

# St Robert Bellarmine Catholic Primary School

URN: 104906

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Archbishop of Liverpool

06–07 March 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

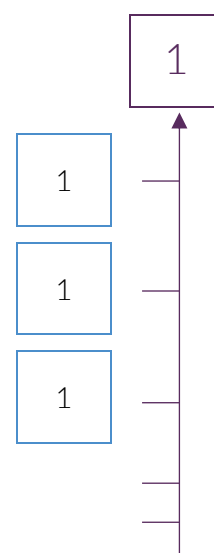
#### Collective worship (p.7)

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 subject leader is both exceptional and inspirational. She knows her responsibilities well and is determined to achieve the priorities.
- There is a lived sense of community. Relationships are at the heart of the school. Everyone is treated equally.
- The school makes effective use of its website as a tool for communicating with its community; it is a celebratory window into the mission of the school.
- Behaviour, both within lessons and around school, is exemplary, which was a privilege to witness.

- The presentation in pupils' books is impressive and that indicates a pride in their work which positively impacts on performance.

### What the school needs to improve

- Engage the pupils with the demands of Catholic social teaching so that they can articulate and explain the principles and how they are addressed by their actions.
- Clarify further the links between planning, adaptive learning, marking and assessment.
- Provide more opportunities for reflection and personal responses during prayer and liturgy.

## 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

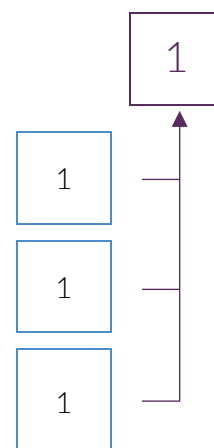
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

#### 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



The mission statement is in the fabric of the school. It is celebrated, valued and lived out by all. Pupils understand it. They say it expresses their uniqueness. One pupil explained that this is, "In a good way – it's good to be different, together." The school council and St. Vincent De Paul group are two of many examples of how their active participation for the needs of others enhances school life and is their commitment to following the teaching and example of Jesus. Staff are very supportive. One said they are always there for each other; the pupils see this and mirror it. They know this is expressed by the Gospels and they seek opportunities to help those in greater need. They keenly share the fact that, "We can become better people by following the light of Jesus and doing what he did." Pupils were able to share examples of their personal responsibility to care for our common home. Pupils know of the principles of Catholic social teaching. They have not yet begun to realise that by their actions they are already responding to the demands of that teaching. Throughout the inspection, pupils' respect for themselves, their peers and staff was evident and behaviour, both within lessons and around school, was exemplary.

The mission statement is unique to the school. Mission in action can be seen within the highly effective website. This platform for reflecting the Catholic identity is strong. Pupils demonstrate a deep sense of respect for those of other faiths and religions. In a school with such a high percentage of Catholic pupils this is an important life skill. Visits to Liverpool Synagogue and a local mosque, alongside displays in the corridors, highlight this fact. Pupils willingly take on leadership and chaplaincy roles. School facilitates this intentionally with pupils being ambassadors for Catholic life through membership of the school council. Pupils share ideas about how they can improve this further. Significant investment has been made in the further enrichment of outdoor spaces to provide opportunities for shared celebration and quiet

reflection. The policy and provision for Catholic social teaching provides the scope for faith in action. Relationships, sex and health education is carefully planned to ensure it meets all archdiocesan requirements.

Leaders and governors ensure that the Catholic life and mission is their core responsibility. They are joyful in their responsibilities and are able to articulate how policies and procedures are embedded. They conduct structured learning walks that enable their informed participation in monitoring and evaluation. Leaders work in partnership with the archdiocese. They attend relevant training and disseminate this back to staff. Leaders and governors greatly value and work hard to ensure the flourishing parish links. It is also evident from the governor and catechist roles. Staff talk of the love they feel the pupils receive from the priest and the parish. The school works alongside its parents and ensures they are involved in supporting the school mission. This is evident through invitations to the many school events, including grandparents' day, Mother's day and class masses. The school enjoys interaction with the community and this includes the harvest festival and *Sefton Community Pantry*. The school's welcome is witnessed and approved by visitors. During lessons, around school, in actions and words, staff guide pupils and each other with love and care.

## Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

### Religious education key judgement grade

#### Pupil outcomes

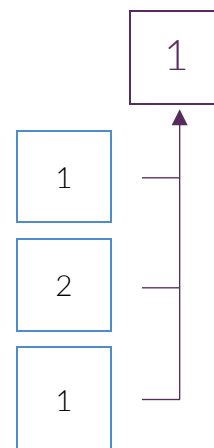
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

#### 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 are developing excellent knowledge, understanding and skills in religious education. They articulate this in lessons, and it is evident in books. As a result, pupils, including those with special educational needs and disabilities achieve good outcomes. Relative to their age and capacity, all pupils are religiously literate. Knowledge and understanding of scripture throughout school is relevant and prominent. This results in pupils being aware of the demands of the commitment to living their faith. Lessons observed were able to showcase that pupils can speak fluently and confidently about what they have learnt. In lessons, where pupils' prior learning was used as examples of opinions, pupils were able to articulate if they still agreed with their original thoughts through increased enrichment of their knowledge and understanding. Independent, age-appropriate learning was evident in all lessons. Pupils were able to concentrate and guide themselves and their peers. Presentation in books is highly impressive throughout the school. This indicates the pride pupils show in their work and positively impacts on performance. When questioned, pupils were consistently able to explain their work but were less sure about how they could improve.

Teachers are clearly committed to, and have high expectations for, religious education and communicate this to their pupils. A range of relevant questioning styles was observed. Where this was most effective, teachers were able to skilfully adapt explanations and challenge further. The school's chosen system for planning ensures coverage of key content. There are examples of where it has built on pupils' prior assessment. During lessons, effort and risk-taking was praised. This is less evident in books where only some teachers celebrated efforts to increase motivation. Teachers understand and value the impact religious education has on the moral and spiritual development of pupils. Purposeful reflection time during lessons was observed. There are limited opportunities for creative ways to present work in books. In the classroom other

adults are valued and effectively deployed to ensure all pupils can access the lessons. They feel very much part of the learning process.

Leaders and governors ensure that the curriculum is a faithful expression of the *Religious Education Directory*. Policies and resources are used to support the delivery of religious education. Leaders and governors ensure religious education has parity with other core curriculum subjects. This is evident in timetabling and staffing. Marking and feedback is consistent with the whole school policy. In some instances where this is less clear, there is limited acknowledgement of adapted teaching that does not always match the marking and feedback policy. Leaders and governors are advocates of personal development in religious education. The Headteacher knows her school well and empowers the subject leader to be exceptional and inspirational. Leaders follow the archdiocesan programme of study, *Come and See*. They have plans in place to begin introducing the new *Religious Education Directory* and have attended relevant training. Self-evaluation is informed by an effective process that is shared with governors. However, the extensive selection of priorities for development will require a carefully scheduled policy for gradual implementation.

## 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 experience a quality of prayer and liturgy that encourages them to plan, prepare and lead. Those observed, were reverent and attentive. They sing with joy with 'go forth' messages that will guide them throughout the day and in their lives. Pupils' participation is valued, and they are confident when reading in public. Pupils are encouraged to take time for reflection. Feast days are celebrated. Although pupils could not explicitly articulate how the Church's liturgical year influences their prayer life, they understood that prayer is part of their Catholic tradition and has an impact on the world. In observations, they set up the focus and lit the candle, stating that "Jesus is the light of the world". They also shared the fact that prayer is about saying thank you to God. Pupils reflect with enthusiasm on the life of Jesus and its relevance to their lives today.

Prayer and liturgy is clearly central to the life of school. It is very well planned and intentionally linked to the Gospel readings each week and made relevant to the pupils so that they understand its meaning. The naturally embedded daily pattern of prayer is evident in class and within whole school gatherings. For the staff, the liturgical year influences the planning and variety of prayer and worship opportunities. Staff embed the purpose of scripture and are committed to sharing their experiences with the pupils. Pupils attend Mass within the parish to support the home, school and parish network. This includes supporting parishioners with delivery of the sacramental programmes for reconciliation and communion. All staff observed modelled exemplary practice for participation in prayer and liturgy. They demonstrated their understanding of the format for prayer. Music is effective in how it brings its own sense of awe and wonder. Families are fully involved with worship within the school. They are invited to events that are being held within church and the school. Parents value these and enjoy taking part. One parent commented, "We attend church on Sunday and the school is clearly helping my child to make further connections to Catholic life and support their spiritual development."

The school's policy on prayer and liturgy guides leaders in its quality provision. Leaders know when and where to involve pupils, in a way that reflects their age and stage. They build pupils' involvement and increase their skills appropriately. Planning for prayer and liturgy supports the leaders' vision to connect with the school calendar and offer opportunities to celebrate the Eucharist at key times in the year. Pupils are proud of St Robert Bellarmine and were able to share some basic facts about their patron. The school connects closely with the parish to provide support for the children accessing the sacrament of Reconciliation and Holy Eucharist. The value placed on professional development by leaders and governors is worthy of note. It is focussed upon making an impact on the school's identified areas for improvement. It was evident during conversations about school processes for prayer and liturgy, that leaders have a clear understanding of the variety of methods of prayer and how to encourage participation. It is equally as clear within leaders' planning that consideration for participation in ministry and liturgy is integral to the opportunities afforded to the pupils. Leaders and governors articulate their knowledge and understanding of prayer and liturgy. Governors understand the importance of sourcing good resources and have reflected this in budget, time allocation and staffing. The school's self-evaluation of prayer and liturgy impacts well upon improvement.

## Information about the school

Full name of school	St Robert Bellarmine Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	104906
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	3433316
Full postal address of the school	St Robert Bellarmine Catholic Primary School, Harris Drive, Bootle, L20 6ED
School phone number	01519221216
Headteacher	Mairead O'Neill Dowell
Chair of Governors	Ann-Marie Pennington
School Website	<a href="http://www.strobertbellarmine.co.uk/">http://www.strobertbellarmine.co.uk/</a>
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	N/A
Phase	Primary
Type of school	Voluntary Aided School
Admissions policy	N/A
Age-range of pupils	3-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	<a href="#">Click or tap here to enter text.</a>
Previous denominational inspection grade	<a href="#">Click or tap here to enter text.</a>

## The inspection team

Joanne Farrimond  
Sarah-Jane Carroll

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