



Archdiocese of Birmingham

Section 48 Inspection Report

ST NICHOLAS CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Part of ST JOHN PAUL II MULTI ACADEMY COMPANY

Jockey Road, Sutton Coldfield, B73 5US

Inspection dates:

19th and 20th March 2019

Lead Inspector:

Debbie Huxtable

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS:

Good

Catholic Life:

Outstanding

Religious Education:

Good

Collective Worship:

Good

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection:

Outstanding

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

This is a good Catholic school because:

- Leaders and governors demonstrate a public commitment to the school and its mission in the Church. They are well regarded by the whole community as models of Catholic leadership. The development of the Catholic Life of the school is viewed by leaders and governors as a core leadership responsibility.
- There is a strong sense of community at all levels, which is evident in the high-quality relationships between staff, pupils, parents, parishioners, governors and directors of the multi academy.
- Visitors acknowledge the friendly and welcoming environment that strongly reflects the Catholic character of the school and its mission in the local and global community.
- All pupils are proud of their school and are strongly appreciative of how the Catholic Life of the school is at the heart of their daily lives.
- Pupils are actively engaged in lessons and are committed to improving their knowledge, understanding and skills, in order to further develop as competent learners.
- Use of the Bible by staff and pupils is a consistent feature of Religious Education lessons and has led to all pupils having an extensive knowledge of key passages and stories.

- All pupils, including the very youngest, demonstrate extremely high levels of reverence and respect during all opportunities for Collective Worship. They sing joyfully and are keen to participate in all opportunities for prayer and liturgical celebrations.
- Professional development of staff is well developed and highly effective in meeting the individual and collective needs of all staff across Catholic Life, Religious Education and Collective Worship.

It is not yet outstanding because:

- The school's self-evaluation is not yet based on rigorous monitoring and searching analysis of Religious Education and Collective Worship, in order to plan for future improvements.
- Leaders and governors do not use monitoring data to evaluate the school's performance in Religious Education, in order to plan for future improvements.
- Appropriate differentiation and challenge for more able pupils is not consistent across all classes.
- The ability of pupils to frequently plan and lead high quality Collective Worship is inconsistent.

FULL REPORT

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Leaders and governors should develop a more robust system to monitor and evaluate Religious Education and Collective Worship, in order to plan future improvements.
- Build on recent developments in Collective Worship, so that there are consistent high expectations and age appropriate experiences of staff led and pupil led Collective Worship across the school.
- Leaders and governors should ensure that analysis of assessment data in Religious Education is used effectively to identify areas for well-planned and targeted improvements.
- Ensure more able pupils are consistently challenged through effective questioning and appropriate differentiation.

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.

- Pupils, staff, parents, governors and board of directors are deeply committed to the Catholic Life of St Nicholas Catholic Primary School.
- The school environment strongly reflects the Catholic nature of the school and leaders continue to look for ways of developing this further. The principal, vice principal and staff work hard to ensure that displays in shared areas and in classrooms are of a consistently high standards and underpin the Catholicity of the school and mission of the Church.
- Pupils know and have a deep understanding of the school Mission statement, 'At St Nicholas School we are called together to LOVE God, ourselves and each other. LIVE life in response to God's call. LEARN to achieve our best in everything we do.' This mission is central to the life of the school and drives the actions of all members of the community. It is regularly referred to by staff when they talk to pupils about the way they conduct themselves in school and their homes.
- Relationships between pupils are very strong. They are kind, caring and show respect for themselves and others. As one key stage 2 pupils said, "We should live our life in response to what Jesus wants us to do."
- The Catholic School's Pupils Profile (CSPP) is embedded within the school community. Physical reminders around the school, regular teaching through assemblies and lessons mean that pupils see them as, "Practical signposts to help us live our lives."
- Pupils' thoughts and actions are strongly informed by the CSPP and the mission statement. As a result, pupils are considerate and reflective of how they should treat each other and the need to forgive and be forgiven.
- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Staff are excellent role models and have high expectations of all pupils. Support for pupils who find the high expectations challenging is swift and well targeted and demonstrates an understanding and respect for all pupils.
- Pupils appreciate and value the Catholic Life of the school and recognise the extra demands attending a Catholic school places on them. They enthusiastically contribute their time to serve as school councillors, chaplaincy team members and altar servers.
- Charitable giving is seen by all pupils as a means of responding to the call of Jesus to serve others. Older pupils have a good understanding that this makes their school special because it is a key part of their social responsibility. Pupils have a say about which charities the school supports each term and have contributed to a variety of charities such as CAFOD, Macmillan and a local Food Bank.
- Specific lessons and guest speakers have developed pupils' understanding of vocations. They confidently talk about what it is to have a religious vocation, as well as secular vocations given to all adults who are called to serve.
- The school's retreat programme is well developed and has a significant impact on the spiritual and emotional development of pupils. Year 3 and Year 6 experience one day retreats as part of their sacramental preparation. Year 4 pupils take part in a Light of the World Sleepover and Year 5 attend a residential retreat at Alton Castle. All pupils talk enthusiastically about these experiences and how they help them grow closer to God.
- Staff at all levels are deeply committed and supportive of the Catholic Life of the school. They see it as a crucial part of their role and give freely of their own time and energies to attend and support many activities within the parish. They are

excellent role models for pupils resulting in a strong, supportive and family atmosphere.

- Pupils and parents contribute to the evaluation of Catholic Life through regular use of 'Reflection Sheets' and parent questionnaires completed at parent evenings.
- Pupils have an excellent knowledge and understanding of other faiths appropriate to their age and ability. Staff build on this through focused teaching in Religious Education lessons and visits to places of worship. Pupils demonstrate respect and integrity when discussing other faiths.
- The school is situated close to St Nicholas Church and makes good use of the Church, so that pupils can experience a variety of liturgies other than the Mass. For example, staff lead their classes in praying the Stations of the Cross as part of their Lenten devotions.
- Preparation to receive the sacraments is well established and highly regarded by parents and parishioners. Pupils receive sacramental preparation in school, which is further developed by enrichment activities within the parish, including workshops, projects, services and parental meetings. This leads to pupils who are highly motivated and well prepared to take the next step on their faith journey.
- Collaboration is a key feature of the strong relationship between the school and the parish. The school has an excellent reputation in the parish and parishioners are very proud of the school and all that it achieves.
- The parish priest of St Nicholas Church is a regular visitor to the school and pupils enjoy the time he spends with them. He provides spiritual guidance and support to the school, as well as practical advice and help within the curriculum. He feels his relationship with pupils, parents and staff are a very important part of his role, so that he can provide pastoral support whenever the need arises.
- Pastoral programmes including relationships and sex education are carefully planned and taught in line with diocesan expectations. The school recognises the need to review and develop this key area together with other MAC members and the diocese.
- The recent introduction of the Multi Academy Catholic Life Development Committee demonstrates the high priority that St John Paul II Multi Academy places on the Catholic Life of all schools. Plans for future projects will clearly impact on the depth and richness of Catholic Life in all the participating schools.
- Class journals creatively record a variety of activities that demonstrate the Catholic Life of the school, as well as some practical lessons in Religious Education. Photographic evidence is supplemented by pupils' personal and group reflections. This then forms part of the evidence base for monitoring and evaluating the Catholic Life of the school.
- Parents and carers feel welcome and supported by the school. They believe the Catholic Life of the school is evidenced in the daily acts of staff and pupils. They appreciate and value the openness of the school and the extra provision such as prayer bags, retreats and parental talks.

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

- Leaders and governors are positive role models within the local community and are deeply committed to the school and its mission in the Church.
- They are proud of the school and the development of its Catholic Life is seen as a core responsibility at all levels of leadership.

- The principal and vice principal, who is also the Religious Education Leader, have a strong vision for the school within the community. They are passionate about their school and lead with enthusiasm and compassion, to ensure everyone has a part in delivering that vision.
- Governors receive regular reports on Catholic Life, as part of the termly principal report. Many governors are regular visitors to the school and attend services and liturgies when possible. Feedback is given to other governors both formally and informally to ensure that all governors have an understanding of the provision and outcomes of Catholic Life.
- Pupils provide feedback on the Catholic Life through written reflections and pupils interviews carried out by the Religious Education subject leader and the Religious Education link governor.
- All staff engage in regular high-quality professional development and training. New members of staff take part in induction programmes and all staff feel that the school's leaders recognise their different needs and provide appropriate help and support.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The quality of Religious Education.	Good
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education.	Outstanding
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.	Good

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education. The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education.

- Behaviour in lessons is outstanding and pupils are rarely off task because they are fully committed to and engaged in their learning. During lessons, pupils happily work as individuals or in small groups with great consideration for their peers' views and ideas.
- Teachers have excellent subject knowledge and are enthusiastic about how they can inspire and motivate pupils in their lessons. Less experienced staff feel they are well supported and can seek advice and help from the Religious Education lead, principal or other members of staff.
- Collection of assessment data has been inconsistent in the past and it is difficult to judge trends over time. However, since the appointment of the current subject leader the routines of data collection have become more embedded and tracking of cohorts will be more easily achieved in the future.
- Moderation takes place within school to ensure consistence of standards across all classes. Moderation also takes place with other schools within the MAC, which ensures staff and leadership can be confident in the judgements made.
- The school has a high percentage of Catholic pupils who enter school with some knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith. Teachers use pupils' baseline assessment to inform their planning. As a result, progress across Early Years and key stage 1 is good or better, with many pupils achieving above expected levels.

- Progress in lower key stage 2 continues to be good or better. In Year 5 and Year 6, many pupils make accelerated progress, so that by the end of Year 6 many pupils achieve above age related expectations.
- Most staff effectively use marking and feedback to ensure pupils have a clear understanding of how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. Questions posed at the end of some pieces of work encourage pupils to think more deeply and reflect on their learning. This often requires pupils to apply their learning.
- Many pupils are very articulate and enjoy discussions where they can reflect and consider key themes of personal responsibility and social justice. They understand the demands that being a member of a Catholic school places on their everyday lives and recognise the difficulties this sometimes brings.
- The school has worked hard to develop teachers' ability to differentiate written tasks appropriately during lessons. Professional development meetings and individual support provided by the subject leader has led to a more consistent approach across all classes. However, care must be taken to ensure tasks are focused on pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding of Religious Education and not to literacy.
- Teaching assistants provide high level support for teachers and pupils. They are knowledgeable, enthusiastic and keen to enrich the learning experiences for pupils.
- Pupils recognise the Bible as a very special book and treat it with the utmost reverence and respect. They enjoy using it in their lessons and they have an outstanding knowledge of parables and miracles. They confidently reflect on the key gospel messages and can apply them to their daily lives.
- Pupils are proud of their books. Presentation and handwriting are mostly good and there are some outstanding examples, particularly by older pupils.
- All pupils enjoy their Religious Education lessons and have a genuine desire to learn all they can about their faith, the Church and the teachings of Jesus. However, the challenge of more able pupils is inconsistent and some pupils feel they could work harder. This insufficient challenge, in some classes, means that discussions can lack searching, differentiated questioning and appropriate tasks to respond to at greater depth.
- Teachers plan effectively using the school's long-term plan and their knowledge of pupil's current ability. They use a wide range of teaching strategies including individual and collaborative work. Teaching overall is always good and some teaching is outstanding.

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

- The Religious Education subject leader is highly motivated and dedicated to her role. She is a valued member of the school leadership and her appointment to vice principal ensures that Religious Education has a high profile within the school. She provides excellent support and advice to all staff and is a strong role model for all teachers.
- Staff respond positively to the high-quality professional development frequently provided by the subject leader, who is extremely committed to develop the skills and expertise of all staff.
- Some monitoring of Religious Education has taken place but it would benefit from greater consistency, strategic direction and rigour, to result in better targeted planning for future improvements.

- The Religious Education subject leader attends diocesan cluster meetings and all staff are actively encouraged to attend appropriate training from the diocese such as induction courses, developing thinking skills and sacramental preparation.
- Assessment data on pupil attainment is collated by the subject leader, at the end of the year, in line with recommendations of the diocese. However, further improved analysis of class and vulnerable groups could provide even greater rigour to more accurately identify strategic and well targeted areas for future improvement.
- The very experienced link governor meets termly with the subject leader and has taken part in pupil interviews and learning walks. Following her visit, she produced a detailed report that is shared with governors at the next meeting. Pupils attainment and progress in Religious Education is not yet shared with governors and they are, therefore, unable to offer appropriate challenge in line with other core subjects.
- Governors ensure that at least the required amount of curriculum time is given to Religious Education and that the school meets all requirements of the Bishops' Conference.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

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

- Praying together is part of every pupils' daily life and it is given a high priority. Age appropriate traditional prayers are displayed in the classrooms, put into the front of their exercise books and used regularly by all classes. As a result, pupils have good knowledge and understanding of the formal and traditional prayers of the Church.
- Pupils enjoy writing and sharing their own prayers during lessons and at key times of the school day. Examples of these are displayed around the school and they demonstrate how pupils can deeply reflect, as well as offer praise and thanksgiving.
- Celebration of the Eucharist is central to the life of the school and all members of the school community recognise the importance of this weekly event. Pupils are very enthusiastic and enjoy participating through singing, reading and writing prayers. The principal, Religious Education subject leader and the parish priest work closely to ensure all opportunities are taken to encourage pupils to engage and fully participate in this most holy event.
- Pupils demonstrate high levels of respect and reverence during all examples of Collective Worship. Even the very youngest try to participate and enjoy opportunities to pray together.

- The introduction of key stage Collective Worship and Gospel assemblies has provided opportunities for staff to model engaging liturgies and for pupils to learn and use a variety of prayer styles and techniques.
- Pupils feel privileged to be part of the Chaplaincy team and enjoy the extra roles they carry out in both in their own classrooms and the whole school. The school recognises that this team is still in a developmental phase.
- Staff use a variety of techniques to inspire and interest pupils during all acts of Collective Worship. Whole school initiatives such as the Travelling Crib, during Advent, and Lent in a Bag, during Lent, are key times when pupils exhibit genuine enthusiasm for Collective Worship.
- All opportunities for Collective Worship have a clear purpose and message. A whole school plan and rota ensures that staff plan effectively around the seasons and feasts of the Church's year. This helps to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of the cyclical nature of the Church's liturgical life.
- When pupils have the opportunity to plan and lead Collective Worship, they are knowledgeable, creative and resourceful. They confidently initiate prayer, read from the Bible and sing with enthusiasm.
- Many pupils contribute to voluntary lunchtime prayer meetings during key seasons of the Church's year. For example, pupils enjoyed the Rosary Club that took place during of the month October. As a result, pupils have a good knowledge of the Mysteries of the Rosary and the importance of this prayer.
- Staff briefings, meetings and academy committee meetings all begin with prayer. This provides staff and governors with opportunities for personal spiritual reflection.
- Parents value and enjoy attending Masses and Collective Worship. They feel welcome in the school and confident that they could ask questions and discuss with staff their own experiences and those of their children.

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

- Senior leaders have an extensive knowledge and understanding of the Church's liturgical year and they use this to develop a meaningful calendar of Collective Worship that includes Mass, assemblies, class prayer times and other liturgies.
- Some evaluation of Collective Worship takes place by senior leaders. Opportunities for other members of the school community, such as parents and pupils, to contribute to the self-evaluation is limited. Leaders and governors need to adopt a more formal system of monitoring to ensure further well targeted development.
- Leaders are committed to ensuring that staff have appropriate opportunities for professional development and training so that they are skilled and confident in planning Collective Worship. Whole school training about traditional prayers and academy training about supporting pupils to lead Collective Worship help develop staff confidence and expertise.
- Some governors regularly attend Mass and other liturgies and provide informal feedback to leaders.

SCHOOL DETAILS

Unique reference number	103475
Local authority	Birmingham
<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	Multi Academy Company
Age range	4 – 11 years
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on roll	211
Appropriate authority	The Academy Committee/Board of Directors
Chair	Susie Douglas
Principal	Matthew Emery
Telephone number	0121 355 2649
Website address	www.stnicholassutton.org.uk
Email address	enquiry@stnicholassutton.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	20 th & 21 st March 2014

INFORMATION ABOUT THIS SCHOOL

- The school is a one form entry primary school situated in an area with low deprivation, with good housing and high employment. It serves the parish of St Nicholas, Boldmere.
- It is part of the St John Paul II Multi Academy Company.
- The percentage of Catholic pupils is currently 97%.
- The percentage of disadvantaged pupils is 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 well below the national average.
- The percentage of pupils with English as an additional language is below the national average.
- Attainment on entry is slightly above the national average.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION

- The inspection was carried out by two Diocesan Inspectors – Debbie Huxtable and Bernadette Corbett.
- 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 eight Religious Education lessons to evaluate the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. All these lesson observations were conducted jointly with the principal or vice principal (who is also the Religious Education subject leader.)
- 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 governors, including the Religious Education link governor, the Catholic Senior Executive Leader, the principal, the Religious Education subject leader, the local priest and a group of parents.
- The inspectors attended a mass, assemblies, class Collective Worship, Stations of the Cross and undertook a learning walk to look at 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, teachers' planning and learning journals.