being sent to Jesus and in one class the pupils joined hands to share a 'squeeze of love'. Pupils have a secure knowledge of traditional prayers especially the responses to Mass.
- When they pray, pupils explain that, 'Jesus is close to me and anything is possible', and, 'I speak to Jesus in my own words'.
- The school has embraced the CSPP and its virtues are an integral part of Collective Worship.
- There is a beautiful, small chapel that houses the Blessed Sacrament. Liturgy leaders take particular responsibility for the chapel and some pupils use the chapel daily for voluntary acts of prayer. Pupils also voluntarily attend the Rosary during the months of May and October.
- Chaplaincy provision is strong. The parish priest is very supportive, and the deacons attend school regularly to support teaching and learning and train altar servers. Pupils bear witness to their faith by being committed altar servers.
- There are a number of retreats organised throughout the year for pupils. These include a whole school retreat, a retreat for pupils receiving the sacraments of Reconciliation, Holy Communion and Confirmation and a liturgy leaders' retreat with other local Catholic schools. Trips are also organised for sacramental classes to St Chad's Cathedral and Belmont Abbey.
- Pupils have the opportunity to share Collective Worship and prayer with other school communities through the Worcestershire Catholic Cluster of schools at the Good Shepherd Mass and Marian procession.

- Collective Worship is given a high priority in terms of planning, evaluating and resourcing. Collective Worship is timetabled daily. There are regular masses held in school and the parish church and there is a Gospel assembly every Monday.
- Relevant staff have a good understanding of the Church's liturgical year and ensure pupils are familiar with the liturgical year and have good experiences of the Church's liturgical life.
- Collective Worship has a positive impact on parents and families who are invited to all school masses, celebration assemblies and liturgies throughout the year. Parents respond very positively to these opportunities to join in the school's Collective Worship.

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

- Leaders know how to plan and deliver quality Collective Worship. They are excellent models of good practice for staff and pupils.
- There is detailed guidance on Collective Worship and prayer for staff. High quality resources and support have been developed by leaders. These include prayer baskets, meditation prayer booklets and the school prayer book.
- Training through the local Catholic cluster group is provided for new members of staff. This training day focuses on the sacraments, prayer and the Mass.
- Collective Worship is well organised and planned by the headteacher and subject lead. There is a wide variety of Collective Worship planned throughout the year.
- Collective worship has a clear message and purpose. Themes for Masses and assemblies reflect the liturgical calendar and ensure pupils have a good understanding of the liturgical year, seasons and feasts.
- Formal monitoring of Collective Worship is carried out by senior leaders and the link governor. Recently the monitoring of Catholic Life, Religious Education and Collective Worship was reviewed by the governing body and it was decided to separate Collective Worship from the other two areas. This has ensured that the monitoring of Collective Worship is robust and follows a cycle of audits, planning trawls, learning walks, parent and pupil questionnaires and informal feedback from visitors.
- All staff have a performance management objective linked to Collective Worship as identified in the school development plan. Individual feedback to staff ensures they know how they can contribute to its improvement.
- Feedback from all monitoring is given promptly in order to improve the quality of Collective Worship.

SCHOOL DETAILS

Unique reference number	116924
Local authority	Worcestershire
<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	207
Appropriate authority	Governing Body
Chair	Fr. Brian McGinley
Headteacher	Gill Gittins
Telephone number	01905 25841
Website address	www.st-georgescatholic.co.uk
Email address	admin@st-georgescatholic.worcs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	12 th – 13 th June 2014

INFORMATION ABOUT THIS SCHOOL

- St George's Catholic Primary School is a one form entry Catholic primary school. It serves the parish of St George's, Worcester City.
- The percentage of Catholic pupils is currently 83%.
- The percentage of disadvantaged pupils is well 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 below 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 national expectations.
- Since the last inspection there have been a number of significant changes. After a period of disrupted leadership, the current headteacher was appointed in 2016. There is also a new Religious Education subject leader. The number of pupils with English as an additional language has increased.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION

- The inspection was carried out by two Diocesan Inspectors – Mary Daniels and Mary Johnson.
- 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 seven Religious Education lessons to evaluate the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. All of these lesson observations were conducted jointly with 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 the governors which included the chair of governors who is also the parish priest, Religious Education link governor, headteacher and the Religious Education subject leader.
- The inspectors attended a whole school Mass and undertook a learning walk to look at Collective Worship across the school, aspects of learning and teaching in Religious Education, 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.