

Catholic Diocese of Northampton
Interim Monitoring Visit
17 June 2019
St. Martin de Porres (URN: 142264)

St Martin de Porres Primary School is part of the St. Albans Catholic Academy Trust working with four schools as well as a Catholic Partnership and St. Martin de Porres Church. The school is a two form entry, 3 to 11 primary that has a larger than national ethnic mix of 80% with a high percentage of EAL. Many of the children arrive at the school with poor English acquisition. The current headteacher has been in post a year, having been deputy at the school previously. A new leadership team is operating effectively to maintain standards and to drive forward improvement. The school has made very good progress to improve the creative quality of provision as evidenced by the variety of outcomes seen in the books e.g. plays, poetry, prayers, letters, newspaper articles etc. Pupils have been given opportunity to lead liturgies through faith ambassadors and house captains have taken responsibility for planning a termly assembly.

The School currently has an overarching action point related to the Academy Trust which is 'to build an improved assessment system'. This is ongoing work that has been effectively led by the RE lead. There is also within the key priorities for improvement in the School Development Plan a priority related to RE assessment. In addition, there is a working RE Action Plan which is carefully monitored by the headteacher and RE lead. The school's SEF is informative and accurate and has been used as a basis for the RE lead to set an action plan for improvement. In discussion the school were able to verify assertions made in the document and provide evidence, e.g. tracking, for the whole school showing good attainment and progress with a percentage being exceptional.

The school is a welcoming community working within the Catholic tradition as well as showing respect for other faiths, both evidenced in the books and in question and answer sessions in which the children participate with other faith leaders. Every class has a well maintained focal area with a variety of icons, prayers and books to support children's prayer life. The headteacher and RE lead are reflective practitioners and have a strong commitment to sustaining and improving the school. It is a collaborative school where all voices are encouraged to 'have their say'. Staff through a skills audit, have requested support in understanding parts of the Mass. This is to become part of next year's staff meetings. Governance is strong with governors having joined the staff to monitor books in order to improve their understanding and also to monitor practice. It is proposed that governors are to join the headteacher and RE lead for a learning walk next year.

RE has a high profile and is well led. Staff are effectively supported and ensure that lessons are varied and of a high quality. In EYFS the children benefit from quiet time, structured prayers and an emphasis on building appropriate vocabulary. Children as young as year 1 are able to respond to their teacher's marking comments effectively. Differentiation is addressed largely through support with the older children being encouraged to respond to the 'Big Question' and to 'deepen' their responses. The quality of early years 'special books' is outstanding as is the work in many of the other books through the school. Behaviour of the children in and around the school is exemplary. They listened and participated in shared activities – seen in both year 4 and year 5 classes with all being engaged productively with a purposeful outcome. Tracking of progress is very good with vulnerable groups being identified and actions taken to ensure that they progress at least in line with expected.

Areas for Further Improvement:

- To continue to be creative in the teaching of RE and to include the children in choosing the format of their response to the learning
- To continue the work within the Trust and beyond to create an effective assessment system which includes shared resources
- To further the work of the faith ambassadors
- To raise participation in acts of worship so that all may be included more readily
- To continue to involve governors in the monitoring of the school

The reviewer wishes to thank the headteacher and RE lead for their warm welcome. It was a pleasure to meet with the staff and children. The school lives out its mission of 'Working Together in the Light of the Lord'. Please thank all the staff and children for the witness they share.

Maggie Stacey on behalf of the Diocese of Northampton