



Catholic Schools Inspectorate inspection report for St Francis' Catholic Primary School (Handsworth)

URN: 103437

Carried out on behalf of the Right Rev. Bernard Longley, Archbishop of Birmingham on:

Date: 18-19 January 2023

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The school is fully compliant with the curriculum requirements laid down by the Bishops' Conference	✓	
The school is fully compliant with all requirements of the diocesan bishop	✓	
The school has responded to the areas for improvement from the last inspection	Fully	

Summary of key findings

What the school does well

- The school, has a warm, welcoming and attractive environment, which clearly proclaims and celebrates its Catholic nature and is highly valued.
- It is an inclusive and supportive community which offers a wide range of opportunities to develop Catholic life and mission, lived out through action and reflection by all.
- Pupils are developing secure knowledge and understanding in religious education and therefore make good progress in all age phases.
- The school provides an impressive range of opportunities for pupil leadership, involving many pupils in the planning, delivery, monitoring and evaluating of all aspects of Catholic life and mission and Collective Worship.

- The school staff have a shared vision of the distinctively Catholic nature of the school, which is made real and enabled through excellent provision of training at all levels.

What the school needs to improve:

- The school needs to develop a range of original and creative ways in which pupils can synthesise their learning in religious education.
- The school needs to develop feedback to pupils to ensure that they all know what they need to do to make greater progress in their learning through more forensic evaluation of the individual needs of pupils.
- The school should provide further opportunities for all pupils to reflect upon their experience of prayer and liturgy and explain the ways in which these experiences have led to action.

Catholic life and mission

How faithfully the school responds to the call to live as a Catholic community at the service of the Church's educational mission.

Catholic life and mission key judgement grade:.....

1

Pupil outcomes

The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

1

Provision

The quality of provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school

1

Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school

1

All pupils in this multi-cultural, multi-faith community have a strong sense of its distinctive Catholic identity and mission and appreciate that they are valued and cared for as individuals. All are happy, confident and feel secure; on the school tour, one pupil described school as 'a place of care and respect' and another as 'an inspirational and reverend community'. The active participation of all pupils, particularly the Rights Respecting Ambassadors, Young Spiritual Leaders and the recently formed and over-subscribed Mini-Vinnies, significantly enhances Catholic life and mission. While many pupils are from deprived and challenging backgrounds, they are inspired to be ambitious by the staff. This ambition and concern for others is seen in the enthusiasm and commitment with which they take up their various roles of responsibility, which thereby enable them to flourish. Staff comment that, 'Despite the difficult backgrounds that our children come from they are respectful and engaging in the Catholic life of the school.' A focus on UNICEF rights for children has clearly been inspirational for the pupils, who often speak about these with great sincerity; pupils create class charters, which also reflect the relevant articles of the UNICEF rights and demonstrate the highly inclusive nature of the school.

The school mission statement, 'We welcome and value all as individuals created by God, to work, learn and play together. Like St Francis, we show care and respect for each other and our world', regularly revisited by staff and pupils, is prominently displayed throughout the attractive school environment, on the website and in the regular newsletters, as is the school motto, 'Truth and Love'. It is well-known and understood by all. Newsletters include reference to the gospel of the week. Catholic life and mission are key targets in the school development

plan. Staff are exemplary in their relationships and the love and care they show for pupils, providing the highest levels of pastoral care. Responses in the parental questionnaire include, 'The school takes Catholic life, religious education and prayer very seriously and of high importance, which I admire.' The wider school community is well-known, seen in the warmth with which every family is recognised and greeted individually on arrival. School Leaders consistently go above and beyond expectations, offering remarkable support, particularly to the most vulnerable, including refugees and parents in a local women's refuge. Responsibility for chaplaincy is shared by senior and phase leaders and supported by the parish priest. It is embraced and supported by all staff, one of whom commented, 'I believe that St Francis' Catholic Primary School promotes the Christian life of all its staff and pupils. Additionally, it promotes the emotional and spiritual growth of our pupils. The pupils are encouraged to make the values and virtues of Jesus Christ their own.' This is seen in the heartfelt responses to the recent pilgrimage to Assisi, elements of which were live-streamed back to the school and clearly had a life-changing effect upon many. Provision for R(S)HE meets all statutory and diocesan requirements and there is a well-planned programme for its teaching.

Leaders and governors are a source of inspiration for the whole community. They actively promote service of the local Church and parish community, including the neighbouring convent, and have profound concern for the well-being of staff and pupils. Governors consistently emphasise Catholic life and mission as a school improvement priority, regularly monitoring, evaluating and reporting upon it, as is shown by their minutes. Leaders are very committed to supporting new staff, building a cohesive team; early career teachers express how much they value the support they receive in their induction.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade:.....

2

Pupil outcomes

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education.....

2

Provision

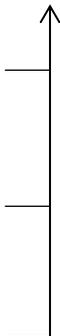
The quality of teaching, learning, and assessment in religious education.....

2

Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor, and evaluate the provision for religious education.....

2



Pupils are developing secure knowledge and understanding, reflecting the learning required by the *Religious Education Directory*. They make good progress and achieve well in all age phases and most years. There are areas of underachievement, particularly by pupils who have special educational needs or disability, but the school is addressing this. In response to open questions and debate in class, pupils demonstrate religious literacy and engagement. In discussion most speak with enthusiasm about their learning, showing an awareness of key concepts and using a good range of subject specific vocabulary, which is a particular strength. Written work is always presented well and shows signs of developing individuality and creativity. Feedback reveals that most pupils enjoy their learning, and it is clear from lesson observations that they approach their lessons with interest and enthusiasm, resulting in good behaviour. They take more care with their written work in religious education than they do in other subjects and achieve at least average attainment when compared with other core curriculum subjects.

All teachers demonstrate confidence in their subject knowledge and have a good understanding of how pupils learn, although differentiation is almost always by outcome and very few opportunities are provided for pupils to respond to the same tasks in a variety of ways. Staff value and are committed to religious education, and this is communicated effectively to pupils in lessons and in written feedback in books. This is clear from staff comments such as, '(the school) gives me the opportunity to be able show my knowledge and faith to the children on a daily basis through religious education lessons and the liturgy.'

Lessons are carefully planned, with "Gap Tasks" used to consolidate knowledge; the use of open questions in lessons and "Green Cup Challenge" tasks in books is a strength in many classes, although expectations of the most able could be higher and there are some examples of closed

questions. Pupil effort is frequently celebrated in class and teachers provide pupils with feedback which ensures that most pupils understand what they need to do to make progress at a straightforward level. Good quality resources, including other adults, are generally used effectively to optimise learning for most pupils, and there is some exemplary support offered by teaching assistants, particularly for those with the most challenging educational needs. Significant numbers of parents attend workshops in religious education.

Leaders and governors have taken significant steps to secure the teaching of religious education throughout the school and thereby ensure progress, even though curriculum responsibility for religious education is currently shared by the Head and Deputy. They ensure religious education has at least full parity with other core curriculum subjects, particularly in terms of training and professional development, and are planning to appoint a new curriculum lead for religious education as a priority. The self-evaluation document recognises areas for development, and there is a clear vision for teaching and learning; the school is working to secure this, with experienced staff more than willing to act as mentors for early career teachers to build their confidence. As a result, all the teaching is consistently good, although much of it is rather didactic in approach. It is clear from documentation that religious education is effectively planned to meet the needs of different groups of pupils and to secure coherence across different key stages and phases. Leaders' and governors' self-evaluation of religious education demonstrates the required monitoring, analysis, and self-challenge.

Collective worship

The quality and range of liturgy and prayer provided by the school.

Collective worship key judgement grade:.....

1

Pupil outcomes

How well pupils participate in and respond to the school's collective worship

1

Provision

The quality of collective worship provided by the school

1

Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for collective worship

1

All pupils are engaged deeply by experiences of prayer and liturgy provided by the school and fully and actively participate. This is seen in their enthusiastic involvement in whole-school prayer and liturgy and particularly in the wide variety of pupil-led class liturgies, which demonstrate pupil planning and leadership in advance of their age and experience. When appropriate, there is exemplary prayerful silence in all liturgy, attentiveness and enthusiasm of pupils in discussion, widely varied and engaging pupil-led liturgy, and joyous and enthusiastic communal singing. Pupils work very well with others to plan and prepare most effectively, undertake liturgical ministries in the parish, and are habitually involved in thorough and sophisticated evaluation of all prayer and liturgy.

Prayer and liturgy are central to the school's life and ethos and appropriate prayer and liturgy develop and sustain pupils, staff and leaders in their daily routines. There is a focus on individual concerns in daily staff prayers, which also feature Ignatian meditation. Staff comment that, 'There is opportunity for staff prayer every morning for those who would like to attend. It has been a wonderful opportunity to have a shared spiritual experience with people from different faiths,' and, 'Although I have only been at this school a short time, I value the prayer life of this school, which enriches my own life and my faith.' There is a well-established pattern of daily prayer, but pupils are also encouraged to write their own prayers and offer these in a variety of forms. Traditional Catholic prayers feature prominently in classrooms and pupils are also encouraged to pray spontaneously in the dedicated prayer spaces of the prayer room, which is used very regularly, and the recently created Prayer Garden; both are clearly cherished. Great dedication ensures these spaces are used appropriately, are well-cared for and are conducive to prayer. Well-chosen scripture passages and the daily and weekly gospel are used in the celebration of whole-school and class prayer and liturgy and for a continuing focus in the school entrance. Relevant staff are skilled in helping pupils and

less experienced staff to plan and lead very well-constructed prayer and liturgy. Through the commitment of the Parish Priest, who is also a governor, the school also enjoys a flourishing partnership with the local parish to prepare pupils to receive the sacraments, including a retreat in the neighbouring convent, and to help all pupils participate fully.

The school's policy on prayer and liturgy is carefully formulated, regularly reviewed, and useful to relevant staff, although it would be more accessible in a single document. The option for parents to withdraw their children is clear in the parents' prospectus and consent form but is almost never taken up. Leaders are excellent role models for the leading of prayer and liturgy, celebrating their own personal faith with remarkable conviction. Leaders, including governors, have most effective strategies for building up the skills of participation in the planning and delivery of prayer and liturgy and have planned the school calendar and timetable carefully to ensure that opportunities to celebrate the Eucharist are regularly offered to the whole school community, particularly at key times in the liturgical year. There is a weekly class Mass, held in the parish church, and whole-school Masses at significant occasions in the liturgical year. Leaders are most generous in their time, assisting others very well in planning and leading experiences of prayer and liturgy and placing the highest priority on the evaluation by staff and pupils of the quality and impact of prayer and liturgy, ensuring it is embedded in the school's cycle of self-evaluation and planned improvements.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Francis' Catholic Primary School, Handsworth
School unique reference number (URN)	103437
Full postal address of the school	Nursery Road, Handsworth, Birmingham, B19 1PH
School phone number	0121 464 5072
Name of head teacher or principal	Margaret Brumant
Chair of governing board	Nigel Smith
School Website	https://www.stfranrc.bham.sch.uk
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	n/a
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age-range of pupils	4 - 11
Trustees	Archdiocese of Birmingham
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	16 / 17 February, 2017
Previous denominational inspection grade	2

The inspection team

Andrew Maund

Lead inspector

Tamsin Davis

Team inspector

Key to grade judgements

Grade	England	Wales
1	Outstanding	Excellent
2	Good	Good
3	Requires improvement	Adequate and requires improvement
4	Inadequate	Unsatisfactory and in need of urgent improvement