

St Bernard's Roman Catholic Primary and Nursery School

URN: 140896

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Bishop of Shrewsbury

27–28 June 2024

Summary of key findings

Overall effectiveness

The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school

1

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

1

Religious education (p.5)

The quality of curriculum religious education

1

Collective worship (p.7)

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

1

The school is fully compliant with the curriculum requirements laid down by the Bishops' Conference

Yes

The school is fully compliant with all requirements of the diocesan bishop

Yes

The school has responded to the areas for improvement from the last inspection

N/A

What the school does well

- Inspirational leadership from the subject leader and senior leaders engage staff in all aspects of school life at St Bernard's.
- Catholic social teaching encompasses the whole curriculum and the prayer life of the school.
- The high standard of teaching and learning in religious education enables pupils to make significant progress from their starting points.
- Staff commitment embraces all aspects of the school's mission, religious education, and prayer life of pupils.
- Pupils' response to the many enrichment opportunities offered to them is outstanding.

What the school needs to improve

- Build on the existing self-evaluation procedures to ensure the effective implementation of the new *Religious Education Directory* and *the Prayer and Liturgy Directory*.

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

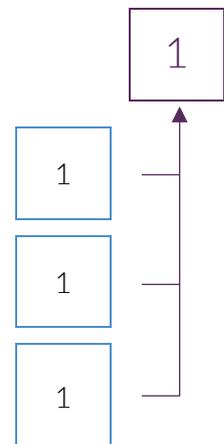
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

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 learning at St Bernard's develop a strong sense of what it means to 'grow, love, and learn following Jesus'. They understand that a choice to respond to this means they have a personal responsibility to care for each other, the local community, and the wider world. This is a strength of St Bernard's. Pupils enthusiastically contribute to a range of activities, which helps them understand the message of *Laudato Si*. Through themes of social justice and conservation they truly believe they can make a difference. This is a strong theme that threads successfully through all aspects of school life, and pupils enthusiastically engage in all that is provided for them. Examples of this resulted in the School of Sanctuary Award and the Outstanding Conservation Award for their work at Chester Zoo. They welcome all who come to work or learn in school. This is something parents value as 'pupils respect one another, recognise and celebrate difference'. Because of the well-established culture of welcome and commitment to living the gospel values, pupils' behaviour is exemplary. Pupils confidently articulate why they try to treat each other with kindness and can relate this to scripture. For example, pupils understand the links between Jesus' disciples and themselves.

The mission statement is appropriate for pupils to understand and is lived out by the school community through the Catholic traditions and emphasis on Catholic social teaching. Therefore, this provides pupils with the opportunity to experience the Gospel values in a nurturing environment, where Christ is at the heart of daily life. All aspects of school life are designed to provide a range of opportunities to develop pupils' awareness of the issues surrounding social justice and conservation. The 'Everyone is Welcome' whole school project is an example of this. Because of the well-planned activities provided by staff, pupils speak with understanding about the plight and circumstances of refugees. Staff embrace the mission of the school, knowing that 'the gospel values underpin what we do every day'. This leads to supportive, collaborative relationships and a high level of pastoral care. Parental responses, governors, and the staff themselves know they go above and beyond to support vulnerable pupils and families. The

pastoral care team successfully use their experience and knowledge of families to target specific support for families and pupils. The displays reflect the Catholic character of the school and celebrate the practical ways the community lives out its mission.

Leaders and governors ensure the Catholic life and mission of the school underpins every aspect of school life. They are enthusiastic in their pursuit of this mission and prioritise training and resources to support it. Several staff are proactively involved in innovative programmes across the diocese, the Trust, local schools and further afield. Staff appreciate the passion leaders have for the school's mission and the supportive, open culture, which enables them to develop their own skills and learn from each other. The subject leader inspires confidence in all staff and willingly shares her expertise in a variety of ways to ensure staff joining St Bernard's understand how the Catholic life and mission is lived out. She is supported by the other members of the leadership team, who together with all members of the community, help to make St Bernard's a shining example of faith in action. The leaders and governors demonstrate exemplary commitment to care for our common home. As a result, pupils clearly respond to the opportunities provided throughout the whole curriculum and can make links with the Church's teaching, such as *Laudato Si*.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

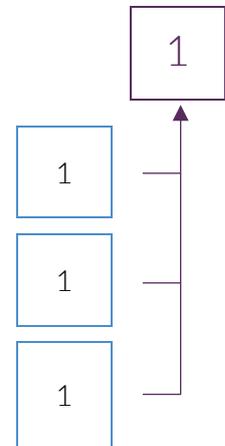
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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



From their starting points in religious education, pupils make excellent progress in knowledge and understanding. They skilfully recall and make links with previous learning, which enables pupils to express their views confidently. Pupils relish the opportunity to answer questions in more depth and enjoy getting the chance ‘to dig a bit deeper’ during their religious education lessons. Younger pupils explore how ‘the Holy Spirit will help the disciples tell everyone about Jesus’ and older pupils discuss how St Dominic Savio used his gifts to show Jesus’ love to those in need. Religious education influences not only their own behaviour, but their awareness of local and global issues. There are many opportunities for independent responses and creative approaches allowing pupils to express their individuality. Pupils show high levels of concentration and are actively engaged in a range of creative activities. Pupils enjoy their lessons and demonstrate great enthusiasm for their work. Attainment in religious education is high and pupils show a deep understanding of how they can apply what they have learned to their own lives.

The quality of teaching and learning is a strength at St Bernard’s, which reflects the level of professional development provided. The staff’s deep commitment to religious education means they have high expectations of all pupils who respond readily to the tasks set. Teachers skilfully use open questions to deepen pupil learning such as “Why did God choose to give us these special gifts?”, which challenges pupils to give more detailed answers. Staff have a high level of expertise and use a range of strategies to plan meaningful lessons in a variety of ways. For example, in Key Stage 1, pupils experience what it means to trust before reading the scripture passage about the healing of the blind man; other pupils reflect on paintings, such as the Communion of Saints, and in Upper Key Stage 2, pupils discuss the qualities of significant people who have served others selflessly. Staff understand the impact of religious education, make clear

connections across the curriculum, and strive to help pupils understand the relevance it has in their own lives. This has a positive impact on the moral and spiritual development of the children. Teachers and adults provide feedback verbally during lessons, which keeps pupils motivated to do their best and make progress. Learning coaches are used very effectively to ensure that all pupils can engage with, and respond to, the tasks set.

Leaders and governors are deeply committed to the centrality and value of the religious education curriculum. Therefore, they ensure that a rich range of resources is available to creatively deliver this subject. Leaders recognise the importance of quality training for all staff and therefore they prioritise attendance at diocesan courses. Key staff then share their knowledge with colleagues in staff meetings. The subject leader is passionate about religious education and is effectively supported by an experienced leadership team. Together with the team, she supports new staff so they quickly become immersed in the high standards expected. Through a programme of coaching, modelling and individual support, teachers develop their subject knowledge which enables them to deliver lessons that are consistently good or outstanding. A wide range of enrichment activities are provided such as links with local theatre groups, Chester Zoo, the Arts council and the 'Amasing' choir. There is a rigorous process of monitoring and analysis including lesson observations, book looks, and pupil voice. Moderation of work takes place internally, across the Trust and with local cluster schools, which reinforces the accuracy of teachers' assessments. Governors clearly prioritise this subject in all aspects of their plans and evaluations.

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 participate fully and can reflect in silence, respond to prayer, and engage in communal singing. The children are aware of the liturgical cycle because they celebrate significant events as a whole school and frequently within their own classes. Because of this, they experience meaningful ways of praying that reflect the traditions of the Catholic Church, such as the use of scripture and symbols. Pupils value the opportunity to experience the celebration of the word as it gives them 'time to reflect' and they feel connected to God and can say anything to him.' These quality opportunities for prayer help pupils make connections with learning in religious education and the wider curriculum. Prayer leads pupils to take action and the Mini Vinnies are proud to work with others to plan and lead prayer trails at significant times in the year, as well as buddying with the Nursery children for prayer. Pupils know scripture can help them to 'grow, love, and learn following Jesus' and 'reflect on how Jesus showed other people love and kindness'. Their prayer motivates them to be proactive in their willingness to support events such as the Elf Run, Lenten Walk, and foodbank collections, which all help those in need.

Prayer is central to the life of St Bernard's. Staff and pupils gather to celebrate significant times during the year and relevant scripture passages are used to highlight these to the liturgical season which helps to deepen pupils' understanding. There are also opportunities to honour Our Lady during the months of May and October as well as other key events such as Remembrance. Staff ensure there is a balance of formal and informal times for prayer. Key staff are models of exemplary practice in leading celebrations of the word, and this leads to frequent and meaningful opportunities which reflect the richness of the Catholic tradition. Staff and pupils plan together and use the school environment, including outdoor areas, so that pupils understand they can pray to God anywhere. Responses to surveys show that parents appreciate being invited into school to share in 'Stay and Pray' sessions and class celebrations of the word. The parish priest visits classes and there are some opportunities for families to attend Mass as a community. In addition, chaplains and prayer leaders from the local Catholic high school lead the Ash Wednesday service.

Leaders recognise the importance of prayer and readily support those teachers who are less confident about leading prayer in their classrooms. The school's policy for prayer and liturgy has guidance on the expectations for each year group when writing prayers. As a result, young children write their own prayers of thanks for their family and by the end of Key Stage 2 pupils pray for 'children's hearts and souls' and for 'the right start to life for every child.' There is a comprehensive plan to celebrate significant feasts and seasons across the year. This includes Masses, pupil-led celebrations of the word, weekly whole school celebrations and other key feast days. Staff prepare children to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation and of First Holy Communion and support parents during this special time. The parish priest and other cluster schools work together to review the opportunities for the children to visit church more regularly. Through joining in with times for prayer and photographs of weekly class celebrations of the word, leaders evaluate the quality of prayer throughout the school, which reflects the richness of the Catholic traditions. Leaders recognise the need to involve the governors and pupils in more formal evaluations of prayer and liturgy in school.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Bernard's Catholic Primary and Nursery School
School unique reference number (URN)	140896
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	8963556
Full postal address of the school	St Bernard's Catholic Primary School, Sherbourne Road, Ellesmere Port, CH65 5EW
School phone number	01513552047
Headteacher	Julie Le Feuvre
Executive Headteacher	Steve Jevons
Chair of Local Governing Body	Bernadette Letissier
School Website	www.stbernardsrc.co.uk/
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	Holy Family Catholic Multi Academy Trust
Phase	Primary
Type of school	Academy
Admissions policy	N/A
Age-range of pupils	2-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	14 July 2017
Previous denominational inspection grade	1

The inspection team

Susan Lyonette

Lead

Michael Glynn

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