



November 2015

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

Mr T Kenny  
St Dunstan's Catholic Primary School  
Drayton Road  
Kings Heath  
Birmingham  
B14 7LP

Dear Mr Kenny,

### **Section 48 Monitoring inspection: 5<sup>th</sup> November 2015**

Thank you for the welcome you, your staff and pupils gave to me when I inspected your school on 5<sup>th</sup> 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, governor representatives, the parish priest and the subject leader for RE. I observed two part lessons and a prayer assembly, and met with pupils and members of the chaplaincy team, as well as looking at a sample of pupils' written work.

#### **Catholic Life**

St Dunstan's School judges its Catholic life to be outstanding. This judgement is justified because its leaders use a range of thorough methods, both formal and informal, to monitor and evaluate its Catholic life so they have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development and are able to plan effectively for school improvement. All members of the school community are involved in this process led by the headteacher and two RE subject leaders.

School leaders ensure that its Catholic ethos underpins all aspects of school life. It is constantly under review in leadership and staff meetings. All staff contribute evidence from their classrooms and their pupils to a Catholic life folder which is overseen by the RE subject leaders. Children are familiar with the school motto which is in evidence throughout the school and emphasises its Catholic values, providing a model against which they can evaluate their own behaviour and attitudes. The school's house system also reflects and promotes its Catholic life and values.

The RE subject leaders carry out observations of prayer and worship in the school, reporting back to teachers on key stage liturgies, school Masses and classroom prayer services, and offering support and guidance with planning where appropriate.

Using diocesan toolkits teaching staff have carried out audits of the school's Catholic life and ethos through group discussion and review. Results were collated by the RE leader and areas for development identified. Following this the school has adopted, and is monitoring progress with, the diocesan Catholic values and virtues programme, the themes of which are used to plan collective worship. Alongside this there is a renewed school focus on vocation and a new audit of spiritual, moral, vocational and cultural education will be undertaken.

Pupils contribute to the evaluation process through questionnaires, reviews and discussions with RE leaders. They have contributed to formal audits of Catholic life, and whilst carrying out book trawls, the RE leader interviews a selection of pupils from across the key stages, about their experience of the school's Catholic life, asking questions such as, "*What makes our school a Catholic*



*school?"* The chaplaincy group, which is led and trained by the lay chaplain from Bishop Challoner Catholic College, plays an active part in planning and leading worship in the school. Its members, drawn from Years 5 and 6, also monitor the quality of prayer focus areas and displays and how they promote the Catholicity of the school, reporting to the RE leader who feeds back to class teachers. Pupils have also produced reviews of extension activities and visits reflecting the wider Catholic life of the school.

Governors see the school as an important part of the parish and are committed to its Catholicity. They play an active part in its life and work and are involved in its evaluation procedures. They meet regularly with the headteacher and RE leaders and receive reports on the Catholic life of the school, and are confident in challenging school leaders and holding them to account. For example, their questioning as to the impact of the house system on Catholic life has led to greater pupil involvement in selecting the charities for each house to support and in planning their fundraising activities; also to a greater emphasis being placed on promoting the faith figures after whom the houses are named as role models for pupils.

Governors are linked to particular classes and there is a school council governor. They visit assemblies and are invited to special events, so are familiar with the school and constantly involved in informal evaluation. The RE link governor meets with the RE leaders and has taken part in formal, focussed learning walks questioning staff and pupils. Information from these learning walks is shared with the whole governing body. She also produced for the governors a detailed factual report on Catholic life and RE in the school.

The parish priest regularly meets with the leaders to review and plan sacramental preparation and liturgical and spiritual aspects of school Masses. This has led to more frequent school Masses and a decision to look for more opportunities for children to visit the church as part of their learning. He also carries out informal assessment, for example of prayer in the school and pupils' response to worship.

Parental involvement in the evaluation of Catholic life is invited through the use of questionnaires and informal discussion. For example parents contributed to a recent review of the arrangements regarding sacramental preparation. In its self-evaluation the school has identified the promotion of greater parental participation as a development target. Positive feedback has also been received from parishioners regarding pupils' participation in school and parish Masses.

The school self-evaluation document is reviewed and updated in school by senior leaders including the headteacher and RE leaders, with the involvement of all staff. It is discussed at governors' meetings where a review of Catholic life is included in the headteacher's termly report. Governors discuss and question the statements and judgements and can add their own contributions.

Under the leadership of the headteacher outcomes of the self-evaluation process are addressed in ongoing school improvement planning. Major initiatives are prioritised and included in an annual action plan for RE and Catholic life. This contains specific targets and success criteria and is reviewed throughout the year.

## **Religious Education**

The school's judgement that its provision and leadership of religious education is outstanding is reliable because it is based on a thorough programme of self-review, evaluation and improvement planning, encompassing teaching and learning, curriculum and pupil attainment and progress.

There is an ongoing focus on improving the quality of teaching and learning in all subject areas and it has been a school priority to ensure that standards in RE are in line with those in English, monitored by comparing pupils' work and performance in the two subjects.

Pupil attainment in RE is monitored and recorded in line with diocesan recommendations and performance is tracked across classes and key stages, showing that from a low starting point on entry, pupils make excellent progress throughout the school and within each key stage. There is now far greater analysis of pupil performance data than was the case at the last inspection, enabling the performance of different ability, gender and ethnicity groups, as well as, for instance, children in



receipt of pupil premium, to be individually tracked and compared. This means targeted support can be introduced where appropriate.

Each term class teachers select a child from each ability group and, working together, moderate them using the *'Levels of Attainment for Religious Education.'* This is another indicator of pupil attainment and ensures that marking is accurate and consistent. In addition it helps identify areas for improvement in teachers' planning and aspects of curriculum provision which need to be addressed. For example it highlighted a need to provide greater opportunities for pupils to demonstrate understanding of the skills associated with *Attainment Target 2, 'Learning from Religion,'* and this was addressed in subsequent lesson planning.

The quality of teaching and learning is evaluated through pupil interviews and formal lesson observations, learning walks and work scrutinies, all of which involve feedback indicating areas for development and where appropriate, sharing of good practice. Analysis of pupil performance data also informs judgements about teaching and learning. One area for development identified by such activities was to ensure children are being challenged through questioning during lessons. This was adopted as an improvement target and became a focus for learning walks and lesson observations.

The judgement that RE curriculum provision is outstanding is based on constant review and adaptation in order to best meet the needs of pupils. Lesson observations, analysis of pupil performance data and feedback from pupils all lead to re-examination of the curriculum. The current format of the school's 'Multi-Faith Week' was arrived at following pupils' suggestions and ideas; parents are invited to meetings regarding delivery of family life and sex education and their responses are incorporated into subsequent planning; and steps have been taken to extend assessment in RE beyond written activities. Curriculum reviews also reflect local and national initiatives such as the requirement to teach 'British Values,' which has been added to the curriculum, clearly linked to Catholic beliefs and teaching.

The subject leader provides effective leadership of RE, which is delivered through the diocesan scheme of work, *'Learning and Growing as the People of God.'* She monitors teachers' planning, oversees assessment procedures and moderation activities and takes the lead in analysing and sharing pupil performance data. As is the case with Catholic life, RE targets are identified and included in the subject action plan which becomes part of the school improvement plan and is subject to review throughout the year.

Governors play a full part in the leadership of RE as they do with Catholic life. The link governor liaises with the leader and takes part in learning walks; the RE leader reports to the standards committee on aspects of RE and on pupil attainment and progress; and the headteacher's termly report to governors includes a section on RE.

The headteacher and senior leaders are committed to St Dunstan's and its Catholic ethos. They provide strong leadership of all aspects of Catholic life and RE and have identified areas for development in the future, so the school has excellent capacity for continued improvement.

In order to support the school in its development I would especially endorse one of the actions it has already identified and begun to address in its self-evaluation:

- to complete, and respond to, the spiritual, moral, vocational and cultural audit already planned.

In addition I would recommend that:

- the school should compile an overview of its monitoring schedule for RE and Catholic life.

Yours sincerely

Denis Cody  
Diocesan Inspector