

St Bernard's Catholic Primary School

URN: 103462

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Archbishop of Birmingham

27–28 June 2024

Summary of key findings

Overall effectiveness

The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school

Catholic life and mission (p.3)

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

Religious education (p.5)

The quality of curriculum religious education

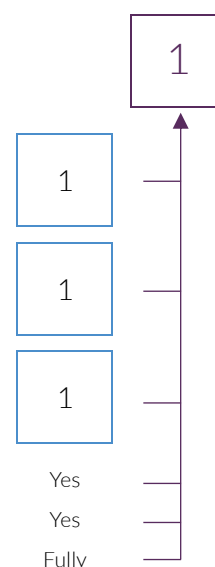
Collective worship (p.7)

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

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



What the school does well

- The inspirational leadership of the head teacher, deputy head teacher, and religious education subject leader ensures that the school's mission and its sharing are evident throughout the school and beyond.
- There is a strong sense of family community embracing everyone at St Bernard's.
- Fully committed staff are highly engaged in supporting each other and the school community so that everyone flourishes.
- Pupils are fully involved in planning and leading high-quality prayer and liturgy.
- Pupils are highly engaged with religious education and enjoy their lessons.

What the school needs to improve

- Deliver all curriculum areas through a Catholic lens, wherever appropriate.
- Develop pupils' evaluation of prayer and liturgy so there is a focus on how it impacts their moral development.

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

Pupil outcomes

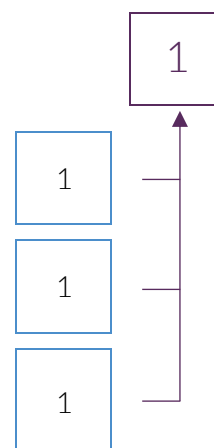
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

Provision

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

Leadership

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



Pupils receive a warm and friendly welcome as they enter the school site, with senior leaders and key staff greeting them and their families and reflecting on the school's mission daily. Subsequently, pupils feel safe, cared for, and valued and enjoy attending school. They clearly understand the school's mission and can articulate how and why it is lived out each day. Pupils are taught to follow in Jesus' footsteps and can do this by helping others and caring for God's Creation. They support various charities, such as Cafod, the Birmingham Children's Hospital, and Acorns. Pupils explain confidently why responding to Catholic social teaching is important. They enjoy learning about different faiths and recognise that it is crucial to understand, sincerely respect, and value others because everyone is equal in God's eyes. The highly valued Chaplaincy team show great pride in teaching others about Christ. They see their role as disciples being sent out to share the Good News so others can pass it on. For example, pupils in Year 5 do this by being prayer buddies for younger children.

The mission statement has been revised to ensure that it is a true reflection of the school and its community today. It is clearly reflected in the strong sense of family community that is evident in the school's daily life. Staff are highly committed to supporting the school's Catholic life, primarily through their explicit care and support for those with specific needs and the most vulnerable, going the extra mile to meet their needs. The school has worked tremendously to become a *School of Sanctuary* and achieve Cafod's *LiveSimply* award. Staff are exemplary role models for the pupils who emulate them in their support of each other. Those of all faiths and cultures are warmly welcomed into the school; for example, signs around the school are displayed in several different languages to ensure everyone feels part of the community. Displays are high quality and support pupils' understanding of social teaching and the school's

mission. Pupils are proud of their school and enjoy seeing their work displayed and celebrated. The chaplaincy team is well led by the religious education subject leader, who has established a 'plan, do, review' evaluation cycle to ensure that their work positively impacts everyone.

Leaders are passionate and are inspirational role models for staff and pupils. The school's mission is central to daily life and is reflected in all policies and procedures. The school engages with other local Catholic schools for sacramental preparation and celebration, which the parents deeply value. An effective pastoral team, including a family support worker, is in place to ensure that families are well-supported and pupils' needs are met. Clear communication is utilised effectively to support parents, who subsequently have a clear understanding of the mission and are highly supportive of it. Catholic social teaching is beginning to emerge through the broader curriculum but is not yet fully developed. Staff value the support offered to them by leaders of the school and by each other. Governors are highly ambitious for the school and provide sharp insight due to their knowledge and expertise. They are well organised and offer support and challenge where appropriate, which leaders appreciate. This is underpinned by a robust monitoring schedule, which also involves pupils. Effective induction of new staff is in place so they feel confident to support the school's Catholic life. Successful, quality, and regular communication with parents ensures their voices are heard and responded to swiftly.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

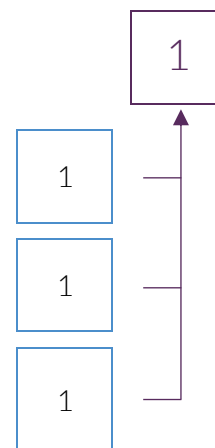
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

Provision

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

Leadership

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



Pupils confidently present their learning in various ways, ensuring active lesson engagement. In turn, they develop secure knowledge and understanding in religious education. Their enjoyment of the subject is abundantly clear; they show great interest, are enthusiastic about contributing to class discussions and are curious to ask meaningful and relevant questions to deepen their learning. Pupils make consistently good progress due to regular monitoring of their learning by staff who plan appropriately in response. All pupils use age-appropriate religious vocabulary when asking or answering questions and can do so with understanding and confidence. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary in religious education lessons throughout the school; they concentrate well on tasks independently and when working with others. They take immense pride in their work and enjoy sharing what they have learned in class. Subsequently, their exercise books show consistently high expectations, comparable to work produced in other core subjects. Attainment in religious education aligns with or is even better than in other core subjects.

Staff are highly confident in their subject knowledge due to training from the subject leader and the diocese. Teachers and teaching assistants provide praise, encouragement, and effective questioning that extends learning and helps deepen pupils' thinking. Knowledge recaps at the beginning of all lessons and references to prior learning throughout lessons enable pupils to embed their knowledge and make links. Staff have high expectations of all pupils. Adapted learning and sensitive support ensure pupils with specific needs can access learning objectives. The use of 'I can' and 'I wonder' statements enable pupils lower down the school to consolidate what they have learnt. The use of 'I wonder' questions further up the school encourages deeper thinking. Pupils know their next steps due to the specific religious education targets in their exercise books. Teachers' feedback guides how to extend learning. Pupils are provided with opportunities for reflection to enhance their spiritual and moral development, along with

constantly highlighting connections to Catholic social teaching and the school's virtues during lessons. In the youngest classes, gifted staff plan meaningful and highly engaging tasks to enable the children to explore and discover for themselves; for example, a pair of 'special glasses' is used to go and look at God's wonderful world, leading children to a tangible sense of awe and wonder. Well-constructed presentations, photos, paintings, artefacts, and visits from the local priest significantly contribute to creative religious education lessons.

The school follows the diocesan scheme of work, which covers the *Religious Education Directory*. Leaders and governors ensure parity between religious education and other core subjects in terms of timetabling, staffing, budgeting, and training. Governors provide knowledgeable support and high-quality challenge due to the quality of the information given to them, their involvement in monitoring, and the range of expertise they bring. The religious education leader has a clear vision for the subject and has shaped subject developments over the last few years. A monitoring schedule is in place, and an excellent level of honest self-challenge leads to high-quality provision, evident throughout the school. Wherever needed, specific areas for improvement are accurately identified for further support and development, which have an effective impact. Curriculum enrichment is provided through visits from a local priest, church visits, and lesson creativity, which is encouraged through freeze frames, re-enactments of sacraments, artwork, and a recent Pentecost dance!

Collective worship

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

Collective worship key judgement grade

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

1

Pupils are highly engaged in the school's prayer life. They are given plenty of opportunities to plan and lead prayer and liturgy in classes, which they value and take pride in. They take this responsibility seriously from the youngest age. There are opportunities for quiet reflections, often with music playing and spontaneous prayers. Prayer leaders deliver with confidence and support each other to minister to the class; for example, reading together when English is a new language for one of their peers. Pupils respond to prayer in actions with attentiveness, reverence, and respect; for example, children in Early Years squeezed a button hard to show their depth of feeling about refugees. They are keen to contribute with their own knowledge and ideas. Pupils enjoy singing together, and pupils and staff choose appropriate songs and hymns. Interactive Stations of the Cross, prepared by pupils, were highly valued by staff and parents, who describe it as 'A beautiful tranquil experience.' Pupils carefully plan relevant and meaningful actions to follow their prayer and worship, such as decorating a rock and giving it to the person who is the rock in their life. The chaplaincy team guides and supports younger pupils in prayer. Pupils are excited to share their knowledge of the liturgical seasons and know that this influences the school's prayer life. They value the opportunities to learn prayers in different languages. Pupils participate in ministry at an age-appropriate level through reading, choosing hymns, and controlling the slide presentation. Pupils can evaluate the practical aspects of their class prayer and liturgy, though they do not yet reflect on how prayer contributes to their moral development.

High-quality and wide-ranging opportunities for prayer and worship, including saints days, feast days, and holy days of obligation, ensure a high level of engagement from the pupils. Their behaviour in Mass is exemplary; they can say all the responses confidently and use relevant gestures where appropriate. A planning tool is in place to ensure that prayer and liturgy are consistent across the school. Prayer is central to the daily and weekly pattern of school life.

Scripture is central to all prayer and worship; well-considered hymns, responses, and 'going forth missions' ensure pupils' full and active participation. Staff are exemplary role models in their participation and encouragement to pupils. They are confident to support pupils in planning and delivering class worship. Good quality presentations, music, and artefacts enhance the meditative nature of prayer experiences. Prayer tables in all classes include high-quality and age-appropriate artefacts, prayers, and pupils' work and are used to support class prayers. Prayer gardens provide seclusion and serenity and bring the natural world into celebrations. Pupils of all backgrounds are invited to participate where they feel comfortable, and provision is made for those of other faiths to pray per their traditions. The opportunity for individual confession is offered during the year. There is a weekly Mass held in school, which key stages attend on alternate weeks, as well as whole school Masses throughout the year. Parents are invited to participate in weekly Masses and celebrations in the school, which are regularly well-attended. Focal points are well set up, and pupils are eager to bring relevant artefacts to support prayer, such as keys and rocks to represent St Peter.

The prayer and liturgy policy includes a strategy to ensure pupils' knowledge of traditional prayers is built up progressively each term. Complimenting this, there is a progression of skills to plan and lead worship to ensure all are offered age-appropriate opportunities. Staff training provided by the religious education lead has resulted in staff confidence to support pupils in planning and leading worship; they go the extra mile to ensure that resources are high-quality. Staff recognise the importance of encouraging pupils to go out and share the message of their prayer and liturgy with the wider community. Self-evaluation by the religious education subject leader and governors is thorough, focused, and directly leads to further improvements.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Bernard's Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	103462
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	330 3375
Full postal address of the school	Wake Green Road, Moseley, Birmingham, B13 9QE
School phone number	0121 464 3795
Headteacher	Peter Foley
Chair of governing board	Pauline King
School Website	www.st-bernards.bham.sch.uk
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	N/A
Phase	Primary
Type of school	Voluntary Aided School
Admissions policy	Non-selective
Age-range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	July 2017
Previous denominational inspection grade	2

The inspection team

Dawn Summers-Breeze
Maggie Hazeldine

Lead
Team

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