



# Archdiocese of Birmingham

## Section 48 Inspection Report

### ST BERNADETTE'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Hob Moor Road, Yardley, Birmingham, B25 8QL

Inspection dates:

1<sup>st</sup> - 5<sup>th</sup> March 2018

Lead Inspector:

Debbie Huxtable

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**OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS:****Good**

Catholic Life:

Good

Religious Education:

Good

Collective Worship:

Good

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*Overall effectiveness at previous inspection:*

*Outstanding*

### SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

This is a good Catholic school because:

- Leaders and governors demonstrate a public commitment to the mission of the Church. They are well regarded as models of Catholic leadership by both staff and pupils. The development of the Catholic Life of the school is viewed by leaders and governors as a core leadership responsibility.
- Pupils show a respect for themselves and others. Behaviour of pupils is very good at all times. Pupils are considerate to others and caring to anyone in apparent need. They show an understanding of the need to forgive, be forgiven and have a good understanding of right and wrong.
- Most pupils are actively engaged in Religious Education lessons and are committed to improving their knowledge, understanding and skills to further develop as competent learners.
- Good quality resources, including other adults, are used effectively to optimise learning for most pupils.
- Pupils act with reverence and are keen to participate in Collective Worship. They reflect in silence and join in community prayer appropriately and with confidence.

It is not yet outstanding because:

- Leaders' and governors' self-evaluation of Catholic Life, Religious Education and Collective Worship is not rigorous and challenging enough.
- The quality of pupils' current work in Religious Education is not yet high enough.

- Feedback to pupils in Religious Education is inconsistent and does not always lead to high levels of engagement, interest, achievement and progress. Not all pupils understand what they need to do to improve or develop their work.
- There are not enough opportunities for pupils to take the initiative in planning or leading worship with confidence and enthusiasm.

## FULL REPORT

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Senior leaders and governors should develop more robust systems of self-evaluation through rigorous monitoring and searching analysis, leading to effective action planning that brings about well targeted school improvement.
- Raise staff expectations about the standards of pupils' recorded work, so that it is more appropriately challenging for their age and ability.
- Provide opportunities for pupils of all ages to initiate, plan and lead collective worship appropriate to their age group.

## THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

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

### 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.

- The school has a welcoming and engaging environment where the Christian imagery, displays and artefacts strongly reflect its Catholic character.
- Governors and staff regularly reflect on their school mission - Learn to Love, Love to Learn. Pupils understand the importance of this statement and consider its impact on their daily lives.
- Pupils appreciate and value the Catholic Life of the school and speak confidently about how they contribute to it through the school council and liturgy leaders. They have a strong sense of belonging to a Catholic school but their understanding of how we live out our faith in our daily lives needs to be further developed.
- Pupils feel happy, safe and well cared for. They are proud of their school and parents are confident in the outcomes and impact the school has on their children.
- Behaviour of pupils throughout the inspection was exemplary and shows a high degree of respect to both adults and other pupils. Staff have high expectations and believe in a collective responsibility for all pupils; they show great pastoral care for pupils and families.

- The school uses some informal and formal methods of evaluating the Catholic Life of the school. However, it is not always clear how these are systematically used to plan and deliver well targeted improvement.
- The school is highly inclusive and gives priority to supporting and helping vulnerable pupils and their families. Staff, who often give their personal time and energy, are very committed to providing financial and practical help for all in the school and local community who find themselves in need.
- All classes have adopted a class saint and each class has a display and shares information about their saint. This has deepened pupils' knowledge and understanding of a variety of saints and how their lives demonstrate the values we try to live by as Christians.
- Pupils recognise and celebrate their differences and feel it is important to respect and value everyone, irrespective of their faith background. They enjoy learning about other faiths and sharing their diverse religious beliefs.
- Pupils are reflective and confidently discuss how the Catholic Schools' Pupil Profile impacts on their personal faith and the way in which they behave towards one another. Displays around the school and assemblies also support the virtues promoted by the profile. As a result, pupils are constantly reminded of how the virtues should influence our relationships and the way we treat others.
- Sacramental preparation has a high priority for the school and parish. Staff work closely with the parish priest to develop a meaningful programme that is enjoyed and appreciated by parents and pupils.
- Pupils understand that we are called to serve. They support a variety of charities and their acts of kindness are a demonstration of this. They readily take on responsibilities such as liturgy leaders, altar servers, councillors and fund raisers. The school's use of visiting speakers and focused lessons on vocations helps pupils to reflect on what God is calling them to be, both now and in the future.
- Staff are highly dedicated and committed to the Catholic Life of the school. They provide pupils with positive role models, share in the school mission and are actively engaged in shaping and supporting it.
- Staff and pupils enthusiastically participate in activities that reflect the Catholic Life of the school. As a result, attendance at workshops and retreats for pupils and staff are both high and well received.
- Pupils and staff value the contribution made by the parish priest. He is a regular visitor and he provides support and commitment to the development of the Catholic Life of the school.
- The highest levels of pastoral care are provided by a parish sister. Her role supports all members of the school community, whether staff, pupils or families. Her contribution is warmly regarded by the whole school community. Her caring attitude permeates all aspects of school life, where great effort is made to meet the needs of everyone.
- Parents are well informed and encouraged to contribute to the relationship and sex education programme, which is planned and taught in accordance with the teaching and principles of the Catholic church.

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

- The headteacher is dedicated to the Church's mission not just within the school, but within this very diverse local community. She is seen by pupils, staff and governors as a positive role model and is highly committed to providing opportunities to further develop the Catholic Life of the school.
- Governors are proud of the school and deeply committed to its mission as a Catholic school. Some are regular visitors and can accurately identify the Catholic Life in action. They receive information about the Catholic Life of the school through the termly headteacher's report to governors and there is some evidence of evaluation of Catholic Life. However, this is not yet focused enough on outcomes and impact, as part of a school improvement cycle.
- The Religious Education subject leader ensures that all staff have relevant opportunities for professional development through training provided by the diocese, as well as in house termly sessions provided by herself or external providers. Induction of new staff is seen as central to the development of skills of a teacher in a Catholic school and the Religious Education leader offers support both on an individual basis and in small groups, depending on the needs of staff.
- The Religious Education subject leader is enthusiastic, and staff see her as a supportive and approachable role model. Impact of her vision and commitment are evident and she has a clear understanding of her role.
- School leaders engage in some aspects of self-evaluation and ensure pupils and parents contribute their views and opinions through questionnaires and informal discussions.
- The school is developing close links with other Catholic schools within the area. A recent peer review of St Bernadette's, by a group of headteachers, accurately identified areas of improvement for future development.

### **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

The quality of Religious Education.	<b>Good</b>
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education.	<b>Good</b>
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education.	<b>Good</b>
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education.	<b>Good</b>

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

- Pupils enjoy their Religious Education lessons and are keen to learn. They work collaboratively and are developing the skills of independent learners.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and plan a variety of activities to motivate pupils. However, these are too often based on closed activities and worksheets, particularly in key stage 1. This limits the opportunities for pupils to reflect and

express their own ideas. As a result, opportunities for pupils and staff to explore questions of meaning and purpose are lost.

- Pupils have a good knowledge of Bible stories and the traditions and practices of their faith. They enjoy learning from the books of the Old and New Testaments and older pupils can confidently use Bible references.
- The school has focused on the development of religious vocabulary and this is supported by displays of key words in the younger classes and as lists of key words in some of the older classes. This has helped to improve pupils' religious literacy.
- Productivity and presentation of pupils' work is inconsistent across classes and there is a lack of challenge for more able pupils
- Tracking of pupil performance is embedded. Following diocesan advice, the school is amending the way it records assessment data at the beginning of the next academic year. This will assist comparisons with other schools and enable opportunities for moderation.
- Detailed Religious Education assessment data is analysed for all classes and for vulnerable groups. However, this could be further developed as part of the school self-evaluation and used to inform improvement planning.
- The Religious Education curriculum has been reviewed and modified. Staff have contributed to its development in order that it meets the needs of all pupils. It is now interesting, varied and fully addresses the teachings of the Catholic Church.
- The parish priest and parish sister both occasionally contribute to this new curriculum by visiting school and supporting specific aspects that are in line with their expertise. The school and parish priest are now keen to extend this support even further.
- Planning effectively, with a consistency of documentation, has been a key area for improvement. Training and support by the Religious Education subject leader has led to a more confident staff and higher quality planning.
- Teaching of Religious Education is good, and some teaching is outstanding. Teachers plan across all three classes in each year group, then adapt the lessons for the needs and abilities of their own class or teaching group.
- Pupils enter school with limited knowledge of Religious Education but make at least good progress in the first year. Over time, most pupils achieve at least expected attainment by the end of Year 6.
- Marking and feedback in Religious Education books is under review and the school is planning to make amendments to the policy to address the inconsistencies across classes and year groups. Where good practice is seen, pupils know how to make improvements to their work and teachers provide key questions to help pupils to develop their learning.
- Support staff provide high quality input and are skilled and well deployed to support pupils' learning and teachers. They demonstrate good subject knowledge and questioning skills that support vulnerable learners.

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

- Leaders and governors ensure that Religious Education meets the requirements of the Bishops Conference and that at least 10% of teaching time is dedicated to the Religious Education curriculum.

- Monitoring of Religious Education takes place as part of the annual school monitoring cycle and results are fed back to staff. However, the size of the school and the number of classes make it challenging to achieve a robust and effective timetable of monitoring that drives school improvement. The school should consider ways in which the current good practice can be further developed to better challenge staff and pupils.
- The Religious Education subject leader is hardworking and dedicated. She has a clear vision for teaching and learning. She also has the capacity to support and help staff develop their own skills and understanding of the Religious Education curriculum.
- Although governors have a good understanding of Religious Education and the curriculum, they do not receive information about outcomes or standards pupils achieve in this subject. The Religious Education link governor and the Religious Education subject leader meet regularly, and they are beginning to address this issue. However, this needs to be further developed so that all governors are well informed about pupils' outcomes in Religious Education.
- Governors consider professional development of staff to be a central part of the performance management of staff. This has led to all staff, including the headteacher, having targets related to the Religious Education curriculum or Catholic Life.

## COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

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

### **How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship.**

#### **The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school.**

- Pupils demonstrate reverence and respect during liturgies and Collective Worship. They clearly enjoy gathering for assemblies and times of prayer within the classrooms. Staff are adept at sharing high expectations and providing good role models so that pupils understand the need for a reflective and prayerful environment. This is evidenced by the excellent behaviour and attitude of all pupils.
- Pupils experience a variety of prayer styles and are becoming more confident when sharing meaningful spontaneous prayer.
- Prayer is embedded as a fundamental part of the school day. Staff and pupils come together as a community to share and reflect on their faith and personal experiences of God.
- The traditional prayers of the Church have a high profile in the school and pupils have an excellent knowledge of the prayers expected of their age group. To help pupils learn the prayers, staff ensure that key prayers are displayed in the classrooms and in pupils' books. Prayer bags are sent home with copies of the prayers pupils are

learning, so that parents can support their child's use of these prayers in school but also use the prayers within the home.

- Pupils enjoy writing their own prayers and these are often used during assemblies and as prayers of the faithful during the celebration of Mass.
- The Eucharist is central to the life of the school and all members of the school family are committed to its celebration. Mass is regularly celebrated in school and in the parish. Pupils are enthusiastic about attending Mass and look forward to leading and participating in this special celebration.
- Throughout school, pupils have a good understanding of the liturgical year and its seasons. Even the youngest children, in the Reception classes, are able to explain "Purple is for Lent and purple means we say sorry."
- Pupils enjoy the *Wednesday Word*, which the school provides for families to use. It is also used as a resource for some class acts of Collective Worship.
- Although pupils sing during Mass, the opportunities for singing hymns and religious songs are very limited. Staff use some liturgical music in assemblies and class acts of worship to create a spiritual atmosphere and provide pupils with opportunities to reflect.
- Staff are skilled at leading prayer using silence, time for reflection, meditation and other approaches to prayer. Scripture, candles, artefacts and IT are used to deepen the response of pupils to prayer experiences.
- The school has now established a group of pupils known as liturgy leaders who are beginning to plan and deliver Collective Worship for their own class and some younger pupils. However, not enough pupils, appropriate to their age, are given the opportunity to independently prepare and lead worship with confidence. The Religious Education subject leader recognises that this is a key area for development in the future.
- Staff expertise when planning and developing prayer with their class is growing and most staff are now able to plan and deliver short meaningful liturgies. The Religious Education subject leader provides support and resources to help those staff who are less confident to grow in their own skills and understanding.
- Pupils in key stage 2 are encouraged to attend weekly voluntary acts of worship. These are very well attended, and pupils enjoy these special experiences, particularly when asked to read aloud during the liturgies.

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

- Leaders and governors see Collective Worship as a central part of the life of the school and are committed to its ongoing development and improvement.
- Although pupils' experience of Collective Worship across school is generally good, self-evaluation of Collective worship by the leadership team and governors is inconsistent. Monitoring activities lack cohesion and do not always lead to a robust analysis of outcomes or identify clear actions for improvement.
- The Religious Education subject leader, with the help of the liturgy leaders, has taken part in some monitoring activities which have led to improvements in the resources used for Collective Worship. The liturgy leaders have expressed a wish to develop this role further and to involve more pupils.

- The leadership team plan and deliver quality experiences of Collective Worship and are able to make links across a variety of themes and reinforce the teaching of Christian values.
- The Religious Education subject leader recognises that some staff are more confident than others when planning and delivering Collective Worship. She ensures that all staff receive appropriate training and support according to their personal needs.

## SCHOOL DETAILS

Unique reference number	103460
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	Voluntary Aided
Age range	3 – 11 years
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on roll	671
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Anna McLaughlin
Headteacher	Miss Angela Cowings
Telephone number	0121-783-7232
Website address	<a href="http://www.stberns.co.uk">www.stberns.co.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:enquiry@stberns.bham.sch.uk">enquiry@stberns.bham.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	13 <sup>th</sup> – 14 <sup>th</sup> March 2013



## **INFORMATION ABOUT THIS SCHOOL**

- The school is a large three form entry primary school with a nursery. Although the school is situated in Yardley, it is one of two primary schools within the Holy Family Parish, Small Heath in Birmingham. The school is close to the boundaries of other parishes and many pupils who attend the school live in one of these neighbouring parishes.
- The percentage of Catholic pupils is currently 71%.
- The percentage of disadvantaged pupils is above the national average.
- The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above 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 above the national average.
- Attainment on entry is below the national average.

## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION**

- The inspection was carried out by two Diocesan Inspectors – Debbie Huxtable and Bernadette Corbett.
- 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 seven Religious Education lessons to evaluate the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. All of these lesson observations were conducted jointly with the headteacher, Religious Education subject leader or 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 two governors, including the chair of governors, the Religious Education link governor, the headteacher, the Religious Education subject leader, the parish priest and a group of parents.
- The inspectors attended assemblies, class 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 development plan, the Religious Education action plan, teachers' planning and learning journals.