



# Archdiocese of Birmingham

## Section 48 Inspection Report

### **ST GEORGE AND ST MARTIN CATHOLIC ACADEMY**

Part of the Newman Catholic Collegiate Multi-Academy Company  
Boulton Street, Birches Head, Stoke-on-Trent, ST1 2NQ

Inspection dates:

12<sup>th</sup> & 13<sup>th</sup> November 2018

Lead Inspector:

Maureen O'Leary

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#### **OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS:**

**Good**

Catholic Life:

Good

Religious Education:

Good

Collective Worship:

Good

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*Overall effectiveness at previous inspection:*

*Outstanding*

#### **SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS**

This is a Good Catholic school because:

- The whole school community values its Catholic mission and continually tries to live by its school mission statement. The staff in the school work collaboratively to provide the best Catholic education they can for pupils.
- Pupils' very good behaviour, informed by their desire to act like Jesus taught us, is a strength of the school.
- Teachers work hard to make Religious Education lessons interesting and enjoyable. As a result, most pupils make good progress throughout the school.
- Prayer is an important part of school life. Senior leaders have ensured that there are regular opportunities for Collective Worship to support the school in its mission to grow, love and learn. Increasing opportunities have been provided by the school to allow pupils to plan and lead meaningful times of prayer.

It is not yet Outstanding because:

- Not enough of pupil attainment is above diocesan expectations. Although school leaders have identified that girls out perform boys in Religious education in most classes, a clear action plan has not been put in place to reduce this difference. As a result, the gap between girls' and boys' attainment over the last three years has widened.
- Pupils need a greater awareness of other faiths and religions.
- Improvement planning in Catholic Life, Religious Education and Collective Worship could be better informed by monitoring and evaluation processes.

- Governors' understanding of areas for development in Catholic Life, Religious Education and Collective Worship is too general and not focused on specific areas of improvement.

## FULL REPORT

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make better use of Religious Education assessment data to identify pupils that need additional support to achieve at or above diocesan/national expectations.
- Increase the amount and improve the quality of teaching about other faiths and religions. This teaching should include visits to places of worship.
- Use existing monitoring to identify key areas for development in Catholic Life, Religious Education and Collective Worship. Write an improvement plan for these key areas. Actions from this improvement plan should be carefully monitored by leaders and governors to ensure impact.

## THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

The quality of the Catholic Life of the school.	<b>Good</b>
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school.	Good
The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school.	Good
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision of the Catholic Life of the school.	Good

### 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, from the very youngest, are able to share and explain how they live by their school mission - *Growing, Learning, Loving; United in Play, Prayer and Peace*. This statement reflects the educational and spiritual mission of the school. The pupils' relationships with each other and with the adults that work with them demonstrate their commitment to this mission. Pupils have limited knowledge of the MAC vision and no knowledge of the diocesan Catholic Schools' Pupil Profile.
- Staff are deeply committed to implementing the school mission across the whole of school life. There is a very strong sense of team work and collaboration among staff, parents and governors at the school, who are keen to support each other to continually improve Catholic Life.
- Until quite recently, staff and pupils have greatly benefitted from the support of the Sisters of Mercy. Their provision of staff retreats, training and support has had a significant impact on the school. As the sisters who provided this valuable support are now retired, the school is exploring new ways, potentially with the help of the parish priest, to develop staff spiritually and professionally.
- The school environment supports the Catholic Life of the school. Each classroom and work area have a dignified and sacred space, which reflects the Church's year and the prayer life of the school. Throughout the communal areas of the school, there are displays and statues that remind everyone of a call to prayer and a need to live out the Gospel values.

- Through the work of the school council, pupils are able to take part in evaluating aspects of the Catholic Life of the school. Pupils who are elected to this role take their responsibilities very seriously. They are proud of their achievement to provide a buddy bench on each key stage playground. They feel it is important that every child should have someone to play with.
- Pupils' behaviour in class and in communal areas is very good. They recognise that they are all part of God's family and that they should look after each other and sort out any problems quickly so that they can all remain friends. Their personal prayers regularly ask God to help them to be better friends and students.
- Older pupils in Year 6 have a variety of roles that support the Catholic Life of the school. Younger pupils appreciate the many roles of Year 6, including the play buddies who lead games and activities at dinner times, the prefects who remind pupils about the school's high standards of uniform and behaviour, house captains, sports captains and the librarians who help them choose and change books in the school library. Older pupils also visit local nursing homes where they sing for the residents. The pupils understand that all these types of service help them follow in the footsteps of Jesus. Presently, this type of responsibility is limited to Year 6 pupils.
- Older pupils have taken part in chaplaincy events organised by St Margaret Ward Catholic Secondary School, which they feel has helped them recognise who their 'neighbour' is. The school is exploring how to develop the pupils' experience of retreats and visits further.
- Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) is taught in the light of Catholic teaching using the programme "Journey in Love." The RSE policy has recently been updated and a review of provision is underway.
- The school has a planned Sacramental programme, which includes a half termly family meeting.
- Since the last diocesan monitoring visit, the school has developed pupils' understanding of vocation. Class and phase assemblies, regularly reciting the school vocation prayer and taking part in vocations day, have helped most pupils to have a general understanding of vocation. This understanding is deeper in Year 6, where the pupils have also benefited from attending a diocesan led workshop.
- Pupils have some awareness of other faiths and religions, but this should be developed further.
- The pupils value the links they have with the parish community, especially through the parish based sacramental Masses. These Masses are well attended by pupils and staff. The pupils appreciate how the parish community prays for them as they prepare to receive the sacraments. School leaders are eager to develop further the links between the school and parish to support the sacramental programme in the school.
- The parish priest supports the school through the celebration of Mass and by providing opportunities for the sacrament of reconciliation during Advent and Lent. He feels that the school prepare the pupils extremely well to participate in Mass with reverence and understanding.
- The school supports the local community by providing the venue for a mother and toddler group.

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

- The principal and governors see the development of the Catholic Life of the school as one of their core responsibilities. The principal monitors Catholic Life each term and her general findings are shared with staff and governors.
- Through their attendance at relevant diocesan training, school leaders and governors have shown a commitment to developing the monitoring and evaluation of Catholic Life. They have established regular opportunities for monitoring Catholic Life and have completed the Catholic Education Service (CES) annual self-evaluation of the governing body. This has helped them to have a general understanding of areas of strength and areas that need to be developed. Ongoing monitoring and evaluation should now focus on key areas and should lead to more detailed improvement planning beyond the general understanding of Catholic Life.
- The evolving role of the Catholic Life link governor should be used to increase the rigour of governor support and challenge to leaders. An increased analysis is needed of the impact of any improvement planning concerning Catholic Life.
- Currently, the headteachers throughout the MAC meet on a regular basis to discuss a range of issues including Catholic Life. This collaboration should now be developed further to target specific areas of Catholic Life that need improving.

### RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The quality of Religious Education.	<b>Good</b>
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.	Good

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

- Teachers thoughtfully plan lessons using the diocesan strategy, *Learning and Growing as People of God*, to interest and engage pupils. As a result, nearly all pupils enjoy Religious Education.
- Teaching and learning is consistently good throughout the school and is particularly strong in Years 1, 4 and 6.
- All teachers make good use of questioning to check pupils' understanding. The best teachers challenge pupils' thinking and invite them to justify their ideas. All teachers regularly ask questions that encourage pupils to consider how their learning is linked to their everyday life. When talking about Religious Education, one Year 6 pupil explained, "It is God's Word. You need to take the message and use it in life."
- Teachers provide many tasks in Religious Education that match pupils' abilities. In key stage 2, pupils usually have the choice of bronze, silver and gold tasks, this choice allows pupils to make independent choices about how to challenge themselves. However, more thought needs to be given to providing activities and tasks that consistently direct more able pupils to work at a deeper level.

- The attainment for most pupils in Religious Education is good. Senior leaders have accurately identified that girls have generally outperformed boys over the last three years. Currently, there are no specific targeted actions in Religious Education to address this difference. Moving forward, the attainment of boys needs to be closely monitored and improved.
- Most pupils make good progress throughout the year and across the phases. However, disadvantaged pupils and more able pupils need further challenge. Class teachers need to develop a better understanding of how they can intervene to improve the progress of these groups of pupils further.
- Leaders have identified that the presentation of pupils' work is an area of development across all subjects. Strategies, that have already been put in place, are beginning to have an impact and a growing number of pupils are proud of their Religious Education work.
- Work is regularly marked by class teachers and generally refers to the Religious Education content. However, in many extended pieces of writing, the main marking focus is literacy and not Religious Education. This means that opportunities to focus on pupils' deeper reflections are missed.
- Pupils sometimes have opportunities to respond to their teachers' written and verbal feedback, which helps to deepen their understanding and application of their learning.
- Teachers provide a range of activities and strategies including art, drama, individual and group work. Drama is best used where pupils record a personal reflection after any role play, these reflections are regularly used in Year 4.

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

- Leaders and governors ensure that Religious Education meets the requirements of the Bishops Conference. The Religious Education subject leader's joint role as acting vice principal ensures that the subject has a high profile in the school.
- Priority is given to ensure that the subject leader has the opportunity to attend diocesan and MAC meetings regarding Religious Education. She has been appointed as chair of the MAC Religious Education subject leader group. This group has recently benefitted from greater focus, direction and accountability to directors.
- The Religious Education subject leader is deeply committed to improving provision and outcomes for pupils. She is well regarded by her colleagues, who value her leadership. The strong collaborative ethos of the staff means that they regularly receive informal ongoing support and guidance from the subject leader and each other.
- There are established processes and procedures to formally monitor and evaluate Religious Education, which have identified areas to develop. These areas have then been addressed by leaders in training. As a result of this monitoring, the pupils' ability to pose "I Wonder" questions have been developed.
- Although assessment data is collected and analysed, this analysis needs to better inform improvement planning in Religious Education. Specific actions to address gaps in attainment and progress need to be planned and monitored closely.
- Governors have a general understanding of the strengths and areas for development in Religious Education, which is informed by the principal's and Religious Education subject leader's reports. These reports need to be more targeted and detailed so that governors can hold leaders to account more closely. Governors need to know how monitoring informs improvement planning and the impact of any improvement strategies for specific groups of pupils.

**COLLECTIVE WORSHIP**

The quality of Collective Worship.	<b>Good</b>
How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship.	Good
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.**

- Prayer is central to the daily life of the school and is valued by the whole community. Pupils regard prayer as special. One pupil explained to the inspectors, "It helps you to talk to God and feel better".
- The themes for Collective Worship are planned termly by senior leaders and reflect the Church's liturgical year, seasons and feasts. Care is taken to provide a range of prayer experiences for pupils. A variety of prayers, including the prayer of the month and the rosary, are planned as part of Collective Worship each term.
- The introduction of the prayer of the month has ensured a whole school knowledge and devotion to a number of significant traditional prayers of the Church. The inclusion of these prayers on the monthly school newsletter means that parents can share in this devotion.
- During advent, there are eight whole school liturgies. The engagement of pupils during these liturgies is enhanced by the way pupils sit facing each other and by the fact that each class is given a specific role to undertake.
- In the season of Lent, pupils develop spiritually as they watch the Stations of the Cross being acted out. Led by Year 6, this drama allows the younger pupils profound moments of personal reflection. Parishioners, who attend the last school Mass before Easter, also greatly appreciate the participation of pupils as they portray the journey of the Cross.
- Parishioners and families are welcome to attend a number of services throughout the year such as class assemblies, the Christmas concert, the nativity service and the harvest celebration.
- Pupil led class Collective Worship is well established and provides pupils with regular opportunities to plan and lead worship. This Collective Worship is thoughtfully and reverently delivered. Pupils feel that they gain a lot from being given the responsibility of planning and leading prayer.
- Staff have worked hard to support pupils in leading Collective Worship. They have provided them with a variety of resources and guided their choices of scripture and themes to include in Collective Worship.
- The adults in the school are skilled at leading Collective Worship during the weekly whole school and phase assemblies. These assemblies engage pupils in heartfelt prayer and reflection. All the adult led Collective Worship observed during the inspection gave pupils opportunities to think about how they would carry the message of the worship into their own lives.
- An after-school Bible club, for key stage 1 pupils, provides an opportunity for younger pupils to listen to and reflect on a piece of scripture. This activity is engaging and supportive of the pupils' spiritual development. Consideration should be given to extending this excellent provision to older pupils.
- The member of staff who leads the Bible club, and who also led the key stage 1 phase assembly, during the inspection, is highly skilled and effective. She has the

ability to create opportunities for profound spiritual reflection and meaningful prayer, which is accessible to all children.

- Music is regularly used to enhance the experience of Collective Worship. Adults choose very appropriate music to play to pupils as they enter and leave Collective Worship and to help them to reflect during prayer time. Although all pupils are very reverent when singing during Collective Worship, not all pupils engage in singing in an enthusiastic manner.

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

- Senior leaders ensure that Collective Worship is a high priority in the school. They have a very secure understanding of the Church's liturgical year, seasons and feasts which they included appropriately into the planning of school Collective Worship. Currently, this planning takes place each term. Consideration should be given to having a long-term plan for Collective Worship in addition to this mid-term plan.
- Senior leaders regularly lead Collective Worship and are very good role models for other members of staff. Their personal faith is made clearly visible by their words, attitudes and behaviours during the delivery of worship. They model well how to maintain pupil interest and participation, as well as how to include moments of stillness and prayerful reflection.
- Formal monitoring of Collective Worship by senior leaders has accurately identified key areas for improvement. The evaluation of this monitoring has led to improvements in pupil led worship and the pupils' knowledge of traditional prayers.
- Although governors have an understanding of the areas that need developing in Collective Worship, this understanding could be deeper. This would then allow them to monitor improvements more thoroughly.
- Improvement planning in Collective Worship, over the last two years, has focused on increasing pupil led worship. In response to this focus, leaders have provided training for staff. This training, delivered by the Sisters of Mercy, has successfully helped staff to support pupils in planning Collective Worship.

### **SCHOOL DETAILS**

Unique reference number	140145
Local authority	Stoke-on-Trent
<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	Academy
Age range	3-11 years
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on roll	240
Appropriate authority	The board of directors
Chair of local academy committee	Lisa Harrison
Headteacher	Dawn Farmer
Telephone number	01782 234384
Website address	<a href="http://www.sgsmacademy.co.uk">www.sgsmacademy.co.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:sgsmcp@sgsmnewman.co.uk">sgsmcp@sgsmnewman.co.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	May 2013

## **INFORMATION ABOUT THIS SCHOOL**

- St George and St Martin is an averaged sized primary school serving the parishes of St George & St Martin and Sacred Heart, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent. Most pupils live in Birches Head, Northwood and Sneyd Green.
- There are currently 89% of Catholic pupils at the school.
- 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 against the national average.
- The percentage of pupils with English as an additional language is below the national average.
- Attainment on entry is below age related expectations.

## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION**

- The inspection was carried out by two Diocesan Inspectors – Maureen O’Leary and Paul Nutt.
- 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 a group of governors (including the chair of governors and the Catholic Life link governor), the headteacher and the Religious Education subject leader. The parish priest was interviewed by telephone.
- The inspectors attended a whole school Gospel assembly, a key stage 1 and a key stage 2 phase assembly, a Year 6 class pupil led collective worship and a Year 2 class collective worship. They also undertook a learning walk to look at the presentation of the Catholic Life of the school and pupils’ behaviour.
- The inspector 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, teachers’ planning and learning journals.