



Archdiocese of Birmingham

Section 48 Inspection Report

ST JOHN'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Part of The Pope Francis Catholic Multi Academy Company
Avocet Way, Banbury, Oxon, OX16 9YA

Inspection dates:
Lead Inspector:

2-3 December 2021
Ben McArdle

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:

- The school's leadership is deeply committed to the educational mission of the Church and successfully energises the whole of the school community to follow Jesus' command to "*Love one another as I have loved you*".
- Pupils enjoy Religious Education. As a result of activities which capture their interest and enthusiasm, pupils engage well in their learning and are keen to learn more.
- Prayer is at the centre of the community.
- Leaders ensure that opportunities for prayer and liturgy capture the hearts and minds of all pupils and enable them to understand the Church's liturgical year well.

It is not yet Outstanding because:

- Not all pupils receive the full entitlement of Religious Education, as prescribed by the Bishops' Conference of England & Wales.
- Pupils' preparation of Collective Worship is overly reliant on the adults in school.
- The quality of provision for Religious Education is not consistently good, consequently some groups of pupils do not make enough progress.

FULL REPORT

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that 10% of curriculum time is allocated to the teaching of Religious Education for all pupils at all times.
- Develop pupils' leadership skills so that they are regularly involved in the planning of prayer and liturgy.
- Improve the teaching of Religious Education so that all lessons are at least good and contribute to good outcomes for all groups of pupils.

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

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

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

- Pupils have a secure understanding of the school motto, *"Love one another, as I have loved you"*. As a result of its prominence within school they can speak freely about what this means and the impact it has on their behaviours and attitudes. Pupils also reflect on the challenges of living out Jesus' command, citing feelings such as temptation and retaliation as "things that make it difficult".
- Staff also understand the mission of the school in terms of its motto. Because the deputy headteacher talks about it a lot in assemblies, and models what it looks like, staff are good role models for pupils to aspire to be like.
- Pupils are regularly involved in evaluating the quality of Catholic Life at St John's. Their opinions are sought through questionnaires and pupil voice activities. However, because pupils are not routinely involved in leading developments relating to Catholic Life, they lack a sense of the difference their contributions make.
- The behaviour of pupils is good. They are distinctly aware of the need to respect each other because "God made us all" and the responsibility this places on all members of the community. Pupils understand that their behaviour has consequences and that, as followers of Jesus, they need to forgive others and ask to be forgiven from time to time.
- The school provides many opportunities for pupils to participate in its Catholic Life. For example, pupils have taken part in the 'Maisy Milk' Rosary for Peace initiative, collected winter coats for St Chad's Sanctuary, donated substantially for the local food bank and held a disco in aid of Save The Children. Because these opportunities are linked to the school motto, pupils are alert to the needs of others in the community and enjoy seeking justice for them.

- Visits to places such as St Chad's Cathedral and Oscott College ensure that pupils are aware of their diocesan family and the opportunities available to them within it. Pupils know that they are part of a national and global church, and that they have a responsibility to "work together to show love, just like Jesus".
- Retreat opportunities, provided within school, contribute towards the spiritual and moral development of pupils. Because the school seeks pupils' opinions after such experience, leaders are able to identify and secure appropriate provision, which meets their needs.
- The pastoral care of pupils is a high priority for the school. A home-school link worker is very effective in the support she provides pupils who have identified with particular needs. Furthermore, as a result of continuing professional development (CPD) and training, capacity within the daily timetable has been created so that classroom-based staff are able to manage the emotional needs of pupils effectively and immediately.
- Pupils have a good awareness of right and wrong. Because teachers discuss the teachings of Jesus on a regular basis, pupils develop their sense of morality well.
- As a result of a new relationships, sex, and health education (RSHE) curriculum, pupils' understanding of appropriate relationships, based on respect for the dignity of the human person, made in the image and likeness of God, is developing. Pupils can explain why it is important to treat others with respect, though not all pupils do this with confidence.
- The oldest pupils have a secure understanding of vocation as a call to service and can identify the many different ways people respond to God's call. However, as a result of 'vocations week', the majority of pupils think of vocations solely in terms of entering the priesthood. Visits from the Greyfriars and input from Bishop Stephen Wright and Canon Richard Walker should be supplemented with exposure to people with other types of vocation to develop pupils' understanding.
- Because pupils learn about other faiths and religions, which is supplemented with visits to places of worship, they demonstrate a good level of respect towards them and have a pride in their own culture. This work is further supplemented by pupils' knowledge of the values that are referred to as being British, which are taught by the school with appropriate links to the Catholic faith.
- Although there is a significant proportion of staff who are new to the school, they are committed to the Catholic Life of the school. Consequently, faith is at the forefront of the school's work and is becoming embedded into its various aspects, including a focus on restorative justice.
- Because prayer is part of daily school life, there is a strong sense of community at St John's. Consequently, there are effective relationships between staff, pupils, and parents.
- Due to significant recent investment by school leaders, the school environment reflects its Catholic identity through its physical environment. Photographs of pupils with the parish priest celebrating the sacraments, artworks depicting St John the Evangelist, statues and prayers adorn the walls and corridors of the school. Pupils refer to these when talking about "things that make this school special".
- The extent to which the wider curriculum reflects Catholic social teaching is developing. Whilst staff can talk about some general links to the faith within certain subject areas (e.g., care for Creation in geography), there is yet to be any formal planning to embed papal teachings into relevant areas of the curriculum.
- Chaplaincy provision has grown in recent times and continues to do so. As a result, pupils are beginning to develop leadership skills and they enjoy doing so; they display confidence when leading chaplaincy initiatives. Pupils would like to be involved in more activities and be more independent in their leadership of them. Younger pupils like to experience chaplaincy that is led by older pupils.

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

- The school's leadership is deeply committed to the Catholic Life of the school. Because of the personal witness of senior leaders, all staff and pupils know the importance of the faith to the life of the school. The example set by the deputy headteacher is especially inspirational to parents, who value her work immensely.
- Leaders, including governors, give Catholic Life the highest possible priority. This is reflected in the way in which they have prioritised its financing and esteem within the school. As a result of the introduction of new monitoring systems by the executive headteacher, supported by the deputy headteacher, priority areas for development are accurately identified, with effective actions put in place to further enhance the school's Catholic Life.
- Because the executive headteacher regularly reports to the governing body, they are kept abreast of developments relating to the school's Catholic Life and view it as a school improvement priority. The governing body is informed of leaders' accurate self-evaluation judgements and the reasons for them; subsequently, they are ambitious for the Catholic Life of the school and empowered to support and challenge leaders effectively.
- Regular evaluations of the various aspects of Catholic Life are undertaken. These are analysed, with appropriate action plans implemented subsequently to address any areas deemed to need improvement. Leaders assess the impact of their actions and adjust plans accordingly.
- Leaders have secured CPD about Catholic Life from the Archdiocese of Birmingham for teachers, which they found inspiring. Other sources of professional development, external and internal, have helped staff new to the school to become familiarised with the expectations and practices of Catholic education.
- Parents' views are captured by questionnaires in addition to informal dialogue. Recently, parents' views regarding the new RSHE curriculum have been sought; in response, leaders have been able to verify their view that the school's written policy is lived out by the staff, and "fits perfectly with the vision and purpose of St John's."
- The school is enthusiastic in the way it responds to diocesan policies relating to Catholic Life; consequently, leaders actively promote the archbishop's vision for the diocese throughout the school.

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

- Because of the focus on technical vocabulary and most teachers' ability to question pupils deeply about what they're learning, the vast majority of pupils are religiously literate, and they are enabled to reflect spiritually and ethically on the issues covered by the curriculum. For example, in Year 2, pupils were encouraged to think about how John the Baptist's message could be continued by Christians today; in Year 6, pupils were reflecting on what it means to refer to Jesus as a bridegroom.
- Pupil attainment is good: around four in five pupils achieve the age-related standards in Religious Education. This level of attainment has been sustained for the last three years.
- Some groups of pupils do not make as much progress as others. This is because teachers do not always plan lessons that meet the specific needs of all pupils. Greater attention needs to be paid to ensuring that the tasks set by teachers match the ability of all pupils and that they consistently target questioning to groups of pupils that will ensure they make progress comparable to others.
- Most pupils are actively engaged in lessons; they are willing to contribute to class and group discussions and rise to whatever challenges their teachers set them. Because of this, they enjoy Religious Education and are determined to succeed to the best of their ability.
- In lessons, there is a distinct focus on what pupils can learn from religion and how they can apply this to their own lives. This is because teachers ask questions requiring pupils to reflect on lesson content. Consequently, most pupils are aware of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life.
- Teachers use a range of teaching strategies in lessons. In addition to motivating pupils, this ensures that pupils are able to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding in numerous ways, for example, through extended writing, story, drawing, and arts and crafts.
- The vast majority of teachers are either new to Catholic education, or to the teaching profession. Consequently, they are still becoming familiar with the expectations surrounding Religious Education in the Archdiocese of Birmingham, including the content of the curriculum.
- Because teachers do not always plan lessons linked to their current assessment of pupils' attainment, some pupils do not learn well enough.
- Teachers use self-assessment in lessons with the intention that pupils will know how well they are doing in relation to the learning objectives and thus know how to make future improvements. Success in this varies throughout the school - in some classrooms the practice is embedded well, though in others the success criteria do

not fully match the learning objective or are simply not challenging enough. As a result, good progress is sometimes inhibited.

- The quality of teachers' questioning varies throughout the school. Where questioning is at least good, teachers target individuals and groups of pupils with pre-planned questions, designed to consolidate their learning. Questioning is less effective when it is not used by the teacher to adapt tasks in response to pupils' understanding, or when the focus is on something other than Religious Education.
- In some classrooms, the pace of learning is too slow. As a result, very little written work is completed by pupils at times, making it difficult for teachers to assess their learning and effectively sequence lessons.
- Teachers generally use resources well. This is because they enable pupils to make progress towards meeting the learning objectives. The use of other adults is inconsistent across the school as some receive little direction as to how best to support pupils' learning in Religious Education.
- The school's marking policy is not yet used consistently throughout the school. This means that some pupils do not know what they have to do in order to improve.
- Pupils' achievements are rewarded and celebrated by staff in all classrooms. As a result, there are good levels of motivation from almost all pupils.

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

- Leaders ensure that Religious Education meets the requirements of the Religious Education Curriculum Directory and the additional requirements of the Archbishop of Birmingham.
- In some classrooms, pupils do not always receive their full entitlement of Religious Education (i.e., less than 10% of curriculum time is allocated to the subject).
- In terms of resourcing, staffing and CPD, leaders and governors ensure that Religious Education is comparable to other core subjects.
- Leaders' monitoring and evaluation of Religious Education is outstanding. This is because they are rigorously examining the subject through a variety of methods, ensuring that they accurately and reliably identify areas of strength and areas for development. Where weaknesses are identified, action plans are devised and evaluated for impact in a robust manner, ensuring that swift and effective improvements are made.
- Governors are well informed about standards in Religious Education and developments in the subject. As a result of a robust reporting procedure, governors are enabled to support the subject leader effectively.
- All of the issues identified under the subheading immediately preceding this one had been identified by school leaders prior to the inspection. Action plans are already in place and are beginning to effect change.
- The subject leader for Religious Education is outstanding. Her expertise and vision for the subject ensure that she is well placed to continue to mentor and coach other teachers to improve their practice. Staff have a deep gratitude for all of the support she gives them and for her approachability. As a result, they know that she will always make time to help them and will follow-up the initial support she offers them, if needed. Governors and the Multi Academy Company need to create capacity for the subject leader so that she can continue her work in a way that is sustainable.
- Leaders and governors are aware of the need to increase scrutiny of provision for, and outcomes of, groups of pupils in Religious Education.

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	Outstanding

CW1 How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship**CW2 The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school**

- Because of the high expectations surrounding prayer and liturgy in the school, and that fact that prayer is embedded into the daily lived experience of school for all, pupils act with reverence during prayer and are keen to participate in it. This is demonstrated in the enthusiasm with which pupils approach prayer; during the inspection a Key Stage 1 pupil exclaimed "Yes! Advent!" when invited to join in a classroom-based prayer time.
- Pupils in the Chaplaincy Team are regularly involved in leading prayer. Because prayers are usually prepared for them by staff, opportunities for pupils to plan their own prayers and liturgies are limited.
- The size of the Chaplaincy Team is increasing; the team has recently grown to include pupils from Year 4. As a result, there is now increased capacity for pupil planning and leadership to become embedded throughout the school.
- Pupils use a variety of approaches to prayer. This is the result of teachers regularly exposing pupils to liturgical music, scripture, open prayers, and formal prayers as part of the school's provision. Consequently, pupils are increasingly proficient in their use of traditional and contemporary ways of praying; for example, during the inspection, pupils in Year 6 went foraging in the Forest Schools area to find signs of hope in nature, collecting them in prayer pots before beginning a prayer service based on the diocesan *Walk with Me* resource.
- Because of the outstanding leadership of Collective Worship throughout the school, most pupils have a very good understanding of the key seasons and feasts in the Church's year. For example, pupils in Reception were able to explain why the colour purple is used at this time of year and why candles are lit on the Advent Wreath.
- Pupils at St John's have a keen appetite for prayer. They pray regularly and are enabled to pray for their own intentions if they want to. For example, the 'Prayer Post Box' enables pupils to write their own petitions, knowing they will be prayed for by the community in assembly or in a classroom. Pupils appreciate this resource.
- As a result of regular reflection on Scripture during prayer and liturgy, it has a positive impact on the spiritual and moral development of most pupils.
- Collective Worship always has a clear theme and purpose. Teachers effectively guide pupils through prayer so that they can understand its message and contribute if they choose to do so. Care needs to be taken that spiritual encounter with God through prayer is not punctuated by 'question and answer' sessions, which sometimes turns prayer into mini-Religious Education lessons.
- High priority is placed on planning prayer. As a result of effective CPD, all teachers consistently use the diocesan model for pupil-led worship. This instils confidence

within pupils and staff whilst praying. For example, during the inspection, a pupil in Reception randomly selected '*The man who built his house on rock*' as the story to be used in the 'listen' phase of the liturgy; the class teacher effortlessly and immediately used an age-appropriate resource to make the story come to life for the class, enabling them to access its message and offer appropriate prayers in response.

- Prayer and liturgy are regularly arranged to facilitate attendance from parents and carers; whole school and class Masses are well attended. Accordingly, the sense of community is further heightened amongst all stakeholders. Parents and staff are keen to resurrect the regular provision of these as the world emerges from the height of the pandemic.

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

- The executive headteacher and deputy headteacher have an expert knowledge in how to plan and deliver high quality Collective Worship and are very visible as leaders of prayer within the school. Therefore, the highest standards are modelled to other staff and to pupils, ensuring they know the expectations of the school surrounding prayer, which everyone is keen to meet.
- The liturgical year is leaders' catalyst when planning prayer. This ensures that every pupil is aware of the seasons of the Church, and these are subsequently reinforced by classroom teachers.
- Because leaders always make prayer accessible to pupils in a contemporary context, pupils are highly engaged in it and have a desire to contribute to it themselves.
- Although pupils are yet to routinely plan prayer, they are frequent leaders of prayer because this is the expectation of leaders.
- Staff appreciate the support offered to them by the deputy headteacher in helping them lead high quality prayer. She shares a wealth of practical ideas with staff, helping them to increase in confidence as leaders of prayer themselves. Because she models best practice in individual classrooms upon request, teachers are able to access support personalised to their own specific context.
- As a result of rigorous and regular reviews of school performance, leaders and governors effectively plan to improve standards at an appropriate pace.
- St John's responds well to diocesan initiatives relating to prayer. For example, pupils joined Archbishop Bernard Longley in praying the Rosary when it was livestreamed from the Cathedral and took part in the Adoremus initiative.

SCHOOL DETAILS

Unique reference number	147898
Local authority	Oxfordshire
<i>This inspection was carried out under Canon 806 of Canon Law and under Section 48 of the Education Act (2005).</i>	
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy
Age range	4-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on roll	170
Appropriate authority	The board of directors
Chair	Paul Concannon
Headteacher	Krystyna Bickley (executive headteacher)
Telephone number	01295 263740
Website address	https://www.st-johns-banbury.oxon.sch.uk
Email address	office.3350@st-johns-banbury.oxon.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	12 November 2014

INFORMATION ABOUT THIS SCHOOL

- St John's Catholic Primary School is a smaller than average primary school serving the parish of St John the Evangelist in Banbury.
- The percentage of Catholic pupils is currently 81.4%.
- The percentage of disadvantaged pupils is below the national average.
- The percentage of SEND pupils is in line with the national average.
- The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic origins is above the national average.
- The percentage of pupils with EAL is above the national average.
- Attainment on entry is average.
- Since the last inspection there have been several significant changes to the school's leadership; the school is currently led by an executive headteacher (in post since April 2020) and deputy headteacher (in post since September 2019). There is also an entirely new governing body. Furthermore, all of the teaching staff have changed in September 2019, with five new teachers joining the staff in September 2021. The school has also become part of The Pope Francis Catholic Multi Academy Company.

INFORMATION ABOUT THIS INSPECTION

- The inspection was carried out by two Diocesan Inspectors: Ben McArdle and Paul Madia.
- 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 eight Religious Education lessons to evaluate the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.
- 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 the chair of governors, the Catholic Life link governor, the executive headteacher, the Religious Education subject leader, parish priest, parents, and pupils.
- The inspectors attended a whole school Mass, class-based and whole school 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 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's development plans, teachers' planning and prayer books.