



Archdiocese of Birmingham

INSPECTION REPORT

ST ALOYSIUS CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

143 Woodstock Road, Oxford, OX2 7PH

Inspection dates 2nd - 3rd June 2015
Reporting Inspector Mr 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	226
Appropriate authority	The Governing Body
Chair of Governors	Mrs Felicity Staveley-Taylor
Telephone number	01865 311056
E-mail address	office.3842@st.aloysius.oxon.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	June 2010
DFE School Number	931/3842
Unique Reference Number	123218

Headteacher Mr Tom Walker

Previous inspection:	2
This inspection:	2

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 full RE lessons, 2 with the headteacher.
- The inspector completed a work scrutiny and held a discussion with pupils to evaluate the impact of teaching on their learning over time.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, staff, the chair of governors, and members of the governors' school improvement committee, parish priest, and parents.
- The inspector observed 3 examples of collective worship 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.
- Other documents such as RAISEonline, the development plan and minutes of relevant meetings, teachers' planning, and learning journals were read alongside the self evaluation.

Information about the school

- St Aloysius School is a smaller than average Catholic primary school serving The Oxford Oratory Parish of St Aloysius and is situated less than a mile from the centre of Oxford.
- The parish is an area of predominantly private housing.
- The number of Catholic pupils is currently 79%.
- The proportion of ethnic minority pupils is 52%.
- The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average as are the numbers with special needs and/or disabilities.
- Attainment on entry is broadly in line with the national average overall.
- There is a high degree of pupil mobility across the school due to a significant number of parents being connected to the university.
- Since the last diocesan inspection (2010), there have been some significant changes of staff, including the headteacher who, from September 2014, now co-ordinates RE overall. The deputy headteacher continues to plan the liturgy with the school chaplain.
- A recent HMI monitoring visit confirmed the school is taking effective action to address areas for improvement raised in a section 5 Ofsted inspection (2014)

Main Findings

- There is significant evidence to support the school judgement that the self evaluation of Catholic life and religious education at St Aloysius School is good overall.
- The school leadership has developed a range of effective systems and processes that ensure self evaluation outcomes clearly identify strengths and areas in need of further development.
- Improvement planning is well focused as a result of realistic and honest appraisal of action to be taken. However, more formal systems for recording monitoring, in relation to Catholic life, would enhance tracking of developments over time.
- Through accurate self evaluation, outcomes confirm that pupils generally make very good progress in their faith journey. A growing knowledge and understanding in RE is reflected in the way they are able to articulate and embrace Gospel values in the context of living the school mission on a daily basis.
- St Aloysius School has a strong Catholic identity and is exceptionally well supported by the governing body who are fully involved in the ongoing evaluation of its Catholic life and RE provision.

School self evaluation

Catholic Life and Collective Worship

- Self evaluation is now securely based upon effective systems for monitoring and evaluating the quality and impact of Catholic life and RE provision, consequently an accurate profile of the school's current position informs priorities for future planning.
- The school recognises that a more formal structure for recording the way Catholic life and collective worship are monitored and evaluated is required so as to focus the process of tracking its effectiveness and development over time.
- Although school self evaluation represents an honest appraisal of the school's present position, evidence of inspection outcomes suggest this is understated in some areas.
- Governors are fully involved in the Catholic life of the school. They make a significant contribution to the self evaluation process and monitor areas prioritised in related RE improvement planning.
- The parish priest, who is also RE governor, is a regular visitor to the school. As well as celebrating class and whole school Masses throughout the year, he conducts focused RE learning walks and provides a leading teaching role in the sacramental preparation classes.
- There is significant evidence to support a judgement that Catholic life and religious education at St Aloysius School are good overall.
- Self evaluation is rooted in a thorough knowledge and awareness of the school as a whole and is firmly centred on the school mission in action that strives to provide the best possible outcomes for all pupils and underpins the high quality of its Catholic life.
- Since the last inspection, the school has made good progress in establishing a monitoring and evaluation cycle that has been developed and personalised over time. A whole school review has resulted in a detailed action plan being drawn up with a specific focus on a close correlation of monitoring evaluation and subsequent action to be taken.

- Implicit in the drive towards a continuous momentum of school improvement, is the application of abroad dimension of informal and formal monitoring processes. The outcomes of which are shared by staff and governors.
- Monitoring is effected in a variety of ways, for example, through formal and informal discussions, learning walks, pupil interviews and general observations. This is led by the school leadership in liaison with the parish priest, governors and all staff.
- An example of this collaborative approach to monitoring aspects of Catholic life was in the planning and development of the mission statement – an excellent whole school project that is effective in helping to crystallise a deeper understanding of Catholic life at every level.
- A highly effective and informative pictorial representation of school Catholic life is depicted on a series of wall panels, situated in a dedicated central area of the school. This child centred message acts as a constant reminder of the responsibility each member of the school community has to practise the Gospel values and provides a clear benchmark against which its effectiveness is evaluated.
- The views of pupils are also valued and encouraged. This is effected through a cycle of pupil interviews, questionnaires and by representation of the school pupil council. As a result, the school leadership is able to evaluate the extent pupils benefit from and participate in the continuing development of the Catholic life and mission of the school.
- Reporting on school self evaluation takes place through the governors' school improvement committee.
- The school leaders have established a very fruitful liaison with the parish priest with whom all evaluations are shared relating to Catholic life and RE provision. He has a thorough knowledge of the Catholic life of the school and is effective as a key partner in planning its continuing development. This regular and valuable support to staff and pupils is much appreciated by the school.
- Central to the school mission is daily prayer and collective worship. Pupils are encouraged to contribute and lead through readings, composition of bidding prayers and through musical support as cantors and instrumentalists. In addition to school and class Masses meditation is an integral part of Catholic life. Evaluation made through pupil discussion and questionnaires reveal a positive impact and benefit for class groups and individuals.

Governance

- Governors are well organised and are dedicated in supporting the school leadership and staff, encouraging all they do while at the same time, offering an appropriate level of professional challenge in order to sustain and improve the Catholic life of the school.
- Governors know the school well and are kept fully informed through the excellent liaison of the parish priest/link governor and the school leadership, in addition to regular review and reports shared through the School Improvement Committee.
- Governors value the views of parents and an invitation is offered for them to attend an annual meeting, where governors present a summary of their duties in open forum and aspects of school Catholic life are discussed and suggestions considered. This opportunity is much appreciated by parents and also assists the governors in evaluating their own effectiveness.
- Governors monitor all school policies regularly to ensure that the Catholicity of the school is implicit in its documentation.

- Through the work of the school improvement committee, governors have established effective systems to monitor curriculum planning and the impact of RE provision. Consequently, they have a thorough understanding of how the school is witness to the Gospel teachings and this contributes to their evaluation of its Catholic life.

Religious Education

- Systems used for monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning to determine the impact of the school's work in RE are good. This judgement is reliably based on evidence seen during the inspection.
- The quality of teaching is monitored by the headteacher to maintain the high standard expected in RE and written feedback of lesson observations is shared in a supportive and professional manner
- In response to recommendations made in the previous inspection good progress has been made in developing a more structured programme that is now used by the school to implement the policy for monitoring and evaluating RE provision.
- The school is alert to the need for regular review of systems used to monitor quality assurance in RE and this area of work in progress, to ensure self evaluation processes are fit for purpose, features as a priority within the RE development plan.
- In order to maintain a fresh approach to the teaching of RE, members of staff have benefited from a range of in-service training opportunities provided by the diocese.
- In order to monitor the overall quality of RE provision the headteacher and parish priest conduct learning walks, scrutiny of pupils' work in RE, including the quality of marking and feedback for development.
- In accordance with school RE improvement targets, the quality of classroom prayer focus areas and displays relating to the liturgical calendar are monitored through audits, learning walks and classroom visits.
- The RE curriculum follows the Diocesan Curriculum Strategy and is delivered in unison with a personalised school creative curriculum built around the mission statement. This enrichment offers a broad base that is able to provide an additional dimension to evaluating the school 'mission in action' with an implicit curriculum focus of community, virtue and relationships.
- The school leadership gives close attention to monitoring and evaluating the quality of RE curriculum planning and the strategies used to deliver the key elements. Scrutiny of lesson planning is consistent with that of other areas of the whole school curriculum.
- Pupil performance data relating to curriculum unit assessments is analysed and shared by the headteacher. This, in conjunction with the annual moderation of pupils' work by all staff, is carried out in order to ensure there is continuity and progression within and between key stages.
- Through the effective collaboration of the parish priest, school leadership and school improvement committee, the governing body maintains careful oversight of Religious Education and fulfils its statutory and canonical responsibilities well.

Overall effectiveness of the school

- Progress of pupils, relative to the evidence of baseline assessments on entry is generally very good. They receive an excellent start to their faith journey at the foundation stage and the most recent assessments confirm that the majority of

pupils are working at or above expected standards across each key stage, with a significant number exceeding expectations by the end of Key Stage 2.

- The quality of teaching is monitored by the headteacher and records show a generally good level of consistency over time. This was confirmed by teaching observed during the inspection, including excellent examples of high quality questioning, discussion and pupil engagement.
- From self evaluation of the impact of teaching on pupil learning, the school has correctly recognised the need to ensure that tasks are more appropriately differentiated to challenge and develop their learning.
- Pupils generally display good subject knowledge. They are very open about their faith and personal spirituality which they are eager to share with others.
- The content of pupils' work is generally good, indicating a maturing knowledge of Gospel values and thoughtful responses to written tasks. However, the quality of presentation of pupils' written work should be addressed.
- Through a carefully planned 'creative curriculum' the school has identified a range of additions to the existing RE programme thus providing further enrichment and development that is adapted to meet the needs of all learners.
- The quality of collective worship is well developed and through prayer and reflection, pupils are encouraged to consider how new knowledge and understanding of Gospel values impacts upon their own daily lives and enhances their moral awareness and sensitivity towards the needs of others.
- The governors and school leaders provide clear directional guidance and through planned monitoring and evaluation strategies, strive to provide the best possible education for all pupils.

Recommendations

- Develop pupils' learning in RE by ensuring that lesson planning and teaching include a broader degree of differentiation in order to extend a greater challenge to all pupils.
- Build upon existing good practice by continuing to develop more formal systems to record the way Catholic life and collective worship are monitored across each key stage.