



Catholic Schools Inspectorate inspection report for St Mary and St Benedict Catholic Primary School

URN: 133556

Carried out on behalf of the Most Rev. Bernard Longley, Archbishop of Birmingham, on:

28-29 September 2022

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The school is fully compliant with the curriculum requirements laid down by the Bishops' Conference	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
The school is fully compliant with all requirements of the diocesan bishop	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
The school has responded to the areas for improvement from the last inspection	Fully

Summary of key findings

What the school does well

- There is a strong and effective partnership between the school and parish, which contributes exceptionally well to pupils' spiritual formation.
- The quality of pupils' work in religious education is of a good standard, reflecting the school's high expectations for the subject.
- The school environment is an attractive, distinctively Catholic space that celebrates the dignity of every community member and inspires prayer and reflection.
- School leaders ensure the mission statement is central to the day-to-day life of the school. It is lived through the dedication of the staff, clergy, pupils, and the broader school community.

What the school needs to improve:

- Improve the quality and impact of monitoring and self-evaluation to result in strategic action and well-targeted planning, which leads to continuous improvement.
- Improve opportunities for pupils to prepare, lead, and evaluate prayer and liturgy so they undertake liturgical ministries with confidence, understanding, and skill.

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:.....

1

Pupil outcomes

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

1

Provision

The quality of provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school

1

Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school

1

There is an inclusive and welcoming Catholic culture at St Mary and St Benedict driven by the mission statement, 'Together, with Christ, everyone achieves more', which is well understood, lived, and loved by the entire community. Pupils feel a lived sense of belonging because of the strong ethos of welcome that leaders, governors, and staff have nurtured, reflecting the teachings of Christ in a very practical way. Pupils and their families feel exceptionally well valued 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 'come together and follow Jesus.' Pupils are exceptionally respectful and kind towards each other and demonstrate practical care and deep concern for the most vulnerable in society; this is reflected in the positive response of pupils and their families to charitable activities at the school, such as collecting food for asylum seekers and the work of the Mini Vinnies. The chaplaincy provision at St Mary and St Benedict has a powerful impact on pupils' spiritual and moral development. Leaders and governors work very effectively with the parish priest to ensure the school is at the heart of parish life and pupils value this deep-rooted connection.

Staff at all levels are very committed to the school's mission. This is reflected throughout the school in the way children are valued and respected, the engaging and attractive religious displays, and the many ways Catholic life and mission are enhanced through visits to holy places, retreat days, and charitable outreach. A powerful sense of community runs through the school at all levels. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the school and are very supportive of its work. Pastoral care is very strong; as a result, pupils know they are genuinely loved and unique in the image of God. A well-sequenced Catholic relationships, sex,

and health education programme has been implemented. The school provides a carefully maintained, engaging Catholic environment both indoors and outdoors. Beautiful displays of pupils' work, artwork, statues, and outdoor spaces create a prayerful and spiritual environment where everyone can work and play, knowing that God is at the heart of the school. Pupils experience a wide range of opportunities to demonstrate care for our common home through gardening and growing activities in the school's allotment and sustainable practices, such as collecting rainwater for the allotment.

Leaders and governors are dedicated to ensuring the pupils experience an enriching Catholic education that provides excellent formation. They are meticulous in ensuring staff receive high-quality training and induction so that the Catholic life and mission of the school are consistently strong. The school engages positively with the diocese, and staff regularly attend training and support meetings. The head teacher chairs a group of Catholic head teachers who come together to support and develop the Catholic life and mission in all of their schools. Leaders and governors ensure all staff are treated with respect and dignity, resulting in a highly motivated and committed staff team. Staff feedback highlights how they feel valued and supported by the school. The governing board is well established and is utterly dedicated to ensuring the school, as a central part of the parish, provides the best possible Catholic education and care for its pupils. Governors' high expectations and aspirations are reflected in the quality of Catholic life and mission. Pupils are supported to evaluate Catholic life and mission for themselves, and this work has developed well post-pandemic.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade:.....

2

Pupil outcomes

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education.....

2

Provision

The quality of teaching, learning, and assessment in religious education.....

2

Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor, and evaluate the provision for religious education.....

2



Well-planned teaching sequences help pupils steadily improve their knowledge and understanding in religious education. Pupils make strong progress from their starting points because teaching enables them to know more and remember more. Pupils' religious literacy is strong, reflecting the well-planned teaching they receive. A clear focus on learning, practising, and remembering religious language runs through lessons for all year groups and leads to good outcomes. Pupils have a particularly robust knowledge of the school's patron saints. Pupils are skilled at asking their own questions about religion; for example, they have worked in groups to generate questions about sainthood. Pupils of all age groups demonstrate positive behaviour for learning, good conduct, and high levels of concentration in lessons. This is because teachers and teaching assistants ensure lessons are engaging and enjoyable and meet individual pupils' learning needs. Pupils say they thoroughly enjoy their lessons because they 'learn about Jesus and think about how to be like Jesus.' Attainment in religious education is generally strong, with most pupils meeting or exceeding age-related expectations by the end of each key stage.

Teachers and teaching assistants have good subject knowledge, and there is a culture of working together to ensure teaching is of good quality. Lessons are usually planned around pupils' prior knowledge, but the work is sometimes pitched too high or too low. All of the lessons seen during the inspection engaged pupils, and the work in their books is of a consistently good standard throughout the school. Teachers make very good use of questioning to remind pupils of previous learning and help them to store knowledge in their long-term memories. This is very effective in assisting the pupils in making progress. Whilst the youngest pupils learn about Bible stories, older pupils quickly move on to thinking about

what they can learn from these stories. Lessons in Key Stage 2 often provide opportunities for pupils to reflect meaningfully on the gospels. The school has invested in good quality religious education resources, which are well used by staff to enhance teaching and learning. Teachers usually provide helpful feedback for pupils to help them deepen their knowledge and understanding. Without exception, teachers value and recognise pupils' efforts and encourage and help them do their best.

Leaders ensure that the curriculum for religious education meets the requirements of the *Religious Education Curriculum Directory* and that all classes cover the required content. Both the subject leader and the head teacher undertake this monitoring work. The quality of learning and teaching is monitored, and staff are provided with helpful feedback. Leaders and governors do not yet evaluate the impact of this feedback to improve the quality of provision even further. Religious education is given at least the same high status as other core subjects. Lessons are well-resourced and well-staffed resulting in good quality learning for pupils. The subject leader is dedicated to improving and sustaining the good quality of religious education. She provides hands-on help and support for all staff, which effectively improves the quality of teaching and learning. Pupils' individual needs are well met in lessons, and teaching assistants contribute positively. Specialist resources are also well used to ensure all pupils can access and benefit from the curriculum, which is enriched by roleplay, artwork, offsite visits, and the richly Catholic environment of the school itself.

Collective worship

The quality and range of liturgy and prayer provided by the school.

Religious education key judgement grade:.....

2

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



Pupils enjoy the varied opportunities they have to participate in prayer. They show very high levels of reverence and respect and participate wholeheartedly by answering questions, joining in with responses and signing enthusiastically. Pupils are attentive and respectful as they listen to the head teacher and interact with her during worship. Pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of the liturgical year and make connections to the cycle of prayer and liturgy and various seasonal parish and school traditions. For example, pupils spoke enthusiastically about how they enjoyed Mass for Our Lady's birthday and the special assemblies about Holy Week. The school provides several retreat experiences; pupils say these are memorable and are unique opportunities for prayer and 'time away with Jesus.' Pupils are very reflective; even the younger pupils can describe how their experience of closeness to Jesus in liturgy and prayer helps them to live out his teachings in their daily lives.

Prayer is central to the daily life of the school. Different phase groups attend Mass in the parish weekly, and there are regular whole school assemblies. In addition, there are teacher-led assemblies, which feature prayer in class and pupil-led worship. The restrictions of the pandemic prevented pupils from visiting other classes to lead their own acts of worship, which has temporarily affected this aspect of the school's prayer life. Leaders recognise this and have planned strategically to address it. Pupils know a wide range of traditional prayers and responses, which are consistently taught throughout the school. Teachers are skilled at using scripture appropriately, and readings are chosen based on the liturgical season. All staff demonstrate high levels of commitment and set a positive example in prayer as leaders and participants. The children respond exceptionally well to this example because it is consistent

amongst all staff. Leaders are skilled at delivering good quality prayer and supporting all staff, enabling them to become competent and accomplished. Teachers are confident and enthusiastic and work as a team to ensure worship is of a consistently good standard throughout the school. The use of music, creative displays, prayerful silence, videos, and images help to provide innovative and engaging acts of 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. Prayer is prepared in partnership with the parish priest. This results in a programme of worship that is matched to pupils' ages and experiences, enabling all pupils to participate. Sacramental preparation is provided by the school and is positively evaluated by parents. Holy Days of Obligation are observed, and whole school Masses are celebrated. Leaders have in-depth knowledge and understanding of the liturgical year and ensure that prayer is matched appropriately and thoughtfully. Leaders and governors ensure that staff receive quality and effective induction training and continuing professional development throughout their careers. This results in high staff confidence and competence in prayer and liturgy. The head teacher monitors the school's entire provision of prayer and provides feedback to staff. The impact of this monitoring is not yet evaluated to help further drive the existing good standards. Leaders and governors ensure that prayer and liturgy are well resourced with subscriptions, artefacts, and training to support good quality experiences for pupils and the whole school community.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Mary and St Benedict Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	133556
Full postal address of the school	Leigh Street, Hillfields, Coventry, CV1 5HG
School phone number	02476 229 486
Name of head teacher or principal	Pauline MacDonald
Chair of governing board	Elizabeth Hancock
School Website	www.stmary-stben.coventry.sch.uk
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	Not applicable
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age-range of pupils	3-11
Trustees	Archdiocese of Birmingham
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	June 2016
Previous denominational inspection grade	Good

The inspection team

Mark Hinton	Lead inspector
Christine Finnegan	Team inspector

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