



Archdiocese of Birmingham

Section 48 Inspection Report

ST FRANCIS CATHOLIC ACADEMY

Part of The Holy Spirit Catholic Multi Academy Company
Rye Piece Ringway, Bedworth, CV12 8JN

Inspection dates:

21-22 June 2022

Lead Inspector:

Louise Bury

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS:

Outstanding

Catholic Life:

Outstanding

Religious Education:

Good

Collective Worship:

Outstanding

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection:

Outstanding

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

This is an Outstanding Catholic school because:

- Catholic life is inspirationally yet humbly led by the principal, supported by the Religious Education leader and the education standards committee (ESC) who are all exemplary role models. They are totally committed to demonstrating and fulfilling the school's mission.
- The school and parish work intrinsically together to serve their community, under the guidance by the parish priest, and supported by the multi academy company (MAC).
- Self-evaluation is accurate and reflective with areas for development addressed and monitored. Parents speak confidently about home-school communication and the variety of ways in which information is shared.
- Pupils have a confident understanding of Catholic social teaching, which is interwoven into day-to-day learning in the school.
- The school is a leading force, a 'mover and shaker', in social action. The strength of relationships within the community have been further deepened by the school's uncompromising drive community to reach out, communicate with, and comfort and support those in need.
- The reflective and deeply spiritual essence within the school, where faith is made a living reality and relevant to the lives of all involved, is a strength of the school.

FULL REPORT**What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Provide a range of opportunities for independent extended writing within Religious Education.
- Develop a consistent approach to planning challenging Religious Education lessons, which meet the needs of all pupils and ensures they make progress.
- Facilitate opportunities for pupils to plan, prepare and lead acts of worship independently.

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

The quality of the Catholic Life of the school	Outstanding
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school	Outstanding
The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school	Outstanding
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision of the Catholic Life of the School	Outstanding

CL1 The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school

- Pupils appreciate, value, and participate in the Catholic Life and mission of St Francis Catholic Academy, 'With grace and humility, glorify the Lord by your life.' They are keen to share their understanding of how their school supports the common good.
- The behaviour of pupils is exemplary. They show respect for themselves and others and are keen to celebrate their own and others' successes during lessons and in shared celebrations. Consequently, they show an ability to listen, to be thankful, to forgive and be forgiven. This is underpinned using restorative justice, enabling any disagreements to be resolved with ease and understanding.
- Pupils are alert to the needs of others. Their awareness of, and involvement in, charity and social actions is clear by the number of ways they support those in need. They understand the need to help those less fortunate than themselves, recognise the importance of service and respond generously. The reverse Advent calendar, support for the local foodbank and an appeal for Ukraine are all recent examples of the pupils' excellent support of those in need. Pupils speak about this area of their work enthusiastically and with confidence.
- The accuracy of the school's self-evaluation recognises the need to further develop the children's role in pupil-led monitoring of Catholic Life through the pupil liturgy group and school councillors.
- The school and parish work together very well; pupils are actively involved in the mainstream life of the parish: reaching out to the community. For example, Year 6 were highly involved in a Mass for the sick, for which they undertook several leadership roles, including the serving of refreshments to parishioners afterwards.
- Pupils have a good relationship with the parish priest and respond positively to his presence in school.

- School and parish work as a collective; the pupils take on responsibilities at Church, from supporting children's liturgy, reading at Mass and serving to meeting and greeting visitors. The impact of this is their positive response and relationship with the parish priest in the celebration of Mass.
- Pupils are happy, confident young people who know what it means to be able to live out their faith. They epitomise the words of the leaders in the school who live by the mantra, 'faith without action is not faith at all'.
- Pupils recognise that they are children of God and their relationships with each other evidence that they are secure and comfortable in their own stage of growth and development.

CL2 The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school

- The mission statement is embedded in all aspects of school life. It is further enriched through the understanding of justice, human dignity and the common good, alongside Catholic values and virtues. All are intrinsically linked and interwoven into the life of St Francis school.
- There is a deep sense of community throughout, observable at all levels. This is because St Francis Catholic Academy is a supportive, inclusive, and welcoming school at the heart of the local community.
- The parish priest works with the principal and other leaders in the school, looking for as many opportunities as possible to embed and develop the faith life of the school. As a result, they work together as a collective, prioritising and evaluating everything that they do, ensuring it is done to the highest possible standard with the highest possible impact.
- During the challenges of the pandemic, the school and parish continued to reach out to support the Catholic Life of the pupils whilst they were at home and in school, by providing live streamed Masses and individual virtual meetings with the parish priest to nurture relationships and support continued growth as a community during the most challenging of times.
- Parents speak very highly of the parish priest and the work the school undertakes with him.
- The support from the parishioners is a fundamental part of the school's life, from attending Mass together, to sharing their vocation with pupils and participating in prayer life at whole-school level. One parishioner is a part of the school's rosary club and presented the school with a rosary from his recent pilgrimage to Lourdes for pupils to use.
- Prayer is central to the life of St Francis. The physical school environment is open to prayer and reflection through its many prayer spaces. This helps make the school a prayerful and joyful community.
- There is an unassuming confidence within the school; staff know what they are doing and thus the school is wholesome, deeply spiritual community, living out its mission.
- Staff see themselves as valued and valuable members of the school family; they show a deep commitment to the life of the school.
- Staff commitment to the school's Catholic Life is shown in many ways, particularly in their involvement in charitable and social action work, which is a priority for them.
- All staff recognise the importance of nurturing all who work in the school; trainee students reflect on their experience in the school, saying they are welcomed as 'a valued part of the school family'.

- Much investment has been given to developing the school environment. These developments have grown out of the strong foundation and community of the school. The outdoor prayer spaces are inviting areas for the pupils to visit and have been resourced by the parish; they further promote prayer and quiet reflection. These areas are used for the school's rosary club, which is a truly uplifting and prayerful experience for those who attend.
- The school environment clearly reflects St Francis' as a Catholic school, where devotion to its patron and his faith are clear: he is a mechanism to spread the Gospel's message within school.
- Catholic social teaching is embedded across the curriculum and is a means by which the children make links and reference to, in their learning, understanding and explanations. The concepts of justice, human dignity and the common good are displayed every classroom and are living, breathing aspects of school life.
- Staff and pupils are proud of their school. A member of the support staff described working at St Francis as 'my vocation'.
- The care of the staff towards pupils is palpable; they see themselves as an extended family, in which everyone is important. All issues or problems are addressed.
- The relationships, sex, and health education (RSHE) curriculum is taught using the 'Life to the Full' programme, enabling pupils to articulate their understanding of love in a Christian context.

CL3 How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision of the Catholic Life of the School

- Leaders are at the forefront in the school's pursuit of justice for all and promote a way of life where charity is at the heart of the school's work.
- Staff at all levels are involved in the monitoring and evaluation of the Catholic Life of the school. Staff know that the Catholic Life of the school is at the heart of what they do and that they are a part of supporting and developing the ongoing developments within that. Everyone feels important.
- Staff are given the opportunity each week to acknowledge successes and suggest improvements to the Catholic Life of the school. These feed directly into future developments, ensuring that leaders take on board the views of their colleagues regarding the effectiveness of their work.
- The self-evaluation of the school is accurate; next steps are devised out of secure evidence and lead to further improvements.
- Staff feel supported and there is a clear plan for induction into the life of this Catholic school in place, supported by the MAC, which makes use of continuing professional development (CPD) offered by the archdiocese.
- Parents trust the school; they always feel welcomed and are always struck by teachers' positivity and know there is an air of positivity and faith that prevails within school. They know that their children are cared for and loved as children of God.
- The governors and board of directors are fully involved in the monitoring and evaluation of Catholic Life; they identify the strengths of the school and areas for development with confidence. Next steps are planned well.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The quality of Religious Education	Good
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education	Good
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education	Good
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education	Good

RE1 How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education

- Pupils make good progress from their starting points, including those with special education needs and disabilities (SEND).
- Pupils are religiously literate. They are enthusiastic and engaged in their learning. They use their knowledge, understanding and skills to reflect spiritually on a range of subjects and issues. They can think ethically and make links between what they are learning about and their own life experiences. Pupils show an understanding that religious commitment is part of everyday life.
- Pupils concentrate well, are actively engaged in lessons, offer suggestions, and respond appropriately to their teachers' questions. They are keen to improve their knowledge and understanding to develop further as learners.
- Pupils have a respect for each other as learners. They love to share their learning and celebrate their successes with each other.
- Behaviour in lessons is outstanding. They enjoy their learning and participate with enthusiasm in a range and variety of activities.
- Most pupils are articulate and confident when speaking about their faith.
- Pupils' attainment, as indicated by accurate teacher assessment, indicates that most pupils make at least average progress in Religious Education.
- The variety of activities planned and delivered is a strength; there is a focus on securing pupils' understanding during lessons, which is secured with the use of deeper level questioning and 'shoot to success' to extend learning and offer opportunities for reflection.
- The quality of pupils' written work is good.

RE2 The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education

- Teachers plan detailed lessons which reflect their knowledge of individual children and their needs. Lessons usually seek to consolidate and extend pupils' knowledge about religion and of what they can learn from it.
- Teachers display confident subject knowledge and expertise. They have a good understanding of how pupils learn; consequently, pupils apply themselves and make good progress during lessons and over time.
- Teachers employ a range and variety of appropriate teaching strategies. They encourage children to work independently and to collaborate with others. This encourages high levels of motivation and engagement in lessons.
- There is limited evidence of pupil involvement in evaluating how well they are doing. Some pupils are unsure about how to make future improvements in their learning in Religious Education.

- The good quality feedback that was evidenced provided challenge; however, this needs to be more consistent across all year groups making specific reference to how the pupils can improve their knowledge and understanding of Religious Education.
- Teachers consistently use time effectively to maximise learning opportunities in individual and sequences of lessons.
- Teachers' use of questioning is strong and confident. They encourage pupils to make links to the school's values and virtues, and to Catholic social teaching, as well as using other religious knowledge to explain their reasons and observations.
- Children's understanding of the Catholic faith begins in Reception and doesn't stop. One teacher new to the school this year explained that it was clear to her how well her pupils have been 'nurtured from their first days in Reception and can articulate their own vocations within the world today.'
- Support staff are extremely effective. The deep commitment they show to the learning of the children is evident. They are involved and supportive.
- There are a wide variety of resources in school to support the teaching and learning of Religious Education both in the classroom and around the school. These are used creatively by the teaching staff to deliver the learning objective.
- Teachers communicate their high expectations in lessons through their relationships with the pupils through their effective questioning, and creative and consistent classroom management.
- Achievement is both celebrated and rewarded through housepoints, stickers, use of the zone board and kind words. Teachers are naturally inclusive and seek opportunities to praise pupils.

RE3 How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education

- Leaders and governors have ensured that the school is fully compliant in meeting the requirements of the Bishops' Conference of England & Wales in relation to Religious Education
- The school follows the diocesan curriculum; its planning and delivery is carefully monitored by the subject leader. Members of the governing body are kept up to date regarding developments in the subject, as well as being involved in termly evaluation, which is regular, focussed, and rigorous, documenting the subject's strengths and next steps.
- Religious Education is a high priority within the school and evidence shows how well governors' investment in resources has resulted in improvements in standards.
- Teaching staff benefit from high quality professional development and evidence clearly shows the ongoing support that is in place to continue to develop the standard of teaching and learning in the school.
- The subject recognises the strengths in the school and benefits from the collaborative work across the MAC which provides opportunities for rigorous external moderation of standards.
- Provision for Religious Education is very well led and managed. The subject leader has a very clear understanding of where the areas for improvement are and has an excellent relationship with the staff to be able to bring about those improvements.
- Induction for new teachers to the school is extremely effective. There is a supportive attitude within the school and early career teachers have benefitted from the time taken to support them to enable them to 'deliver a great Catholic education' to the pupils in their care.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

The quality of Collective Worship	Outstanding
How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship	Outstanding
The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school	Outstanding
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship	Outstanding

CW1 How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship

- Staff are models of outstanding practice; this is clearly evidenced by the way they conduct themselves in assemblies, where pupils show their genuine enthusiasm for prayer.
- Pupils respond to prayer with understanding, being able to relate the message of scripture to their daily faith life.
- All pupils are reverent and participate enthusiastically in all acts of worship. There is a joy and deep-rooted humility and honesty from each and every pupil.
- Pupils understand the Church's liturgical year and the signs and symbols that are linked to different seasons and feasts.
- Pupils plan Collective Worship, and they understand and can explain the structure of prayer in school.
- Pupils are involved in a wide variety of prayer, for example, meditation, the Examen and the Rosary; spontaneous prayer intentions offered in the prayer areas around the school.
- Pupils are familiar with prayer routines and understand the benefits of prayer in an age-appropriate way. They understand the role of silence as a way to 'allow us to get closer to God and lets us speak to Him; He can also speak to us.'

CW2 The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school

- The environment of the school is alive with the opportunity for prayer and voluntary worship. Consequently, prayer is central to the life of the school; the indoor and outdoor prayer areas are welcoming, purposeful, and effectively resourced.
- The use of Christian meditation across the whole school as a tool for calm and reflection is highly effective. Pupils are encouraged to use this time to speak and listen to God and are able to articulate the importance of this type of closeness with God.
- The school provides a variety of opportunities and experiences of Collective Worship that are cherished by the children.
- The school embraces the opportunity to work with the secondary school in the MAC, with older students supporting Collective Worship at St Francis. This enables younger pupils to benefit from the excellent role models of older pupils. The inspiration that these older students provide for the pupils of St Francis is clear, supporting the view that faith is for everyone and that it grows with us!

- Staff have a very clear understanding of the liturgical year, seasons and feasts and associated symbols; this is evidenced in their preparation, organisation, and delivery of Collective Worship.
- Mass is a well-planned and purposeful celebration that enables the community coming together as one, with many parents and parishioners present as well as pupils from other MAC schools on occasion.
- Investment in the prayer areas of the school has seen a real passion and love for worship. The parish have supported the school in the provision of effective furnishing of the areas with cushions and rugs. Consequently, they are welcoming spaces to talk to God which highlight the importance of prayer to the school community.
- Staff support the planning and delivery of Collective Worship using the diocesan planning sheets. Approved resources are used well to support the facilitation of prayer.

CW3 How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship

- There is a tangible understanding of prayer and worship across the school and of how to plan and deliver this knowledge to pupils.
- The planning of assemblies shows that prayer has purpose and is linked to events in the Church's liturgical year.
- The centrality of prayer and worship is brought alive by the prayer areas around the school that lend themselves to moments of creative and spontaneous prayer.
- Leaders at all levels are exceptional role models for Collective Worship.
- Leaders provide opportunities to ensure that pupils are confident to participate in and plan worship independently.
- The principal and Religious Education leader monitor worship on a regular basis and governors receives feedback on the provision which further evidences the centrality of prayer in the life of St Francis'.
- Regular and focused CPD takes place for staff who evaluate the Collective Worship that has taken place weekly so providing a shared, embedded vision and understanding in the development of Collective Worship in the school.
- Governors review and evaluate Collective Worship against the whole school priority milestones. These documents are updated termly so creating a momentum of improvement to pupil leadership and liturgy within the developing prayer environment of the school.

SCHOOL DETAILS

Unique reference number	141817
Local authority	Warwickshire
<i>This inspection was carried out under Canon 806 of Canon Law and under Section 48 of the 2005 Education Act.</i>	
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy
Age range	4-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on roll	211
Appropriate authority	The board of directors
Chair	Avril Staley
Headteacher	Charlotte Culleton
Telephone number	02476 315279
Website address	https://www.stfranciscatholicprimary.co.uk
Email address	admin3502@welearn365.com
Date of previous inspection	October 2015

INFORMATION ABOUT THIS SCHOOL

- St Francis Catholic Academy is a one-form entry primary school serving the parishes of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, Bulkington and St Francis of Assisi, Bedworth. The two parishes cover a wide area, encompassing a wide range of diverse socio-economic groups.
- The percentage of Catholic pupils is currently 70%.
- The percentage of disadvantaged pupils is below the national average.
- The percentage of SEND pupils is above the national average.
- The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic origins is in line with the national average.
- The percentage of pupils with EAL is above the national average.
- Attainment on entry is below average.
- Since the last inspection a new principal has been appointed and there has been a significant increase in children with English as an additional language and an increase in the number of children entering school with significant speech/language difficulties.

INFORMATION ABOUT THIS INSPECTION

- The inspection was carried out by two Diocesan Inspectors: Louise Bury and Christine Walker.
- The focus of the inspection was on the impact, quality, and leadership of the school's provision of Catholic Life, Religious Education and Collective Worship.
- The inspectors observed teaching across six Religious Education lessons to evaluate the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. All these lesson observations were conducted jointly with senior leaders.

- The inspectors completed a work scrutiny and held discussions with pupils to evaluate their understanding of Catholic Life, the impact of Religious Education teaching on their learning over time and their experience of Collective Worship.
- Meetings were held with members of the ESC and board of governors, the headteacher, the Religious Education subject leader, the parish priest (who is chair of the ESC), parents, teachers, support staff and discussions with parishioners.
- The inspectors attended a whole school Mass, class Collective Worship and prayer clubs and undertook a learning walk to look at aspects of learning and teaching in Religious Education, the presentation of the Catholic Life of the school and pupils' behaviour and spontaneous prayer life.
- The inspectors reviewed a range of documents including the school's self-evaluation, data about pupils' attainment and progress, Inspection Data Summary Report, the school development plan and action plans, Subject Leader monitoring and evaluation, the Religious Education action plan, ESC members' review documents, teachers' planning and Catholic Life journals.