



Catholic Schools Inspectorate inspection report for St Dominic's Catholic Primary School

URN: 142210

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

Date: 11-12 October 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

- It works collaboratively and creatively with the parish to ensure that Christ is at its centre and is known to staff, governors, and pupils.
- The environment greatly enhances its Catholic life and mission, inspiring pupils and the whole school community.
- All staff are exemplary role models, adopting a nurturing approach, which leads to positive relationships between staff and pupils.
- Teachers are confident in their religious education subject knowledge and are skilled in planning lessons that consolidate learning.

- Pupils relish opportunities to plan prayer and are becoming increasingly confident in leading it.

What the school needs to improve:

- Ensure that pupils clearly understand how well they are doing in religious education and can articulate what they need to do to make progress.
- Appropriately challenge pupils in religious education lessons, including to produce work of a consistently high quality, which demonstrates their individuality and creativity.
- Develop more consistent and robust monitoring and evaluation systems for prayer to plan for clear and sustained improvements.

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

Pupils fully embrace the distinctive Catholic identity of St Dominic's and proudly share its mission statement, 'As children of God, we love one another'. They are contented, confident, and feel cared for, with one child saying, 'Our school and teachers lead us to a better life'. Pupils and families feel valued and have a strong sense of belonging. Pupils understand the importance of respecting others, and this is seen through the excellent behaviour demonstrated in school and the concern they show for the vulnerable and those most in need. The school places the highest priority on Catholic social teaching, and pupils embrace their responsibility in caring for our common home, seeking opportunities to live out the Catholic faith. Their response to Pope Francis' call is seen in their work to support Cafod, Fr Hudson's Care, local food banks, and Mary's Meals. Pupils relish the invitation to participate in chaplaincy opportunities provided by the school, sharing and living out Jesus' teachings encountered through scripture.

Staff wholeheartedly support, participate, and share in the school's mission. They enthusiastically work to achieve the best outcomes for the children in their care and are exemplary role models. One staff member cited, 'Christ really is at the centre of everything we do, and our Catholic Social Teaching work unites us all as members of God's family.' The school has created a positive and supportive community because relationships between all stakeholders are strong. Staff go out of their way to nurture pupils and celebrate their uniqueness. The school's Catholic character is reflected in the exceptional quality of prayer spaces and engaging displays in classrooms and around the school. The recent altar addition and timeline, displaying the history of St Dominic, the church, and the school, enhances the faith-filled atmosphere and is a focal point for the whole school community. The school is committed to promoting the spiritual and moral development of pupils and staff, and this can be seen through the chaplaincy offered through the whole school and

class liturgy. The provision of relationships, sex, and health education has been carefully reviewed to ensure consolidation of learning across the school; it fully meets diocesan requirements.

Leaders and governors steadfastly ensure that pupils, staff, and the school community know and understand the school's mission. They recognise the development of Catholic life as their core responsibility and show unwavering determination, wanting the best for all pupils. This means they ensure that Christ's teachings are firmly rooted in the school's heart. Governance at all levels offers firm support and direction for leaders, one example being the strategic improvement of Catholic social teaching across the academy. The link governor is a regular presence in the school and provides effective feedback following monitoring visits; thus quality assuring the school's Catholic life implementation plan. Leaders and governors work hard to ensure a strong partnership between the school and the parish of The Immaculate Conception and St Dominic. Parents appreciate the school's work in sacramental preparation and their children's opportunity to attend Mass regularly. Leaders are committed to the pastoral care of all staff, and policies and structures ensure that staff well-being is a priority. Great emphasis is placed on staff training through various internal and external training and coaching opportunities, leading to an increased understanding of the school's mission. Governors and leaders are continually evaluating their provision for Catholic life and mission. Targeted improvements are identified in the implementation plan, which leaders use to enhance provision constantly. Leaders, including governors, ambitiously aspire for the school community to live out its mission actively.

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 enjoy religious education, speaking confidently about their learning and demonstrating a keenness to improve their work. However, they do not always know what to do to improve the quality of their work or presentation, which is inconsistent. Pupils are developing secure knowledge, understanding and skills because strategies focus on consolidating prior learning to ensure pupils know and remember more. Pupils' religious literacy is growing because they are given clear learning aims, and key concepts and subject-specific vocabulary are regularly reinforced. Pupils concentrate exceptionally well during lessons and are engaged and eager to contribute and answer questions. There are some opportunities to think more deeply in lessons, but pupils are not confident in asking questions about this. Pupils enjoy responding to religious education in different ways, including through drama and art. There are some examples of emerging individuality and creativity within pupils' responses to tasks, but these are not consistent throughout the school. Pupils' religious education attainment is comparable to that in other core subjects.

Teachers are confident, have good subject knowledge and plan religious education lessons which build on prior learning. Learning intentions are explicit and referred to throughout the lesson, ensuring that key religious concepts are thoroughly covered. Using paired talk as a strategy is very effective across the school and allows pupils to discuss and reflect on key questions. There is a culture of all adults working together in lessons to ensure that outcomes are at least good. Teachers use questioning in lessons and the 'T' marking code to assess understanding; however, individualised feedback is limited, as pupils cannot consistently articulate how to improve their learning over a unit of work. Pupils show secure knowledge by completing various recorded tasks; however, more significant stretch and challenge work for more able pupils and more profound questioning opportunities are not always evident. Teachers use thoughtful resources that engage pupils and bring the curriculum to life, such as role play and dressing up in the early years, to develop children's understanding of marriage and loving relationships.

Leaders and governors ensure that the religious education curriculum is systematically taught and has at least equal status to other core subjects regarding timetabling, resourcing, and training. Governors and leaders recognise the importance of providing high-quality, in-house and external staff training through the diocese and collaboration with the other academy schools through the RE Hub, the latter of which is highly valued by staff for its support with teaching and learning and opportunities to share best practice. They have identified and started introducing coaching strategies for staff so that good practice can be observed and shared. As the subject leader for religious education, the head teacher has a good understanding and vision for the subject and strives to improve teaching and learning. Succession planning has been carefully considered and is in place to develop future senior leaders of religious education in the school. More recent monitoring and analysis of religious education has resulted in improvements across the school; however, their consistency and rigour are not established. Self-evaluation is evident, but there is a lack of targeted planning, which secures better outcomes.

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

2



Pupils thoroughly enjoy and respond well to the experiences of prayer and liturgy the school provides. Indeed, they relish any opportunity to contribute to and be part of prayer, demonstrating increasing confidence when leading. Pupils across the school understand, in an age-appropriate way, that praying is an integral part of the Catholic tradition. The use of traditional prayer is strong, as seen in even the youngest classes. The weekly Rosary Club is extremely well-attended and thoughtfully planned; pupils benefit tremendously from this opportunity to pray and develop their spirituality. Pupils understand the importance of prayer in their lives and use their liturgy experience to articulate how they can go forth to spread the message of God. They identify ways that they have responded to world events, such as making pledges to look after their common home and working towards Cafod's LiveSimply award.

Staff are excellent role models, skilled in planning high-quality prayer and liturgy experiences, which are central to school life. Scripture is carefully chosen and shared in a way relevant to all pupils and staff, supporting their faith formation. One staff member commented, 'Joining the St Dominic family has had a significant positive impact on my faith and has allowed me to live a more fulfilled life through servant leadership.' The liturgy model of 'gather, listen, reflect, and go forth' is firmly established across the school. Pupils take an increasingly active role in contributing to each part, resulting in a liturgy experience that is meaningful to them. Staff continually seek opportunities to make explicit links to the virtues and values and Catholic social teaching during prayer and reflection. There is a comprehensive calendar of Masses and planned opportunities for the Sacrament of Reconciliation during key times of the liturgical year. Thoughtful whole school assemblies, led by the head teacher and other liturgical events held in the school prayer garden are examples of the rich variety of prayerful experiences planned to unite the school community. The school's creative and imaginative use of space is exceptional, and prayer areas in classrooms are very well cared for, offering a dedicated focal point to pray with. The school enjoys a strong, long-

established partnership with the local parish and its priest, with links made through Masses and acts of service to the parish, such as pupils altar serving and through the sacramental preparation programme. Parents appreciate the school's work to enhance their children's prayer lives and thoughtfully involve them in it. One parent told inspectors, 'The prayer bag is a lovely idea, which really inspires our children to think about prayer at home'.

The school's policy and opportunities for prayer and liturgy are shared with parents via the school website. The prayer and liturgy policy benefits relevant staff because it outlines the structure and expectations when planning liturgy. A programme for developing pupil participation skills across the school has also been designed and shared. Leaders, including governors, place a high importance on prayer and liturgy and recognise the need to provide and seek high-quality training opportunities for staff. Staff formation is provided for, including annual retreats planned at academy level. Leaders have started to review the quality and impact of prayer and liturgy, with some monitoring of assembly, Mass and class liturgies. This is not yet consistent or clear how it feeds into strategic improvement. As part of this monitoring and evaluation schedule, pupils' views are starting to be sought. However, this is underdeveloped, as it is not from a more comprehensive sample of pupils across the school.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Dominic's Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	142210
Full postal address of the school	Margaret Street, Stone, ST15 8YG
School phone number	01785 413278
Name of head teacher or principal	Dianne Stokes
Chair of governing board	Kenneth Wilson
School Website	www.st-dominics-catholic.staffs.sch.uk
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	The Painsley Catholic Academy
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy
Age-range of pupils	3 to 11
Trustees	Archdiocese of Birmingham
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	May 2017
Previous denominational inspection grade	2

The inspection team

Melanie Elliott

Lead inspector

Clare Madden

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