



Archdiocese of Birmingham

Section 48 Inspection Report

ST BRIGID'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Part of the Lumen Christi Multi Academy Company
Frankley Beeches Road, Northfield, Birmingham, B31 5AB

Inspection dates:

4th & 5th April 2019

Lead Inspector:

Rose Brookes

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:

- Catholic Life is passionately led by the executive headteacher, supported by the senior leadership team and the governing body. They are totally committed to fulfilling the school's mission, 'We educate our children in a Catholic community with Christ at the centre.'
- St Brigid's is a happy school where staff are developed professionally. As a result, they have very good subject knowledge of Religious Education. They enjoy teaching and they are highly committed to the school and parish.
- The school and parish work very closely together to fulfil the Church's mission to call everyone to holiness. St Brigid's parish and school community are very well supported by the parish priest and some dedicated parishioners.
- Senior leaders know the school and its areas for development well. This has resulted in initiatives and staff development that are well embedded.
- Staff have systematically trained pupils to lead Collective Worship. They have done this so well that pupils can now do it independently and with confidence.
- All pupils take a pride in their work and enjoy their learning in Religious Education. This is because the activities in their lessons are interesting.
- The school is very involved in giving to local charities and pupils learn a lot from this.
- St Brigid's staff are very effective in the way they support pupils' emotional development. As a result, pupils can apply what they learn in Religious Education to how they should act in their lives.

It is not yet outstanding because:

- Work in Religious Education needs to more fully match the needs of individual pupils.
- Not all teaching in Religious Education is consistently good and not enough teaching outstanding.
- Boys often do not achieve the same high standards as girls.
- Feedback does not sufficiently tell pupils what they have done well and how to improve their work.

FULL REPORT

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Consistently match work in Religious Education to pupils so that the needs of different abilities are met.
- Raise standards in teaching so that it is all consistently good and more is outstanding.
- Continue to develop teaching strategies that support boys' learning.
- Provide regular feedback that shows individual pupils about how well they have achieved and what their next steps in learning are.

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.	Outstanding
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.

- Catholic Life is passionately led by the executive headteacher, supported by the senior leadership team and the governing body, who are all exemplary role models. They are totally committed to fulfilling the school's mission, 'We educate our children in a Catholic community with Christ at the centre.' As a result, pupils feel safe, secure and valued as children of God.
- The pupils are culturally very diverse and bring a richness of their own to the school. Gospel values and the virtues promoted in the Catholic Schools' Pupil Profile (CSPP) are reflected in the openness, trust, tolerance and respect that are key features of St Brigid's school community.
- All staff care deeply for the pupils. From their earliest years, pupils know that they can trust all members of the school community. This enables pupils to be confident and happy in this close-knit school community.
- The behaviour of pupils at St Brigid's is exemplary. Pupils respect each other and they are grateful for the care that they receive from a very dedicated staff. They respond with a high level of trust and confidence in the school community, where they know that they will receive continual support, which enables them to learn about the love of God.

- The pupils can confidently discuss the wide variety of roles which they are encouraged to fulfil. During the inspection, the pupil liturgy leaders recalled how they frequently monitor prayer corners in each classroom to check that they correspond with the liturgical year. When asked to give an example of the impact of this, pupils recalled that they had noticed that four classrooms did not have a crucifix. They reported this to the Religious Education subject leader. As a result, all classes now have a crucifix.
- The pupil led Global Gang spoke with pride to inspectors about how they meet after school to study and work for global issues, such as, Fairtrade Fortnight and the Gambian Schools Project.
- Pastoral programmes for Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) and Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) are thoughtfully designed, carefully planned, consistently well taught and celebrate Catholic teachings and principles.
- A strength of the school is the way that pupils make connections between the Catholic life of St Brigid's and their own lives outside school. This enables them to quickly learn how to cope with different emotions and situations.
- During the inspection, when Year 3 pupils were interviewed, they were very clear about the fact that they lived out their faith in all areas of the curriculum.
- The school is a happy community with staff who receive continuous professional development. As a result, all staff are fully committed to the implementation of Catholic Life across the curriculum and the whole of school life.
- Staff enthusiastically participate in school activities, which reflect the Catholic Life and mission of the school, such as, retreats, staff prayer and professional development.
- Pupils understand the importance of service and respond generously to the needs of others. They are regularly and actively involved in activities linked with CAFOD and a range of other charities. For example, pupils and parents took part, overnight on the school playground, in the 'Big Sleep' to raise money for the homeless. The school also makes hampers for vulnerable families at Christmas and the Mini Vinnie's support an Easter chocolate drop to the homeless in Birmingham.
- Pupils actively and enthusiastically participate in a variety of high-quality religious experiences and retreats. For example, Year 3 have a retreat day in school with an outside provider and Year 6 visit St Chad's Cathedral.
- As part of the sacramental preparation, the parish catechists organise an annual retreat for the pupils. Both pupils and parents have found this spiritually uplifting.
- The pupils have a good understanding of what it means to have a vocation and recognise the importance of using their gifts in the service of others. A pupil from Year 3 explained to the inspectors, 'We think about what God wants us to do. Jesus is at the centre of everything we do.'
- Pupils learn about different faiths and cultures. Pupils have visited a variety of places of worship and they appreciate and respect how pupils of other faiths pray.

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

- Catholic Life is led by the dedicated executive headteacher who is very well supported by a highly committed senior leadership team. The governors are very dedicated and proactive. Together, they all support each other with a passion that is rooted in a love for the pupils in their care. This enables the staff and governors to provide a very high standard of pastoral care for all the pupils and parents.
- The executive headteacher, the head of school and the Religious Education subject leader are deeply committed to the school's mission. They provide support and challenge in all aspects of Catholic Life.

- The parish priest and the members of the parish are very supportive of the Catholic Life of the school. They work in partnership with the school and provide quality catechesis for pupils, staff and parents.
- The monitoring and evaluation of Catholic Life takes place through lesson observation, learning walks, book scrutinies and professional conversations with staff and pupils.
- Governors regularly attend events promoting the Catholic Life and they discuss it at governor's meetings. A link governor formally records evaluations of the Catholic Life.

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.	Outstanding

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

- Teachers receive quality professional development, which is often from the school's experienced senior leaders and from the other primary schools in the Lumen Christi MAC. As a result, all teachers have good subject knowledge and are constantly improving their teaching.
- Inspectors observed consistently good questioning of pupils by teachers in most lessons.
- Staff show good classroom management and have established good relationships with pupils.
- Pupils are especially good at relating what they have learnt in Religious Education to their everyday lives. When interviewed, a Year 6 pupil mentioned that she had learnt how to process feelings like anger. The pupils' growing emotional intelligence is consistently developed across the school, appropriate to their age. Staff share a lot of their personal faith journey with pupils creating an atmosphere of trust.
- Pupils enter the Nursery and the Reception classes with very low levels of knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith. However, due to good teaching, they quickly begin to make progress, so that by the end of foundation stage most are working at expected levels.
- The evidence from lesson observations and work scrutinies confirms the school's judgment that average attainment continues to be good for the majority of pupils and for some it is above expectations. However, the school has identified that the number of boys working at or above the expected standard is significantly lower in some year groups, compared to that of girls. Teachers discuss this at termly progress meetings and have put specific interventions in place to improve boys' learning. The school has provided training for staff so that they can successfully use the thinking skills activities in lessons to engage boys and pupils with special educational needs.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons is exemplary. Both boys and girls enjoy Religious Education. They can speak with conviction about why they enjoy it.
- Standards in Religious Education compare favourably to English and the amount of work undertaken in all classes is good. Pupils' work in their Religious Education books

is of a good standard and well presented. It indicates an appropriate range of resources and strategies to promote good learning.

- Teachers employ a wide range of appropriate teaching strategies and activities to motivate pupils, including individual and collaborative work. Consequently, almost all pupils sustain high levels of concentration. However, work is not always planned to meet the variety of pupil needs.
- The teaching of Religious Education is good overall with some outstanding elements. However, there is also a minority of teaching that requires improvement. Senior leaders have accurately identified where teaching requires improvement and appropriate support has been provided. The school now needs to ensure that all teaching is good and more of the good teaching is raised to outstanding.
- Feedback is regular and in line with the school's marking and feedback policy. However, steps need to be taken to improve the quality of marking and feedback to ensure pupils know how to achieve well and what their next steps in their learning are.

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

- Leaders' and governors' self-evaluation of Religious Education is a coherent reflection of rigorous monitoring, searching analysis and self-challenge, which is well-informed by current best practice.
- There is a strong Catholic senior leadership team. They are passionate about developing staff and strive to achieve the best for the development of pupils' faith life. They truly live out their mission, 'We educate our children in a Catholic community with Christ at the centre'. This results in well targeted planning and strategic action taken by the school, leading to a high number of pupils working at or above the expected standard in Religious Education.
- The governors fulfil their statutory and canonical responsibilities regarding Religious Education. They ensure that the requirements of the Bishops Conference are met in terms of curriculum time for Religious Education, its content and the priority that Religious Education is given in the school. This is borne out by their active role in monitoring standards in Religious Education.
- The Religious Education link governor has a pro-active role within the monitoring and evaluation of Religious Education. He has formally recorded his visits. Governors have been involved in Religious Education book trawls. This has enabled them to have a clearer understanding of the content of the Religious Education curriculum.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

The quality of Collective Worship.	Good
How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship.	Outstanding
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.**

- Pupils readily take the initiative in leading worship, where they display confidence and enthusiasm. Regular weekly classroom Collective Worship is led by pupils from each class.
- During the inspection, key stage two pupils independently prepared and delivered Collective Worship without help from the teacher. They were creative and resourceful in their planning of liturgy and wanted it to be the best it could be. Most other pupils are visibly uplifted by the worship opportunities created by their peers.
- Pupils in earlier years are given opportunities to lead worship with growing independence as they move through the school. Reception pupils take an active role in the liturgy. They listen with respect and are eloquent in sharing their prayers. Key stage one pupils are able to prepare their prayer focus. Year 1 pupils can lead prayer with support from their teacher, whilst in Year 2 the pupils can write and present their own prayers.
- All pupils conduct themselves with extreme reverence and respect at Mass and during class and school assemblies.
- Staff have worked hard to create a wide variety of interactive displays and prayer areas that encourage pupils to pray both in the classrooms, the corridors and the hall.
- The pupil liturgy leaders regularly monitor the prayer focus areas in the school. They feed back their findings to the Religious Education subject leader and their evaluations are used to make improvements.
- The pupil liturgy leaders are able to explain the process of planning and leading liturgy independent of adults. The Wednesday Word and the liturgical year are used as a basis for their planning. They can talk confidently about how they make PowerPoint presentations, compose questions and write bidding prayers.
- Year 5 and 6 liturgy leaders spoke with pride and passion about their role as prayer partners to children in Nursery and Reception. They referred to this as their calling and they enjoyed guiding the younger children in prayer.
- There is a genuine enthusiasm for Collective Worship. At the whole school Mass, during the inspection, pupils' behaviour was exemplary. The school choir led the singing with very meaningful hymns appropriate for the season of Lent. The pupils' love of singing hymns is a strength of Collective Worship at St Brigid's.
- There is a good relationship between the parish priest and the school. He is a good communicator and all the pupils relate well to him. The school Mass attended by the inspectors was very well attended by the parish and some parents.
- Almost all pupils have an excellent understanding of the Church's liturgical year, seasons and feast. Appropriate to their age and ability, they can prepare acts of Collective Worship, which fully reflect this understanding.

- Prayer bags are sent home to initiate family prayer. The Wednesday Word also provides families in the sacramental preparation years with a special prayer focus.
- The school also focuses very well on the teaching of traditional prayers. There are class prayer books with age appropriate prayers in every class. Pupils understand the meaning of these prayers.
- All the class prayer tables have different kinds of prayers, which the pupils have written themselves. Pupils have a strong understanding of why we need to pray to God and how it should be done.

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

- Leaders employ a range of strategies to deliver Collective Worship including the use of video clips, spontaneous prayer, traditional prayer, meditation, silent prayer and a wide range of liturgical music. As a result, other staff maintain the high standards set by leaders when they organise class Masses and liturgies.
- Senior leaders monitor Collective Worship on a regular basis and governors receive termly feedback on its provision.
- Class teachers regularly evaluate the pupil led liturgies, which enables pupils to improve.
- Pupils play an important part in evaluating Collective Worship. Their views are collected, analysed and then used for future development.
- Governors are regularly present at liturgies. The link governor formally monitors Collective Worship. The findings are shared and acted upon with the staff and governing body.
- Regular evaluation of school Masses, assemblies and pupil-led prayer are completed by the Religious Education subject leader and the executive headteacher.
- Pupils, staff, parents and governors have completed evaluations of Collective Worship, which are used to help improve liturgies.

SCHOOL DETAILS

Unique reference number	141815
Local authority	Birmingham
<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	3-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on roll	457
Appropriate authority	Board of directors
Chair of local academy committee	Jane Hodgkinson
Headteacher	Rebecca Nash
Telephone number	0121 464 2364
Website address	www.stbrigid.bham.sch.uk
Email address	enquiry@stbrigid.bham.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	December 2013

INFORMATION ABOUT THIS SCHOOL

- St Brigid's is a two-form entry Catholic primary school with a nursery serving the three-parish partnership of Our Lady and St Brigid's in Northfield, Our Lady of Perpetual Succour in Rubery and Saint John Fisher in West Heath, as well as the local communities in these areas.
- The percentage of Catholic pupils is currently 75%.
- The percentage of disadvantaged pupils is above the national average.
- The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly in line with the national average.
- The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic origins is well above the national average.
- The percentage of pupils with English as an additional language is well above the national average.
- Attainment on entry is well below the national average.
- Since the last inspection, the school joined the Lumen Christi Multi Academy Company along with a secondary school and five other primary schools.
- In September 2016 the headteacher became executive headteacher of St Brigid's and St Columba's. The deputy headteacher was appointed as head of school.
- Since June 2018, the executive headteacher has been supporting another school in the diocese.
- In January 2019, a shadow Religious Education subject leader was put in place to work with the Religious Education subject leader, who went on maternity leave in March 2019. The shadow subject leader has led Religious Education since that time.
- A new chair of governors, as well as a new link governor for Religious Education, have been appointed.
- In September 2017 a new parish priest was appointed. The parish structure has recently changed to a three parishes partnership, which encompasses Our Lady and St Brigid's in Northfield, Our Lady of Perpetual Succour in Rubery and Saint John Fisher in West Heath.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION

- The inspection was carried out by two Diocesan Inspectors - Rose Brookes and Louise Bury.
- 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 twelve Religious Education lessons and a learning walk in two classes to evaluate the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. All these lesson observations and learning walks 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 a group of governors, the executive headteacher, the Religious Education subject leader, the head of school and the parish priest.
- The inspectors attended a whole school Mass and class Collective Worship throughout the school. The inspectors also 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 inspectors 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 Religious Education action plan, teachers' planning and learning journals.