



Archdiocese of Birmingham

Section 48 Inspection Report

ST BERNADETTE'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Narrow Lane, Brownhills, Walsall, WS8 6HX

Inspection dates:

6th & 7th June 2019

Lead Inspector:

Maureen O'Leary

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS:

Good

Catholic Life:

Good

Religious Education:

Good

Collective Worship:

Good

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection:

Good

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

This is a Good Catholic school because:

- Since her appointment at the beginning of the school year, the executive headteacher, supported by the deputy headteacher and governors, has had a profound effect on improving the Catholic Life and Collective Worship of the school.
- The staff are committed to the Catholic mission of the school.
- The positive and supportive relationships between staff, pupils and parents is a strength of the school. The school is a caring and nurturing Catholic community.
- The parish priest has established excellent relationships with the school community. He provides highly valued spiritual and pastoral support for pupils, staff and parents.
- Pupils at the school enjoy Religious Education and most make good progress in their lessons.
- Prayer is part of the daily life of the school. The quality of all prayerful experiences, both whole school and in class, is improving rapidly. Pupils, staff and parents appreciate and participate reverently in times of prayer.

It is not yet Outstanding because:

- Pupils' understanding of vocation and their awareness of other faiths is not fully developed;
- Teachers' judgements about pupils' attainment in Religious Education are not consistently accurate;
- Pupils', especially the more able, could be greater challenged in Religious Education;
- Pupils' enthusiasm for communal singing during Collective Worship needs to be developed;

- Although monitoring and evaluation procedures have been established their long-term impact cannot yet be judged.

FULL REPORT

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Provide more quality opportunities for pupils to learn about the meaning of vocation and to develop an informed awareness of other faiths;
- Improve teachers' understanding of the skills and knowledge pupils need to meet their age appropriate expectations in Religious Education. This will enable them to make accurate judgements about pupil attainment and progress;
- Develop teachers' subject knowledge, planning, questioning and feedback so that it challenges all pupils but especially the more able;
- Enhance pupil and staff participation in communal singing during Collective Worship;
- Embed monitoring and evaluation processes in Catholic Life, Collective Worship and especially in Religious Education. Ensure that these are regular, rigorous and continue to inform improvement planning.

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

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

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

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

- Pupils are proud to proclaim, "We Follow Jesus," and can give many examples of how they live out their school mission in the way they behave and the care they give to others.
- The behaviour of pupils is shaped by the excellent guidance they receive from staff, which, in turn, is informed by the Catholic Schools' Pupil Profile (CSPP). The virtues promoted by the CSPP are understood by pupils. As a result, they support the exemplary respect pupils show to others and themselves.
- There is a strong understanding among pupils that following Jesus means they are called to serve others. Pupils explained to the inspector, "If we follow his footsteps, we need to be good, friendly and care for each other."
- The call to serve others goes beyond the school. Pupils know that if they are to be curious and active (CSPP virtues) they should be active in helping different charities. This has led to the school actively supporting many charities including Cafod, St Chad's Sanctuary and the Black Country foodbank, which has raised pupils' awareness of social justice.
- The pupils in Year 6 have particularly strong sense of service to others. Each member of the class has a specific leadership role to serve the rest of the school. These roles have had a positive impact on their confidence and self-esteem.

- Pupils have a growing understanding of vocation. The older pupils have had the opportunity to visit Oscott to develop their understanding of a call to the priesthood. School leaders have correctly identified that the pupils' understanding of vocation needs to be developed even further.
- The recently appointed parish priest has established an excellent relationship with the whole school community. His weekly visits to the school enable him to celebrate Mass regularly, to visit the sacramental classes, to visit the staffroom and to eat lunch with the pupils. As a result, he is able to offer exceptional spiritual and pastoral support for the school's leaders, pupils and staff. This collaboration is aspirational for ongoing spiritual development of the school community. Both the parish priest and leaders are planning to provide additional retreat experiences for staff in the new academic year and to develop links with the parish even further.
- The work of the family & multi-agency liaison co-ordinator quickly supports vulnerable families and is a vital part of the school community. Alongside the ongoing support from all staff, this helps the school to successfully fulfil its aim to be a nurturing school that shows the love of Christ in the community.
- Relationships and sex education is taught in accordance with the teachings of the Church. School leaders are actively planning how to improve this aspect of the curriculum even further and are attending diocesan training.

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision of the Catholic Life of the school.

- The executive headteacher's personal faith informs all her decisions and shapes the Catholic mission of the school. She is actively responsible for leading the development of Catholic Life and her vision and drive have led to rapid and substantial improvements.
- Governors and leaders see Catholic Life as a growing priority in the school. The executive headteacher's reports clearly inform governors about the provision for Catholic Life, the areas of strength and those aspects that need to be improved. As a result, they have a good understanding of current standards and are aspirational to improve even further.
- Although the governing body has appointed a Catholic Life link governor, this role has yet to be fully embedded.
- As a result of monitoring and evaluation by senior leaders, improvements have been planned and implemented. An environmental review has led to improved displays throughout the school that promote Catholic Life.
- Pupils, staff, parents and governors (including the parish priest) have been consulted in regard to the Catholic Life of the school and their views have helped to shape improvements. For example, following a pupil interview, where knowledge of the school patron saint was weak, action was taken. Pupils now understand that St Bernadette acts as a role model and they can confidently explain that, "She teaches us to be true to our beliefs in God."

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

**How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education.
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education.**

- Most teaching of Religious Education is good and most pupils, therefore, make good progress and meet the expected age-related standards. Less able pupils are well supported with scaffolded tasks and additional adults and so, usually, make good progress. However, more able pupils require greater challenge to achieve at an even higher standard.
- Pupils enter the school with little understanding of Religious Education. Due to the excellent engaging and creative teaching in Reception class they make rapid progress.
- Teachers usually make good use of the diocesan strategy to plan lessons that engage pupils. As a result, most pupils enjoy Religious Education lessons. Still, some teachers with a less developed subject knowledge would benefit from further support when planning lessons.
- Pupils are given opportunities to discuss their ideas with their peers, in paired and group discussions. They work very well together and their ability to explain and justify their opinions is growing. These skills are particularly strong in Year 6.
- Teachers' questioning sometimes makes links between the pupils' learning in Religious Education and how pupils will live out this teaching in their lives. This use of questioning needs to continue to develop, in order to probe even deeper about pupils' understanding.
- Throughout the school, the behaviour of pupils during lessons is exemplary. Teachers make good use of any occasion to develop pupils morally during Religious Education lessons, often praising pupils who display kindness and consideration to others.
- Teachers are beginning to make use of gap tasks to help embed pupils' understanding of their completed work in Religious Education. Although there are some very good examples of their use, especially in Year 3, this practise needs to be further improved and embedded. Pupils value this feedback from their teachers.
- The majority of work in pupils' books is good. Most of their tasks are written and allow for some personal reflection. Occasionally, pupils express their ideas through their own artwork. Consideration should be given to provide more opportunities for this type of task and to explore traditional and contemporary religious artwork.
- Although, some teachers have used the diocesan unit markers, this has not been consistent. The Religious Education subject leader has accurately identified that additional training is needed if their use is to inform teachers' assessment of pupils.
- Some teacher assessment of pupils' attainment in Religious Education is currently unreliable and requires improvement. This lack of a secure awareness of the skills, knowledge and understanding needed by pupils to meet their age-related expectations should be addressed immediately.

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

- The executive headteacher has a clear vision for Religious Education and is aspirational for standards to improve. Its priority as a core subject has steadily increased since the start of the school year.
- Due to a lack of effective monitoring before March 2019, 10% of the curriculum was not being devoted to teaching Religious Education. The newly appointed Religious Education subject leader (who is also the deputy headteacher) is developing the processes to monitor and evaluate standards more effectively. As a result, the required amount of teaching time is now in place and the Religious Education curriculum currently meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference.
- Although governors have a general understanding of standards in Religious Education, their knowledge of pupil attainment and progress needs to be more rigorous.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

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

How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship. The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school.

- Staff model excellent behaviour during Collective Worship. As a result, pupils participate in all forms of worship with a sense of reverence and appreciation.
- Pupils especially appreciate the times of silence and reflection, which worship led by the school's leaders provides. They use what they experience during these times of prayer to shape their beliefs and behaviours.
- Pupils are given the opportunity to participate in Mass in a variety of ways. They welcome the roles of readers, altar servers, technicians, offertory bearers and choir members, which they carry out with devotion.
- Older pupils take very seriously the responsibility they are given to prepare the hall for Mass. Together with senior leaders, they create a very prayerful and sacred space for the whole school community to gather in. The reverent atmosphere of Mass is also enhanced by the accompaniment of Reception children by Year 6 pupils. The older pupils are vigilant in their encouragement of the younger children to be prayerful and attentive.
- The parish priest is skilled in encouraging pupils to respond to his sensitive questioning during the homily. However, they can sometimes be reluctant to respond. Ways to give them the confidence should be considered, so that they can fully engage with the priest's teaching.
- The celebration of key liturgies and events, such as the May Procession and the Passion of Christ, have had a profound effect on the whole school community. Parents who spoke to the inspector were particularly moved and inspired by the prayer service that recalled Christ's Passion. They also value the welcome they receive to attend all forms of Collective Worship celebrated by the school.

- Once a week, all classes have an extended time of class worship that allows for meaningful prayer and spiritual experience. Increasingly, the staff have been supporting pupils to take responsibility for planning and leading these times of prayer. Prayer monitors and faith leaders have been appointed in all classes. Consequently, the pupils' ability to deliver class worship is constantly improving and their skills are progressing from Reception to Year 6. During the inspection, two pupils in Year 4 led a thoughtfully prepared time of prayer that visibly uplifted their class.
- During Lent this year, the deputy headteacher provided opportunities for pupils to attend a prayer club at lunchtimes. This voluntary Collective Worship proved so popular with pupils that it has been continued. Pupils also like to take time to prayer independently and spontaneously at the statue of their beloved patron St Bernadette, in the school grounds.
- Weekly hymn practise and the introduction of new hymns and songs has encouraged pupils to join in when singing during worship. They understand that music is part of worship and they feel that when they sing they are praying twice. However, the school has rightly identified that the choice of hymns and music needs to continue to grow in variety and the pupils need to become more enthusiastic.

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

- Senior leaders and governors recognise the importance of Collective Worship. The executive headteacher and deputy headteacher have ensured that devout prayer is routinely part of every day and celebration in school. Each week includes Mass, whole school worship, phase worship and extended class worship, in addition to daily class prayers.
- Senior leaders are very visible leaders of Collective Worship, which is planned to be engaging and meaningful for pupils. It always reflects the Church's liturgical year, seasons and feasts, as well as supporting the Catholic Life of the school.
- Although robust monitoring and evaluation of Collective Worship has been established by senior leaders over the last two terms, it is yet to be fully developed. However, leaders and governors have a good understanding of its strengths and areas that need to be improved.

SCHOOL DETAILS

Unique reference number	104242
Local authority	Walsall
<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	Voluntary Aided
Age range	3-11 years
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on roll	193
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mike Quinn
Executive headteacher	Jean Richmond
Telephone number	01543 452921
Website address	http://www.stbernadette.walsall.sch.uk/
Email address	postbox@stbernadette.walsall.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	13 th March 2014

INFORMATION ABOUT THIS SCHOOL

- The school is one form entry and serves the parish of St Bernadette in Brownhills.
- The percentage of Catholic pupils is currently 37%.
- The percentage of disadvantaged pupils is above the national average.
- The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is slightly below the national average.
- The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic origins is below the national average.
- The percentage of pupils with English as an additional language is below the national average.
- Attainment on entry is broadly below age-related expectations.
- Since the last inspection the headteacher has retired and an interim executive headteacher has been appointed. A new Religious Education subject leader has been in place since January. A new parish priest was appointed in September 2018, following the death of the long-standing parish priest (who was also the chair of governors.)

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION

- The inspection was carried out by one diocesan inspector.
- 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 inspector observed teaching across seven Religious Education lessons to evaluate the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. All of these lesson observations were conducted jointly with senior leaders.
- The inspector 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 a number of governors (including the chair of governors), the executive headteacher, the Religious Education subject leader and the parish priest.
- The inspector attended a whole school Mass, class Collective Worship, phase Collective Worship 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.
- The inspector reviewed a range of documents including the school's self-evaluation, data about pupils' attainment and progress, Analyse School Performance (ASP) data, the school development plan, the Catholic Life/Religious Education action plan, teachers' planning and learning journals.