



# Archdiocese of Birmingham

## Section 48 Inspection

### ST JOHN WALL CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Oxhill Road, Handsworth, Birmingham, B21 8HH

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Inspection date 21<sup>st</sup> & 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2017

Reporting Inspectors Mrs R Waugh (lead), Mr S Godber (assistant), Mrs M O'Leary (shadow)

Inspection carried out under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

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Type of School Voluntary Aided

Age range of pupils 11-16 years

Number on roll 599

Appropriate authority The Governing Body

Chair of Governors Mr M Jones

Telephone number 0121 554 1825

E-mail address enquiry@sjw.bham.sch.uk

Date of previous inspection 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> October 2012

DFE School Number 330/4625

Unique Reference Number 103534

**Headteacher Miss K Marston**

Previous inspection: Good

This inspection: Outstanding

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## Evidence

- The inspection was carried out by Mrs R Waugh (lead inspector), Mr S Godber (assistant inspector) and Mrs M O'Leary (shadow inspector).
- The focus of the inspection was on the quality, leadership, and impact of the school's provision of Catholic life, collective worship, and religious education (RE).
- The inspectors observed teaching across 13 lessons to evaluate the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Most of these lessons were conducted jointly with senior leaders.
- The inspectors completed a work scrutiny and held discussions with pupils to evaluate their understanding of Catholic life, worship, and the impact of teaching and learning over time.
- Meetings were held with the governors, the executive headteacher and head of school, the RE subject leader (also in charge of Catholic life), priest chaplain and lay chaplain.
- The inspectors attended a class Mass, assemblies and collective worship in form time, and undertook a spiritual, moral and vocational learning walk.
- The inspectors reviewed a range of documents including the school's self-evaluation, data about pupils' attainment and progress, Analyse School Performance (ASP), the school development plan, teachers' planning and pupils' work.

## Information about the school

- St John Wall is in the parish of St Augustine's and serves an area of wide cultural and ethnic diversity, some of which has significant social and economic deprivation, in Handsworth, Birmingham.
- The number of disadvantaged pupils is significantly higher than the national average.
- The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic origins is significantly above the national average.
- The percentage of pupils with English as an additional language is significantly above the national average.
- Attainment on entry is significantly below national averages.
- The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is higher than the national average.
- 24% of pupils are Catholic.
- There are significantly fewer girls than boys in the school.
- Since the last inspection there have been substantial changes to leadership and management. An executive headteacher and head of school were seconded, from St Augustine's Catholic High School, in 2015 to lead the school through a period of change.
- The school closed the sixth form in 2016 in order to focus on 11-16 provision.

## Main Findings

- Catholic life is outstanding. St John Wall promotes a Catholic school for all. This is evident in the relationships, provision and practice throughout the

school. As a result, its mission is truly Catholic and enables pupils to achieve their God given potential and respond to their vocation.

- The school has an uncompromised commitment to its Catholic life. This is made explicit during the recruitment of staff, and in the expectation that all staff will support the Catholic mission of the school.
- Leadership at all levels is outstanding and there is a particular focus on succession planning at middle leader level.
- Collective worship is outstanding with a varied approach, which is highly valued by pupils, leading to a reflective and prayerful response. There is a clear vision for the further development of collective worship.
- A vibrant chaplaincy provision supports staff and pupils in the planning and delivery of collective worship.
- Monitoring and evaluation of Catholic life, collective worship and RE is embedded in development plans and informs improvement planning.
- Religious education is outstanding as teaching, learning and assessment is highly effective to respond to the needs of individual learners, resulting in outstanding progress.

## **THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL**

### **Catholic life, collective worship and spiritual, moral and vocational development: provision and outcomes**

- St John Wall is a Catholic school for all. It has a clear vision and mission of Catholic education, which pupils of all faiths and none respond to wholeheartedly.  
*'To educate each and every unique child in our care to hear and respond to what God calls them to be.'*
- Pupils are proud of their backgrounds and have a strong sense of personal worth. They are able to express their own beliefs and to articulate how their beliefs reflect the teaching of Christ and the Church.
- Pupils take a lead in developing the Catholic ethos of the school. There are ambitious plans to develop pupil involvement even further in all aspects of Catholic life.
- Pupils speak with confidence about the opportunities and experiences gained in school and the impact of these on their lives.
- Pupils treat each other with high levels of respect. A profound illustration of this was when a student from Iraq led an assembly for his peers about prejudice. He described his experiences and how the school had made him welcome, secure and enabled him to flourish.
- The house system provides regular opportunities for all pupils and staff to support the Catholic life of the school and express faith in action, including charity and outreach work.
- Pupils recognise that they have been called to a life of service. They believe that the guidance they have received from staff supports them as they understand their personal vocation.
- The development of the Catholic Schools' Pupil Profile (CSPP) across the school has supported the strong Catholic values and virtues held by pupils. All aspects of school life, academic and pastoral, reflect the virtues of the profile. Pupils have a clear understanding of what they mean in theory and in practice.
- Relationships throughout the school are based on mutual respect. Staff are aspirational for all pupils, but especially for those pupils from disadvantaged or vulnerable backgrounds. This is a clear expression of Catholic life in this diverse community, which includes 57 languages.

- The head of school has a powerful commitment to the mission of the Church. She has led the development of a profound Catholic ethos which permeates all aspects of the school. She has achieved this with the support of the executive headteacher and the direction and challenge of the governors.
- The focus on succession planning and the development of middle leaders to uphold and develop the Catholic life of the school gives potential for a sustained mission.
- The school website and newsletters truly encompass and promote the mission of St John Wall Catholic School.
- Collective worship has developed since the last inspection. This is most notably through the consistent use of shared resources and the introduction of form assemblies. There is a clear vision for ongoing development, including developing the spiritual life of the staff to ensure an even more spiritual experience for all pupils.
- Pupils' liturgical formation is well planned and appropriate to their faith backgrounds and shows progression.
- There are a variety of opportunities for collective worship across the school throughout the year. These include form prayer, (supported with a clear framework and guidance), assemblies, weekly class Mass and planned liturgical celebrations.
- There are some opportunities for traditional prayer and an understanding of different styles of prayer. There are opportunities to explore and pray the rosary, Stations of the Cross and adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. These opportunities should be mapped in order to maximise the impact for all pupils.
- Some pupils do benefit from retreat experiences and thought should be given to how these experiences can be shared by others. The impact of retreat is evident in the formation of faith ambassadors, which serve the school well in planning and evaluating the liturgical experience of all pupils.
- The school recognises the need to ensure prayer corners, which feature in every form room, are a focal point for Catholic collective worship.
- Pupil led assemblies are a new feature of collective worship at St John Wall. It has provided pupils with a further opportunity to develop their planning and leadership of collective worship. Monitoring and evaluation will help to ensure this area of collective worship continues to evolve.
- Form prayer is an embedded daily feature across the school and consistency should focus on recognising the entirety of the experience as prayer.
- The school environment reflects the Catholic heritage and mission of the school and the liturgical year. For example: a Statue of St John Wall; images of Harvington Hall; and cross curricular displays, which reflect the virtues promoted in the CSPP, are seen throughout the school. The school hall includes a large permanent display about Catholic life which was designed through an inter-house competition.
- Chaplaincy is at the heart of the school. The chapel is located in the middle of the school on the school yard. It is open to all pupils at break time and lunchtime and staff are present to welcome pupils. As a result, this vibrant sacred space is very well used and valued by pupils.
- Pupils have the opportunity to engage with the chaplaincy team through a planned range of activities. Pupils can reflect further on form time collective worship, engage with outreach work and participate in meditation and sign language.
- The chaplaincy team support pupils well in planning liturgy. There is a clear programme of all pupils taking part in the understanding, development and planning of liturgical celebrations for key events. During the inspection, Year 8 pupils were contributing to the planning of the Advent services and Year 9 pupils to the

Epiphany liturgy. In the process they were being guided in their understanding of the season and the key features of a Catholic form of worship.

- Fr David, the priest chaplain, celebrates a weekly class Mass. This has enabled pupils to experience an intimate and profound experience of the Eucharist.
- Pupils respond well in prayer and all embrace the sign of the cross, regardless of their faith background. They are at ease with prayer.
- Collective worship is monitored using a variety of methods and with all stakeholders. The evaluation of this monitoring has led to clear developments.

## **LEADERSHIP**

### **Leadership of Catholic life and Collective Worship**

- Leadership of Catholic life and RE is a particular strength of St John Wall Catholic School.
- The head of school provides clear direction for all staff. She is resolute in her expectations of staff working in a Catholic school. The executive headteacher supports this vision and drive for Catholic education which is shared with all staff.
- The leaders of St John Wall are uncompromising in upholding the Catholic mission of the school. This mission is explicit in advertising and recruitment processes and embedded in induction processes. Succession planning is evident through the empowerment of middle leaders, the vast majority of whom are Catholic. They are well invested in, as Catholic leaders, through professional development opportunities and support.
- The curriculum lead and person in charge of Catholic life is talented and committed to Catholic education for the benefit of pupils at St John Wall. Her passion and charisma, coupled with the guidance and commitment of the senior leadership team leads to a powerful and effective witness. As a result, all staff are leaders in the Catholic life of the school.
- Governance is strong and both the link governor for RE and the governing body hold leaders to account and challenge them in relation to RE and Catholic life. Subsequently, Catholic life and RE are at the forefront of development planning and self-evaluation, which is accurate.
- Senior leaders constantly reflect on the development of Catholic life in their responsibility areas, which is directly linked to the school development plan.
- The St Francis centre and the English as an additional language (EAL) department encapsulate the vision, mission and daily practice of leaders at St John Wall. Every pupil is equipped to fulfil their God given potential and given every chance to succeed.
- Effective Catholic partnership is evident between St Augustine and Cardinal Wiseman Catholic Secondary Schools.
- Governors are aware of the temporary appointments of the seconded executive headteacher and head of school. In collaboration with the diocese, succession planning is currently being developed.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

### **Leadership, outcomes from and provision for religious education**

- Monitoring and evaluation in religious education is rigorous and robust. Observations, learning walks, work scrutiny and weekly moderation ensure that standards and expectations are shared and understood.

- The RE subject leader is held to account through her line manager on a weekly basis. She also reports to the senior leadership team and governors regularly.
- The RE team are a dedicated and committed group of practitioners with a range of experience and practice. Through collaborative planning, internal and external moderation, and regular professional discussion, all staff are well supported to provide high quality teaching.
- Canonical responsibilities are all fulfilled. Religious education is well staffed and given appropriate curriculum time. It is given priority status across a variety of systems in school. For example, all RE exams, starting from Year 7, take place in the hall, in accordance with other core curriculum areas.
- The regularity of assessment and subsequent DDTA (Data-driven teaching analysis) is a powerful method of securing an accurate assessment of all pupils. The needs of each group of pupils are known by the RE staff and high quality, first wave interventions take place in RE lessons. This is evident from the LOT (learning over time) folders collated by all teaching staff.
- Outcomes in RE are outstanding. Progress is significantly above national and diocesan averages. Although, attainment is below diocesan averages there are clear strategies to improve the attainment of all groups of learners. These include compulsory revision, increased length of lessons and a three year Key Stage 4.
- Leaders have correctly identified middle ability learners and girls' attainment as the current key areas of focus. Strategies have been introduced to meet the needs of these groups of learners. These include providing writing frames, which are removed as necessary, and stimulus material to engage female learners.
- Pupils make substantial and sustained progress in RE. The acquisition of knowledge and skills required for success are in line with exam board expectations and are evident from Year 7.
- Assessment, data tracking and subsequent interventions are effectively directed to groups of learners. As a result, the progress of disadvantaged pupils matches other learners.
- In 2017 pupils with SEND were significantly below diocesan averages in terms of attainment. However, the same group of learners were above in terms of progress. Leaders have identified the reasons for this lack of attainment. Subsequent strategies are now in place to ensure attainment for pupils with SEND is in line with other learners.
- The quality of teaching and learning is consistently high through well planned and engaging lessons.
- Teaching and learning directly relates the curriculum to the needs of the learners.
- The pace of learning in lessons is effective. Pupils are given many opportunities to apply their knowledge to examination style questions, in timed conditions.
- Lessons successfully include learning about religion and learning from religion. As a result, pupils are developing their religiously literacy well.
- Many pupils are supported in their learning by frameworks including the KFCS system (keywords, faith facts, change of behaviour and source of authority). Steps should now be taken to remove this scaffolding for the most able learners. This will ensure increased independence in their learning.
- The most able learners are given specific provision, such as a dedicated revision group. However, provision for the most able learners should be developed even further through more creative teaching methods.
- The assessment homework has the potential to promote independent learners, as it is embedded into the culture and practice of pupils.

- Pupils say that the RE curriculum and learning vastly supports their literacy development across the curriculum.
- RE subject knowledge across the department is excellent. All staff in the team, from a newly qualified teacher to members of the senior leadership team, contribute to the schemes of learning.
- Pupils readily apply their understanding of the Faith to daily life. In a lesson on sin and reconciliation pupils consider how able they would be to forgive when faced with sinful actions.
- Questioning in lessons is appropriate. Although, every opportunity should be taken to engage pupils in the breadth and depth of learning with effective open questioning.
- The marking policy is consistency followed by all staff. As a result, marking is a dialogue between pupils and teachers.
- Teachers continually check pupils' progress throughout lessons. There are a range of peer and self-assessment opportunities to give regular feedback and strategies to improve.
- The RE curriculum has been carefully chosen and planned to meet the needs of learners and embeds effective practice from entry into the school. Consequently, pupils make outstanding and consistent progress.
- The *People of God* course is used in Key Stage 3 and the *Eduqas* GCSE meets the expectations from the Bishops' conference.
- The RE curriculum is enriched through a number of effectively chosen visits. These include the synagogue, St Mary's Convent and Harvington Hall (reflecting the heritage of St John Wall).
- The CSPP has enabled all departments and areas of school life to significantly contribute to the Catholic curriculum. During the inspection, the virtues promoted in the CSPP were widely shared with pupils; an ICT lesson, about staying safe on the internet, discussed being eloquent and truthful; trampolining in PE was linked to being curious and active; engineering thought about being grateful and generous; and pupils in an English lesson were comparing the character of Macbeth to a number of the virtues.
- Pupils at St John Wall highly value the opportunities for learning presented to them. As a result, behaviour for learning is exceptional and during the inspection no off-task behaviour was observed.
- Pupils recognise they are given the opportunities to improve their spiritual, moral and vocational understanding. They recognise they are to respond to God's call in their everyday lives.
- Provision for sex and relationship education is thorough and appropriate for the age of the pupils and in accordance with the teachings of the Church.

## Recommendations

### In order to improve the school should:

- Provide opportunities to develop the spirituality of staff. This can then further the spiritual experience for all pupils in collective worship.
- Increase the numbers of Catholic primary pupils transitioning to St John Wall through ongoing collaboration with local Catholic primary schools and parishes.
- Embed the new curriculum for all learners and with a particular focus on developing independence in the most able pupils.