



INSPECTION REPORT

St. Bernadette Catholic Primary School
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DfE Number: 801 3415

Head teacher: Mrs. Barbara Lee
Chair of Governors: Mrs. Nancy Thomas

**Canonical Inspection under Canon 806 on behalf of the Diocese of Clifton
and inspection of Denominational Education under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005**

Date of inspection: 8 and 9 February 2017
Date of previous inspection: 20 and 22 March 2012

Reporting Inspector: Mrs. Sarah Wembridge
Additional Inspector: Mr. Frank Toner

Description of school

St. Bernadette Catholic Primary School serves the parishes of St. Bernadette, St. Gerard Majella and Chew Magna on the South-East of Bristol. The school is popular and over-subscribed. Parents choose the school for its academic standards, Catholic ethos, values and behaviour. Catholic faith was a strong influence on parents' choice of school. There is a clear sense of community. Parish links are strong and both priests are very supportive.

Almost 75% of pupils are baptised Catholic. St. Bernadette Catholic Secondary is in close proximity to the school. The school has seen an increase of minority ethnic and EAL pupils attending school in recent years. The percentage of SEN pupils is 19.4%, and the number of disadvantaged pupils on roll is low.

Overall effectiveness of this Catholic school (summary statement)

Grade 1

This is an outstanding school because

- There is a shared vision for Catholic education, which is supported by staff, governors and parents;
- The school is highly regarded within the parish community and prides itself on its Catholic Faith identity. It is highly effective in supporting pupils in their faith journey;
- Governors and school leaders have rigorous systems in place for monitoring and evaluating the Catholic life of the school. As a result, the school self-evaluation is accurate and focused on continuous school improvement;
- The prayer life of the school is an outstanding feature, reflecting its distinct Catholic nature;
- The school enjoys the overwhelming support of parents and its open door policy promotes a feeling of being part of the school community.

The capacity of the school community to improve and develop

- The head teacher and subject leader are committed and passionate in their drive to improve RE and Catholic life even further.
- Governors are also fully committed to maintaining the continuing success of the school in these aspects.
- Links with school and parish are well established and there is a commitment to develop these further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure all lessons have sufficient challenge for more able pupils by identifying and building on prior learning.
- Ensure pupil-learning activities in each lesson focus on the desired outcomes through identifying appropriate levels of attainment in planning.

How good are outcomes for pupils, taking account of variations between different groups?

Grade 1

a) The extent to which pupils understand, contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school

- Pupils are fully engaged in the Catholic life of the school. They are provided with a range of opportunities to take part in and lead worship and reflections. Prayer and collective worship are central to the life of the school, and resources are readily available for all pupils to use in displays and focal areas throughout the school.
- Pupils are proud of their school and can explain how the Catholic nature of the school encourages them to care and respect each other. Pupils have a good sense of right and wrong, fairness, injustice and equality. Adults effectively model good behaviours and respect, which is a strong feature in all classes visited. 'We're all friends and get on,' said one child.
- Pupils show their caring attitudes towards others through charitable acts. Money is raised for a variety of chosen good causes, and pupils take pride in their contribution and effort for those who are less fortunate.
- Pupils can explain the mission and ethos of the school. They are proud of the tradition and can describe the importance of St. Bernadette and other saints, and relate their acts to how pupils should strive to live their own lives. There is evidence throughout the school that the connection between faith and life are taught explicitly.
- The pupils readily show their knowledge of scripture and are enthusiastic in sharing their knowledge. They are very clear about the distinctive nature of Catholic education and confidently articulate their personal belief: 'I have this little feeling that God is with my learning.' 'God is with everyone. It makes me feel safe because God's with us, but you can't see him.'

b) How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education

- The school has detailed information on the progress and attainment of pupils and tracks groups and individuals carefully. Pupils make good progress in relation to their starting

points with clear evidence, from teaching and workbooks, that this will continue to improve.

- Pupils are confident learners in RE and take pride in their work. They are well-motivated in lessons and are keen to participate in discussion. They are able to use religious vocabulary in a meaningful way. Pupils report that RE helps support their faith as a result of the knowledge and understanding, and enjoy the variety of learning opportunities they are given.
- Pupils are clear about how their learning in religious education affects their attitudes to life and each other. They speak confidently about their respect for each other and each other's beliefs. Pupils enjoy learning about other faiths. There is a genuine sense of the strong Gospel values that underpin the life of the school, which the pupils articulate well. One pupil said: 'I like learning about God and you get to learn about Jesus.'
- Pupils show very good religious knowledge which builds on prior learning which enables them to make links between scripture and everyday life. The school make explicit reference to British and Gospel values with pupils able to describe, for example, the importance of equality and justice. Pupils' enthusiasm for their learning is clear. They are able to describe a number of ways that they enjoy exploring their religious knowledge, and are eager to learn about the Bible.

c) How well pupils lead, respond to and participate in the Prayer Life of the School

- All pupils are given wide ranging opportunities in age appropriate ways, to lead and evaluate prayer and worship in the school. The school keeps evidence of pupil planning and evaluation of prayer and worship.
- Pupils appear reverential and interested in collective worship as demonstrated in a well-planned whole school collective worship on the theme of Light of the World. As a result of the interactive questioning and discussion, pupils were able to understand the key message and how it applied to them personally. Pupils referred to this act of worship in later discussions and showed that the worship had been meaningful and had had an impact on them.
- Pupils have been using meditation to enable them to reflect on their faith and understanding. They are able to incorporate meditation into prayer and worship sessions, and are beginning to explain the benefit that quiet contemplation has to them.
- Classes involve parents in acts of collective worship and encourage feedback from them. An act of class collective worship in Y5 was well attended by parents and the pupils effectively led the session and RE learning was shared.
- Chaplains lead lunchtime meditation with a small group of children. The leaders independently set up a reflection area, choosing symbols, artefacts and other materials to support the session. The pupils were enthusiastic and were able to create an atmosphere of quiet prayerfulness.

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- Shared prayer is a feature of everyday class life. In addition to daily prayers used throughout the school, each class has a class prayer book in which both children and parents and carers write prayers. Pupils have a good knowledge of the sacraments, and the Church liturgical calendar. The class prayer corners reflect the liturgical focus, and there are many high quality interactive displays that illustrate the pupils' contribution to the Faith journey of the school.

How effective are leaders and governors in developing the Catholic Life of the school?

Grade 1

a) How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school and plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils

- Leaders and governors clearly articulate the vision and ethos of the school. The head teacher demonstrates a passion and determination to ensure the best outcomes both academically and spiritually for all pupils.
- Governors are kept well informed of developments and initiatives, which are well-documented through meeting minutes. Governors have opportunities to take part in learning walks and talk to children and take part in Masses and acts of worship.
- Religious Education enjoys a high profile as a subject in school, and the school improvement plan and subject leader's action plan shows clear strategies to develop and enrich the Catholic life of the school. There is a strong emphasis on developing Catholic values throughout the school and the chaplaincy team is involved in monitoring the environment and ethos.
- The school works collaboratively with other schools and the Diocese and such a relationship is seen to be purposeful and meaningful. Leaders and governors are committed to the Aquinas collaboration.
- The school provides opportunities to share in the life of the school. Parents regularly come into school and are able to share RE learning. They report that pupils enjoy talking about their lessons in RE.

b) How well leaders and governors monitor and evaluate the curriculum for Religious Education and relationship education, and plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils

- There are systematic procedures for effective monitoring. Governors use a range of information to evaluate the school's performance and maintain a careful oversight of RE, ensuring they effectively fulfil their statutory and canonical duties. RSE (Relationship and sex education) is well- reported and parents feel well- informed.

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- There is evidence of appropriate challenge and scrutiny of various aspects of RE. The Standards Committee receives reports on attainment and progress in RE
 - Leaders and governors work together to discuss school improvement, and the RE subject leader and link governor meet regularly. Strengths and areas for development, for example, assessment, are clearly identified by school leadership, and governors have been involved in moderation and book scrutinies.
 - The RE subject leader and governor lead meet to evaluate the effectiveness of the developments in RE, and the evidence of the impact is well-documented in work books, floor books and evaluation forms. A wide range of opportunities are given to pupils to explore and demonstrate learning and to develop the religious literacy, using the arts and family and community links and projects.
 - The school monitors teaching and learning of RE efficiently, through amongst other methods, regular lesson observations, learning walks, planning reviews, learning walks and pupil and parent voice. The outcomes are evaluated and documented and are reviewed by governors.
 - A highly committed subject leader is fully supported by the Head teacher and as a result, is able to evidence the impact of the ongoing impact of improvement in RE.
 - The RE subject leader has a clear understanding of her role and has effectively initiated school improvements. Her work in partnership with other schools, on compiling a portfolio of levelled work in RE has resulted in a clearer understanding of assessment which has been shared with staff at St. Bernadette's.

How effective is the provision for Catholic Education?

Grade 1

a) The quality of teaching and how purposeful learning is in Religious Education

- All pupils in the school are enthusiastic about their Religious Education learning and they take pride in their work. They are able to share their knowledge of scripture with increasing confidence through the school showing a deepening subject knowledge.
- Teachers and pupils are engaged in meaningful dialogue and discussion year on year, and good use is made of assessment for learning, with feedback and marking helping pupils become aware of the next steps in learning.
- Throughout the school, pupils demonstrate a growing ability to make links between scripture and how this affects their own lives and that of other believers. In the Reception class, the teaching was well focused and a good links with recent collective worship was made in how the children could be 'lights of the world' and follow in the footsteps of Jesus. The idea was developed further as the children listened to the Feeding of the Five Thousand, which was linked to why others followed Jesus.

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- KS1 pupils are encouraged to develop positive attitudes to learning, and the pace in religious education lessons helps them to build on prior knowledge and make good progress towards lesson outcomes.
 - Throughout the school, teaching is focused on helping the children understand scripture and what they can learn and apply from it to their own lives. As they progress throughout the school, they have a growing knowledge and understanding of the Bible on which to base their answers to more challenging questions. Pupils are able to recognise symbolism and apply it their learning. In the Y5 class, the teacher explored the symbolism of the parable of the house built on the rock, and pupils were encouraged to confidently link belief and action and provide concrete examples of how God is revealed through the actions of others.
 - Where teaching and learning is best, challenging questioning and well-chosen activities help to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of Religious Education. Lessons are generally well-planned and resourced which results in progress being demonstrated year on year.
 - Progress in KS2 is sometimes slowed as planned activities do not provide focused challenge for more able pupils. In some lessons, pupils work through all levels of activity following 'must, could, should' protocols. These are not sufficiently focused on the overall learning objective. Consequently this can limit how pupils demonstrate and evidence their ability.
 - Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and questioning promotes pupil discussion and engagement, although some groups in KS2 could be challenged further and given more time to complete the higher level planned activities. Where this does happen, pupils are able to demonstrate very good progress. For instance in Y4, pupils were studying the Mystery of Light stories, and the teacher's questions were effective in eliciting thoughtful responses on the theme of sacrifice. Excellent use was made of adult support in the class. A group of able children were withdrawn and questioned confidently and highly effectively by the teaching assistant, resulting in high quality responses to learning.
 - Through the teaching of other faiths the Religious Education Curriculum contributes to pupils' understanding of other religions and cultures.

b) The extent to which the Curriculum promotes pupils' learning

- Religious Education meets all Bishop's Conference requirements and is responsive to Diocesan guidelines. The school follows 'God Matters' as its scheme of work for Religious Education, and make use of the resources from the Clifton Diocese website.
- The school is well-resourced with a range of artefacts and scripture, and pupils are able to independently refer to and choose items to support their learning.
- Teachers plan a wide variety of learning activities, and throughout the school, the pupils are challenged to clearly articulate their responses to questions of life. The curriculum is

stimulating and the pupils are engaged and motivated. They are increasingly able to respond to questions about how the Catholic faith gives meaning and purpose to life. The curriculum ensures that progress is made between key stages and from pupils' individual starting points.

- As a result, pupils are able to effectively articulate their knowledge and understanding of how their learning in Religious Education supports their personal faith journeys.

c) The quality of the Prayer life provided by the School

- The prayer life of the school is a considerable strength. Pupils are offered a variety of opportunities to express their beliefs and explore their journey in faith. Adults provide and support a positive and rich environment in which prayer flourishes.
- Prayer is central to the life of the school and all members of the community participate with enthusiasm and commitment.
- Pupils celebrate key events in the Church year and are fully aware of the significance of the liturgical calendar.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well supported by the prayer life of the school.
- The chaplaincy team is well-established and active in the school. Chaplaincy training has been attended. The chaplaincy team are excellent ambassadors for the school, speaking with enthusiasm and conviction about the Catholic nature of the school and how important it is to themselves and other pupils.

Summary of Parental Questionnaires

There were 47 responses to the parental questionnaire which were overwhelmingly positive about the school and the quality of their children's education. Some typical responses included:

'St Bernadette's is welcoming as soon as you set foot through the door. Throughout the school there is a spiritual presence which has a positive impact on children, staff and visitors'

'There is a focus in the school on developing the person and we have found that our son takes real comfort from religious teaching in school and the notion of acceptance as well as forgiveness'

'This school has something special. The feeling of calm when you walk through the door, (and) the way staff treat, talk to and respect children and adults'

'It values every member of the school community and cares deeply about the wellbeing of every child'