

Catholic Diocese of Northampton



Inspection Report of Denominational Character and Religious Education`

(Under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005)

St Martin de Porres Catholic Primary School

DFES School No: 821/3360

URN: 109639

Headteacher: Mr John Carroll

Chair of Governors: Mrs Helen Wells

Reporting Inspector: Mrs Marion Betts

Associate Inspector: Mrs Maureen Everington

Date of Inspection: 11th October 2016

The School is in the Trusteeship of the Diocese and in partnership with
St Alban Catholic Academies Trust.

Information about the school

St Martin de Porres is a large two-form entry primary school for pupils aged 3 to 11 years. There are 446 children on roll, 83% of whom are baptised Catholic. 57% of teachers are Catholic. The school serves the parish of St Martin and pupils also attend from further afield. Many pupils come from low income families. Four fifths of pupils are from a range of ethnic minority groups which is much higher than the national average. An increasing number of pupils have little knowledge of English. In September 2015, the school joined with Cardinal Newman High School and St Margaret of Scotland Primary School to form the St Alban Catholic Academies Trust.

Key grades for Inspection

1: Outstanding 2: Good 3: Requires improvement 4: Unsatisfactory

Overall effectiveness of this Catholic school.

Grade: 1

St Martin de Porres school is an outstanding Catholic school. The strong Catholic identity permeates the school's daily life. Prayer, Mass and worship are of pivotal importance in the school. The partnership between the school, the home and the church very effectively promotes the high quality care and well-being of the whole school community. Relationships within the school are very good and reflect Christian respect, care and concern for others. Pupils described their school as aiming to make us "the best we can be". Staff are committed to the high profile given to Religious Education (RE). Pupils make good progress throughout their school life in knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith.

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

Grade 1

The school has maintained its provision for outstanding Catholic education. The school has fully implemented the improvement areas from the last inspection. RE assessment and moderation procedures are now securely in place. Moderation judgements are firmly linked to national RE attainment targets and the marking criteria is clearly recorded. The school appoints pupils as Faith Ambassadors whose roles, along with those of House Captains, are linked with planning, leading and presenting collective worship. Other RE developments have taken place such as the peace walk and art displays in partnership with other faith communities from the town.

The school's self-evaluation has become more rigorous and derives from thorough monitoring of work, planning and lessons by senior staff who thereby gain a very good overall view of the school's strengths and development needs. At present pupils are not involved in these evaluations. Appropriate improvement actions are planned. The inspectors concurred with the majority of judgements made by the school.

The headteacher, leadership team, local governors and trust directors plan strategically in order to continue to promote their vision for the school's Catholic life and RE to the whole of the school community. Staff, pupils and parents appreciate the values, ethos and pastoral dimensions of the school, exemplified by the recent survey in which 99% of the parents were satisfied that the school promoted Christian values and 94% were happy with the RE curriculum. All staff are committed to achieving high quality religious education and are willing to improve their skills through training opportunities. The Catholic Academies Trust provides a high standard of training for the staff. The school remains dedicated to promoting and developing collaborative working within the deanery schools. The current leadership of the school is strong with a very good capacity to further improve.

What the school needs to do to improve further

- Raise the quality of teaching by the teachers being more creative in adapting RE plans so that input and tasks inspire and fully motivate all groups of pupils in their learning.

- Give pupils responsibility for developing their own spiritual lives by providing more opportunities for small groups of pupils to prepare and plan their own acts of worship.

Outcomes for pupils

Grade 1

Pupils benefit from and contribute to the Catholic life of the school very well. Pupils are proud of their school and are enthusiastic in being trusted to undertake their varied responsibilities that aid the religious character of the school. They know and understand the school's mission statement and strive to achieve it in all areas of their school life. They show concern for the well-being of others especially in their role as peer mentors and play leaders, and they demonstrate a respect for the cultural diversity within the school community. Pupils are encouraged to show compassion for others through their fundraising for charities, particularly for Cafod and the local homeless. Pupils' spiritual and moral development is outstanding and this is reflected in their very good behaviour and their positive attitudes to learning. Pupils are given opportunities to voice their own opinions through an active school council, and following their ideas, money is being raised for more play equipment. Pupils' achievements are recognised and valued. They praise the friendly, caring attitude of the teachers who listen to them, help solve any problems they may have and make lessons fun.

All pupils respond well to worship and the prayer life of the school. They participate respectfully and with reverence. Pupils have opportunities to create their own prayers as part of their RE learning and know a variety of traditional prayers. They enjoy worship especially the hymns and lively action songs which they sing extremely well. Pupils have a good understanding of the liturgical year and enjoy experiencing its celebrations. They contribute to the presentation of Mass. Although some pupils undertake to plan and prepare acts of worship, exemplified by the weekly pupil-led reflective prayer sessions, the house-led assemblies and the active role of the faith ambassadors, many of the older pupils are not given these opportunities. A further development for this would be pupils in small groups planning and preparing their own class acts of worship.

Chaplaincy provision makes a powerful contribution to the spiritual life and the well-being of the whole community. Pupils feel safe, secure and cared for in school and say that "there is no bullying here". They are aware of the procedures and personnel to help them resolve any problems. The individual needs of each child are well-catered for and small nurture groups, often involving families, are targeted at specific children's needs. Parents appreciate the approachability, care and friendliness of all the staff.

Pupils know RE is an important subject and through it develop a sound knowledge of the Catholic faith. The majority of pupils achieve age appropriate RE levels of attainment with some achieving more. RE attainment compares favourably alongside attainment in other subjects. Pupils enjoy their religious education lessons especially when given practical tasks or those that use their own creative ideas such as combining Catholic values into a recipe for living. Work is presented well and demonstrates a range of written tasks. Books evidence a good coverage of the RE curriculum.

Leaders and managers

Grade 1

The headteacher, deputy headteacher, and governors are deeply committed to promoting the school's Catholic life. The school mission statement "Working together in the light of the Lord" is clearly communicated and inspires all in the school community. Pupils know the four Christian values that underpin this statement and strive to achieve them in their actions and attitudes. Very attractive displays around the school confirm the Catholic identity. The school is a welcoming inclusive community where all members are respected and valued. Governors fulfil their statutory and canonical responsibilities. They are very supportive and kept well informed about the work of the school through visits and the headteacher's and RE lead's regular reports. The deputy has conducted a range of monitoring activities related to

the school's religious life and this provides a firm basis for areas of future development. The school works in partnership with parents who responded extremely positively to the inspection questionnaire. Parents particularly mentioned the friendly, supportive and approachable staff. The school has strong links with the church through the close involvement of the parish priest who, together with a trainee priest and a member of the local religious, was used as an extra resource for the older pupils' learning about being called to a religious vocation.

The religious education subject leader is the school's deputy and together with a small team provides the various school activities that form the richness of its Catholic life. This team is well supported by the school leadership. This ensures RE has a high profile. All aspects of religious education teaching and learning are monitored regularly and a clear direction for improvement has been set. Pupils are assessed regularly and the levels of attainment are broken into sublevels so that pupil progress can be tracked in more detail. The RE lead regularly reviews the data of groups and individuals and ensures effective interventions are put in place, if required. Pupils are also involved in self-assessment using the "Moving On" programme from which they know what they need to do to achieve a higher level. Moderation of pupil assessments is undertaken within school and through collaboration with schools within the Multi Academy Trust and the local Catholic partnership. The RE governor, local governors and directors regularly receive reports concerning RE curriculum, monitoring and pupil achievement data. RE professional development is delivered formally by the local Catholic Partnership, as well as informally by each non-Catholic teacher being paired to a Catholic support member of staff. Encouragement is given for teachers to undertake the CCRS (Catholic Certificate of Religious Studies) and one teacher is at present on the course. The budget provided is in line to that given to other core subjects.

Provision

Grade 2

Worship and prayer are integral to the school's life. Pupils are given many opportunities to participate in the richness of the Catholic tradition of prayer and worship. Worship is well planned using visual presentations well to develop pupils' thinking. The pupils learn a variety of traditional prayers. Attractive classroom prayer tables are used well as a focus for worship. Chaplaincy provision is outstanding and provides very effective spiritual and pastoral support to staff, parents and children. Regular exchanges of information ensure that communication is very good. Musical opportunities provided by a member of the chaplaincy team are of a high standard, and pupil singing greatly enhances worship. The pupils attend Mass regularly and they contribute to presenting the liturgy. The parish priests supports the school very well and makes a significant contribution to its spiritual life.

The quality of religious education lessons overall is good. Teachers demonstrate sound subject knowledge with clear learning intentions. Where teaching is best visual presentations; imaginative planning; talking partners; a good pace and practical outcomes, were all effectively used to motivate and interest pupils allowing them to work with enthusiasm. Differentiated tasks are often set that allow all pupils to achieve although in some lessons activities did not challenge the more able. Teaching assistants gave good support to groups of pupils. Formal assessments are undertaken regularly and linked to national expectations. Work is well marked with praise and affirmative comments given. Next steps suggestions, to extend the learning, were posed but not consistently responded to by all pupils.

The quality of the religious education curriculum is good. It fulfils the requirements of the Bishops' Conference. 10% of curriculum time is used for religious education following the "Come and See" programme with additional work relating to saints. Scripture is used very well during teaching, demonstrated in one class where pupils were defining what a person's mission means according to a passage written by St Paul. From this learning and other curriculum teaching, pupils are encouraged to become aware of the demands of religious

commitment. The curriculum contributes well to pupils' spiritual and moral development. The RE curriculum is well linked to other curriculum subjects such as Literacy, Drama, hymn singing and Artwork. Other faiths are studied twice a year. Visits and visitors are used as extra resources for learning. Attractive religious education displays around school give added value to this core subject.

The inspectors wish to thank the headteacher, staff and children for their very warm welcome and for contributing to their very enjoyable and interesting visit.