



November 2014

Don Bosco House,
Coventry Road,
Coleshill,
B46 3EA

St John's Catholic Primary School
Avocet Way
Banbury
Oxon
OX16 9YA

Dear Mr O'Connor,

Section 48 Monitoring inspection:

Thank you for the welcome you, your staff and pupils gave to me when I inspected your school on 12th November and for the information you provided both before and during the inspection. I am grateful for the time given by all including the parish priest 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, a governor representative, the subject leader for RE, and pupils, observed three part lessons, and looked at a sample of pupils' written work.

Catholic Life

Outcomes from the school's review processes lead to a judgement that the monitoring and evaluation of its Catholic life is outstanding. Inspection evidence confirms this view as both accurate and reliable. Monitoring is well organised, comprehensive and thorough; outcomes are evaluated, shared and appropriately actioned. Evaluation is securely based upon a continuous cycle of monitoring systems the school has developed and personalised over time which provide a detailed and accurate profile of the quality and impact of its Catholic life. It is evident that self evaluation is an established culture within the school that is consistently applied and, because outcomes form the basis of future planning, have become a highly effective and successful strategy for improvement.

Priority is given to living out the school mission which was created collaboratively by staff, children, governors and parents and is closely monitored on a daily basis by vigilant and caring staff who are excellent role models and recognise their responsibility to ensure that pupils aspire to the high expectations made of them. This remains a real strength.

The successful involvement of pupils through pupil voice questionnaires, relating to the Catholicity of the school, give a broad insight into the development of their faith journey and their growing understanding of the importance of applying gospel values in their daily lives. The school employs an innovative annual 'Art in Heaven' project in order to encourage pupils to reflect upon their faith in practise, through a pictorial creation depicting their own perceptions and responses to their faith journey. The outcomes of this form the basis of fruitful discussion and debate. It is evident that the nourishment of pupil empowerment has a very positive impact in promoting the excellent relationships that exist throughout the school at all levels. As a consequence pupils are fully aware of their role within the school community and recognise the responsibilities they have towards each other.



The school values the contribution made by parents to its Catholic life and provides a variety of formal and informal opportunities to seek their views. For example: linked to the 'Year of Faith' parents were invited to complete a questionnaire embracing their thoughts and reflections. This resulted in a poem being compiled from their responses that was subsequently shared and developed with the pupils. In addition, observations made by parents and parishioners during visits to school, are duly noted and evaluated.

Governors are fully involved in the Catholic life of the school. They are dedicated to supporting the headteacher and all the staff and consistently encourage all they do. Monitoring the Catholicity and spiritual direction of the school is perceived as their key priority and, through their involvement in the self evaluation process, by their frequent visits to school and reports received by the link governor and headteacher, they are well informed and highly effective in fulfilling their role.

The school leadership liaises closely with the newly appointed parish priest who supports the school well, particularly with the planning of school and parish Masses and sacramental preparation. Daily prayer and worship underpins the Catholic life of the school. The provision of and response to collective worship is monitored and evaluated by the headteacher, RE co-ordinator and all staff formally and informally through observation, review and pupil voice. The senior leadership also conduct audits of the Catholic life by ensuring displays and prayer areas reflect the liturgical calendar.

Religious Education

Self evaluation of RE is accurate and reliable in its judgement that pupil progress and attainment in RE is outstanding. This judgement is reliably based upon a variety of formal processes, including pupil tracking data, derived from termly assessments, that are monitored and analysed by the RE co-ordinator. These processes form a continuous cycle of monitoring, analysis and challenge and in view of their high quality and effectiveness give a clear and accurate profile of RE provision.

The analysis of outcomes are shared and prioritised in an RE improvement plan, containing focus areas broken down into succinct elements with clear aims, action and success criteria. This ongoing development strategy, involving the school leadership, all staff and governors, is reviewed and updated throughout the year. For example; as a result of evaluation focused on raising attainment further in RE, a whole staff programme of moderation will continue, to ensure a consistency in assigning levels to pupils' work. In the same way, book scrutiny analysis revealed that, although marking is generally consistent with the school marking policy, it was agreed that pupils' understanding of how they can improve further would be enhanced by combining this with a cycle of pupil interviews in order to determine a broader picture of their knowledge.

RE is monitored throughout the year by the headteacher and RE co-ordinator. Within this cycle, the quality of teaching and learning is monitored through scrutiny of lesson planning, RE lesson observations and the quality and content of pupils' work. Detailed monitoring records are kept and show a consistent pattern of good and outstanding RE teaching across the school over time. Lesson feedback is shared in a supportive and professional manner.

The school leadership provides clear, directional guidance and has embedded high quality processes for monitoring and evaluating its Catholic life and religious education. Central to the effectiveness of its self evaluation is the way outcomes are directly linked to inform future planning, as a platform for continuous improvement that has an outstanding impact on outcomes for its pupils.

Yours sincerely

Dominic Collins
Diocesan Inspector