

St John The Baptist Catholic Primary School

URN: 114540

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Bishop of Arundel & Brighton

13–14 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

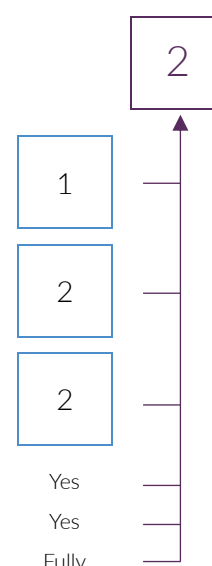
Collective worship (p.7)

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

- All members of the school community actively and joyfully live out the school's Catholic life and mission.
- Staff and leaders have created an exceptionally caring and nurturing family school with strong relationships and the highest levels of pastoral care for pupils and staff.
- Staff led by the inspiring and dedicated head teacher have highly successful strategies for engaging with parents and carers and involving them in the life of the school.
- Pupils enjoy their learning and approach their lessons with interest, producing work that is well presented and of good quality.
- Meticulous care and attention towards the school's Catholic environment create an inspiring and spiritual space to work, learn, and pray.

What the school needs to improve

This Catholic Schools Inspectorate inspection was carried out under canons 804 & 806 of the code of canon law. For maintained schools and academies in England it fulfils the statutory requirements of s.48 of the Education Act 2005. For maintained schools and academies in Wales it fulfils the statutory requirements of s.50 of the Education Act 2005.

- Ensure all teachers have a high level of confidence based on authentic subject knowledge and teaching expertise so that all pupils are actively engaged and make consistently good progress in lessons.
- Use questioning skilfully during lessons to identify precisely where pupils are in their understanding to extend their knowledge.
- Ensure that all staff are inspiring models of exemplary practice to other staff and pupils as leaders of prayer and liturgy so that the experiences of prayer and liturgy engage pupils deeply.

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

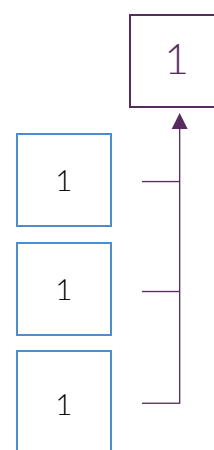
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

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



As soon as you step through the door of St John the Baptist School, you feel the inclusive and welcoming Catholic culture driven by the mission statement, 'Learning and Growing Together, Unique in God's Eyes', which is well understood, lived, and regularly revisited by the entire community. Pupils and their families feel exceptionally supported and cared for because the head teacher and the staff are deeply committed to treating everyone with dignity and respect. Pupils proudly explain how they respect and value everyone's uniqueness and that the school helps them to 'love one another'. As one pupil put it simply, "We love to help others". Pupils have a clear understanding that the school community is committed to following the teaching and example of Jesus as expressed in the Gospels and they are wholly committed to supporting the most vulnerable in society by such activities as collecting for local foodbanks, raising money for charities such as Macmillan Cancer Relief and Cafod and supporting the local hospice with their

'Shaun the Sheep' campaign. The chaplaincy provision supported by the local Benedictine community has a powerful impact on pupils' spiritual and moral development and they gladly embrace their personal responsibility to serving the Church's mission.

All staff are exemplary role models and are fully committed to the school's mission: as one staff member said, "Our school is more than just a place to learn—it's a vibrant community where faith, friendship, and fun go hand in hand". This is reflected throughout the school, its curriculum and how they consistently value and respect pupils. Staff also support one another and model the values inherent in the mission statement, for example, taking the lead in the school's "Our City, Our World" eco-curriculum project and helping pupils to learn about and choose charities to support. The pastoral care for pupils, especially those in the greatest need, is exceptional and pupils know they are known, loved and 'unique in the image of God'. This embedded culture of welcome means that the school celebrates the presence of those from various cultures and belief traditions, going the extra mile to understand their needs, for example, providing a prayer space for pupils from the Islamic faith during Ramadan. This work is recognised in the school's achievement of both the Oscar Romero Award (Participator Level) and the School of Sanctuary Award. The school provides a carefully maintained, engaging Catholic environment both indoors and outdoors. Beautiful displays of pupils' work, artwork, statues, and outdoor spaces, such as the spiritual garden, create a prayerful and spiritual environment where everyone can work and play, knowing that God is at the heart of the school.

Leaders and governors embrace and work hard to ensure a flourishing partnership between the school and the local parish which is central to the life of the school. The parish priest and brothers from the community are very regular visitors, celebrating Mass, leading singing practices and prayer experiences and supporting teachers with the teaching of religious education. Staff led by the dedicated and highly-skilled head teacher have very successful strategies for engaging with parents and carers, for example, the many opportunities to be welcomed into school for assemblies and events and this has resulted in parents being extremely supportive of the school. One parent told inspectors, "I wholeheartedly recommend St. John The Baptist School to any family seeking a nurturing and enriching educational experience for their child". Leaders and governors ensure there is an explicit and concrete commitment to both physical and mental wellbeing of staff, resulting in a highly motivated and committed staff team who feel valued and supported by the school.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

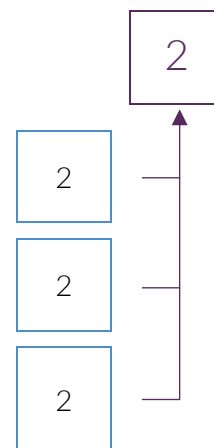
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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 enjoy their religious education lessons and are generally engaged and enthusiastic learners because most teachers plan activities to engage pupils, such as using religious artwork, role play, and visits, such as acting out the Last Supper or the Entry into Jerusalem. They say they enjoy “learning about Jesus and learning how to love one another as he did” and are confident sharing the work they have done: teachers should now ensure that pupils can routinely articulate what they have learnt using key concepts and subject-specific vocabulary. Behaviour in lessons is generally good, with most pupils on task and actively engaged in their learning. Pupils’ work is of a good standard, is presented well, and shows some signs of emerging creativity, for example, mindmaps, photos, art work and fact or opinion sheets. Some pupils understand how well they are doing and what needs to be improved; however, this is not consistent across the school. They can explain how their teachers help them, for example, “if you don’t understand, they will talk to you”. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are well-supported to access the curriculum and are provided with alternative ways to record their learning.

Teachers are committed to the value of religious education and recognise this as a core subject within the school, with one teacher saying “no matter what happens in your life, the Church will be there”. Most teachers have secure subject knowledge and use this to plan and deliver interesting lessons which engage and enthuse pupils. In one very strong lesson on Judas’ betrayal of Jesus, for example, pupils were challenged to make links with other Bible stories about betrayal and to think about how it could lead to forgiveness and remorse. In most lessons, there is a good balance between teacher and pupil discussion, which results in well-paced learning and further ensures pupils’ active engagement. Teachers’ questioning in lessons is effective in some classes to enable them to check understanding and move learning on: in the best examples, the use of ‘I wonder’ questions allows pupils to show deep thinking and curiosity. At other times, however, there are missed opportunities as teachers do not ask the right questions in order to

identify precisely where pupils are in their understanding to extend their knowledge. Teachers celebrate pupils' efforts by, positive marking comments, awards and displaying work around the school. They take time to ensure that pupils feel ready, safe, and comfortable to learn.

Leaders and governors ensure that provision meets the requirements of the local bishop. Religious education has full parity with other core curriculum subjects and is resourced efficiently. The subject leader and the head teacher work very effectively as a team to ensure that religious education is given a high profile within the school. They have a clear and appropriate improvement plan which is evaluated with governors and ensures the quality of teaching and learning through various monitoring activities. This enables them to provide appropriate professional development and support, both to individuals and to the whole staff with planning and training sessions. Plenty of enrichment opportunities are offered to pupils, including visits to places of worship of other religions, Bible workshops, drama events such as "Hot Off the Press" and visits to the local secondary school. Leaders have ensured that systems are in place for monitoring, marking and feedback to pupils; these are not yet consistently or sufficiently thorough, for example, not all pupils understand the marking code and next steps and leaders should now review how to refine their approach so that pupils are clear about what they need to do to improve.

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

2

Provision

The quality of collective worship provided by the school

2

Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for collective worship

2

2

Pupils participate in prayer and liturgy with reverence and respect. They are keen to join in with singing and prayer and respond to questions when asked. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported well, so they access worship alongside all pupils. Pupils know the liturgical cycle and that the Church uses colours to show the different times of the year. They know there are times of the year when specific prayers and services are appropriate, for example, the Stations of the Cross during Lent and praying the Rosary during May and October. Pupils work well with teachers and other pupils to prepare experiences of prayer and liturgy. Older pupils confidently plan, prepare and lead liturgies in class, following the 'Gather, Listen, Respond, Going Forth' format and are becoming more creative, for example, inviting others to reflect on scripture using pebbles on how to avoid temptation. The St John Messengers also plan and lead liturgies for younger pupils. They articulate their enjoyment of leading class worship and particularly the opportunities to reflect and be silent in such areas as the school's spiritual garden and the annual Prayer Spaces Week. The next step is for pupils to routinely evaluate and therefore know how to improve the quality of prayer and liturgy to enable all pupils to engage deeply.

Prayer and liturgy are part of the school's daily life, and prayer is included in school celebrations and assemblies. Scripture is a key feature of all prayer and liturgy; passages used are liturgically correct and are in line with the Church's liturgical year. During prayer and liturgy, attention is given to providing an appropriate mood and setting, often using music to create a prayerful atmosphere. A central focus is created with candles, the Bible, and religious objects. Many high-quality areas in and around the school inspire the community to pray, for example the spiritual garden, the beautiful prayer focal area at the front of the school and the innovative use of a prayer telephone in the Reception classroom. Staff are committed to providing a strong model

of how to lead prayer and liturgy. However, the quality of this is not consistent across the school: leaders should now share the good practice that exists so that all staff are skilled and inspiring models to pupils. Parents particularly value being welcomed into the school for liturgies and assemblies and it is a particular feature of the school that so many make the effort to attend.

The Collective Worship Policy is a comprehensive and detailed document which outlines expectations across the school and supports staff in preparing appropriate prayer and liturgy. Leaders ensure that the school's prayer and liturgy are strategically planned through a termly and yearly calendar linked to the liturgical year. This results in many opportunities to celebrate the Eucharist at key times such as the feasts of St John the Baptist and St Joseph and special occasions such as First Holy Communion Masses and a Moving On Mass for Year 6. Leaders ensure that all staff understand the importance of prayer and liturgy in the life of the school; they provide training and fully involve the Benedictine monks from Worth Abbey in supporting both staff and pupils. Leaders and governors support staff well: they are grateful to have training on how to support the school's prayer life. Leaders including governors recognise the importance of prayer and liturgy when setting budgets and allocating resources, for example, by providing high-quality prayer resources and spiritual journals. Leaders and governors review the quality of the prayer life of the school, but there is not a clear and regular process of evaluation in place to ensure that any monitoring of prayer and liturgy leads to improvements that become embedded throughout the school.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St John The Baptist Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	114540
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	8463311
Full postal address of the school	St John The Baptist Catholic Primary School, Whitehawk Hill Road, Brighton, BN2 0AH
School phone number	01273607924
Headteacher	Tina Davidson
Chair of Governors	Allistare Smedley and Richard Ray
School Website	www.stjohn.brighton-hove.sch.uk
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	4-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	5 th April 2017
Previous denominational inspection grade	Good

The inspection team

Michael Lobo
Fiona McGrath

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