



20 June 2013

Diocesan Education Service,  
Don Bosco House,  
Coventry Road,  
Coleshill,  
B46 3EA

Mrs Dawn Farmer  
Headteacher  
St George and St Martin's Catholic Primary School  
Boulton Street  
Birches Head  
Stoke-on-Trent  
ST1 2NQ

Dear Mrs Farmer,

Section 48 Monitoring inspection: 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2013

Thank you for the welcome you, your staff and pupils gave to me when I inspected your school and for the information you provided both before and during the inspection. I am grateful for the time given by all including the chair of governors in speaking with me.

The inspection was a "light touch" monitoring inspection because your school was judged at the last section 5 inspection to be an outstanding school and because it is now five years or more since you last received a section 48 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, the chair of governors, the subject leader for RE, and pupils from the school council. I observed two lessons and carried out a learning walk of RE lessons around the school, accompanied by the headteacher. I also looked at a sample of pupils' written work. In addition, I spoke with parents and gathered evidence of some of the outstanding practice in the school as part of a diocesan wide survey of good practice in Catholic life and religious education.

### **Catholic Life**

The school self evaluation judges the quality of its Catholic life and collective worship to be outstanding. This judgement is accurate and fully justified because there is strong evidence to support its reliability based upon the effective monitoring and evaluation processes that are in place. The school's leaders are extremely successful in developing the Catholic life of the school and are passionate about providing the very best Catholic education for all its pupils. This vision is shared by a dedicated staff team who place the spiritual and moral development of the pupils as their highest priority. A culture of self evaluation is embedded within the school, shared and practised by all. Specific processes used in the monitoring and evaluation of Catholic life comprise a range of innovative strategies that present an effective cycle of quality assurance. As a result of the monitoring of collective worship, all staff were given a part in planning to develop good practice and pupils became more confident in planning and leading liturgies. A broad base of formal and informal opportunities are made available to enable staff, pupils, governors and parents to contribute and make their views known, including well constructed questionnaires used effectively to invite informed opinions. Parents' views on sacramental preparation and family workshop activities feed into subsequent years' arrangements.

The student council learning walks are particularly perceptive and reflect children's exemplary behaviour and immense pride in their school. Pupils are able to make suggestions and comment relating to the play-leading roles, peer mediating systems and the organisation of school fund raising initiatives throughout the year. The outcomes show these opportunities help them to have a clearer understanding of their responsibilities towards each other. Pupils made significant contribution to the recently revised school mission statement. Consequently, the school has an extremely positive ethos and pupils are able to articulate its distinctive mission and are eager to express their Catholic identity in the way they embrace it. Pupil behaviour and relationships are constantly monitored, evaluated



and nourished by all staff. Crucially the outcomes and analysis of school self evaluation are directly linked to further development.

The school improvement plan is a very useful working document that reflects a systematic audit and evaluation of provision for and outcomes from the Catholic life of the school. This system of regular review and self evaluation, results in accurate planning and high quality outcomes for pupils. The parish priest and RE subject leader liaise regularly to plan a termly programme of collective worship. Pupil and staff questionnaires were used effectively to determine the impact of assemblies and liturgies. Continuing plans include the implementation of a prayer service and a format to assist in guiding children to plan and lead different forms of collective worship. Evidence of all monitoring and evaluation analysis is carefully recorded in the comprehensive school RE Profile. Governors have a strong commitment to the Catholic life of the school and are very supportive of the headteacher who keeps them fully informed. The chair of governors conducts termly learning walks as part of the monitoring and evaluation process, the outcomes of which are shared and actioned. All staff have an annual performance review focus relating to Catholic life. Catholic life has a powerful impact on the school community and parents speak warmly about the quality of education their children receive.

### **Religious Education**

Self evaluation is accurate and reliable in its judgement that pupil progress and attainment in RE are outstanding. This judgement is brought about as a result of an extremely effective structured programme that forms a cycle of monitoring, analysis and challenge. Within this cycle the headteacher and RE subject leader monitor the quality of teaching and learning through scrutiny of lesson planning, RE lesson observations and the quality and content of pupils' work. Careful records are kept and lesson feedback is shared with staff in a professional and constructive manner. Support staff are integral to the monitoring process, with whom identified strengths and areas for development are shared. The accuracy of lesson judgements made by the school is fully supported by the outstanding quality of lessons observed. Teachers communicate their faith through their enthusiasm and sound subject knowledge and the consistently high quality of teaching of RE clearly has a very positive impact on pupils' learning and progress.

The main findings of the most recent learning walk carried out by the RE subject leader reveal that pupil enjoyment and commitment in RE lessons is evident. The asking and answering of searching questions about faith was identified as a development point and will be monitored through book trawls and planning scrutinies. A highly effective system of individual pupil tracking, introduced in September 2012, is used to identify pupils who may be underachieving and this enables staff to introduce appropriate strategies, where necessary, to enhance and sustain progress. The RE subject leader collates plans, samples of work, and assessments as an integral part of the monitoring process, which are analysed, and shared with senior leadership and all staff. The monitoring and evaluation of RE is thorough, made practical to manage and is understood and implemented by all staff. As a result areas for improvement are quickly identified and used to inform future planning. Governors were involved in writing the school self evaluation and are fully informed about provision and standards in RE. They know the school well and encourage all that is done while at the same time offering an appropriate level of professional challenge in order to sustain improvement. In its self evaluation the school has accurately identified the areas for further development to enhance and maintain its outstanding practices.

Yours sincerely

Dominic Collins  
Diocesan Inspector