



St Benedict's Catholic Primary School

URN: 141812

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Archbishop of Birmingham

04–05 July 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

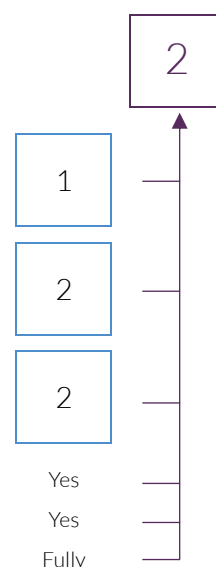
Collective worship (p.7)

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

- Pupils demonstrate an excellent understanding of Catholic social teaching and strong, active participation in and leadership of initiatives which promote it.
- The school's environment effectively reflects its Catholic mission and contributes positively to the formation of the school community.
- Pupils, showing their dedication and eagerness to learn, are actively engaged in religious education lessons, concentrate well, and are committed to improving their learning.
- Pupils understand and can articulate how experiences of prayer and liturgy have shaped themselves and inspired them to act.

What the school needs to improve

- Provide more specific feedback so pupils understand what they must do to progress in religious education.
- Ensure that a more consistent and strategic approach to monitoring, analysis, and self-evaluation of religious education is adopted to establish precisely focused subject improvements.
- Provide staff training that ultimately helps all pupils confidently and independently plan and prepare well-constructed prayer and liturgy.

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

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

1

St Benedict's Catholic Primary School is a joyful community where pupils fully embrace their mission, 'In love we learn, in faith we grow.' This mission is seen in artwork around the school and in interactions and relationships in every classroom. Pupils clearly articulate how they follow Jesus' teachings, and their faith calls them to action. Catholic social teaching is present at all levels in school: in lessons, in the communal prayer areas, in pupils' work, and outreach initiatives. There is no more remarkable example of this than the multi-academy company (MAC)-wide food bank initiative established in school to help those experiencing need in the local community. Pupils proactively respond to these needs locally and can articulate ethical and theological reasons for their actions. Pupils show excellent behaviour in class, around school and during times of meditation. Mutual respect is evident in their exemplary relationships and consideration for the dignity of others, including those of other faiths and religions. Pupils value opportunities for chaplaincy provision, contribute eagerly and are keen to take on more responsibility for their leadership.

The staff's unwavering commitment to the school's Catholic identity is a testament to their dedication and reassures the entire community that the mission is their absolute priority. They clearly and passionately articulate that Christ is at the centre of the school – whether this be relationships between pupils and teachers, leadership and staff, or in providing care for the most vulnerable within the school and the community. Leaders articulate how they understand and provide for the needs of their growing traveller community, which is a testament to the school's excellent culture of welcome. Furthermore, pupils with additional needs are catered for at intervals throughout the school day in 'Benny's Place', a safe environment where pupils are nurtured and developed at their own pace. Every area in the school is well thought-out and

celebrates the school's Catholic character, including the newly-developed 'Little Den' prayer room, which pupils can visit independently; an open-door access policy further promotes this. Spiritual formation is at the forefront of all interactions, as shown through the care and attention given to the quality of physical space in the school. Provision for relationships, sex, and health education (RSHE) is carefully planned to meet statutory and diocesan guidelines; it provides a distinctively Catholic perspective to pupils whose written work in this important subject is recorded and celebrated appropriately.

Leaders and governors are inspirational witnesses to the Gospel and Catholic social teaching in their direction of the school at every level. Training is provided for staff by the school and MAC leaders, who organise an annual retreat led by various highly skilled providers. Staff appreciate this and are vocal about its effectiveness in developing their understanding of the distinctive nature of Catholic education. Governors are ambitious for the Catholic Life of the school and are involved in its evaluation by providing challenge and support in equal measure. Both leaders and governors embrace and emphasise the close relationship they have developed with the parish. Leaders have the highest level of care for their staff, who say, 'There is a culture of recognising effort and achievement, no matter how small.' Staff praise leaders for their kindness and thoughtfulness regarding their well-being. Whether it is this commitment to staff welfare or the planning that has gone into designing a Catholic curriculum, St Benedict's is a school with a coherent and compelling expression of the Catholic faith at its core, inspiring all who are part of it.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

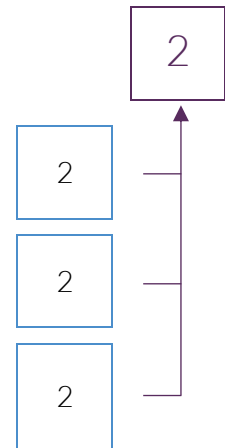
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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 speak eloquently and confidently about scripture, subject-specific vocabulary, and how it can impact their daily lives. They are very articulate when applying the values of Catholic social teaching to their learning. Consequently, pupils' books show a secure knowledge about the importance of treating others with respect and dignity. Pupils work independently and concentrate well; they take the initiative in their learning when given the opportunity to do so and respond to the challenge. The quality of work in exercise books shows pupils' creativity and respect for the subject. Some pupils further their knowledge by responding to deeper thinking questions in their books; this is a particular strength in Year 5 but is inconsistent elsewhere. Pupils enjoy religious education and are fully engaged, so their behaviour in lessons is exemplary. Furthermore, they are keen and enthusiastic to learn about Jesus' teachings; they are proactively encouraged to reflect on them. Most pupils make at least good progress in religious education, though progress for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) is not in line with expectations. Pupils know how well they achieve in religious education, as evidenced by the 'pink pen' technique in their books. However, an inconsistently applied feedback system means pupils are often unsure how to improve their learning further, deepen their understanding, and make further progress.

Staff at St Benedict's are fully committed to religious education's value and are confident in their teaching. This is because they have a good understanding of how pupils learn, and as such, the curriculum is well-planned and caters to their needs, especially those with SEND. Teachers use a range of questioning styles to consolidate prior learning through the 'knowledge and skill' activities in all lessons, resulting in pupils knowing and remembering more. Teachers have high expectations within religious education, so pupil motivation is high; this is seen in the excellent relationships between staff and pupils. Provision is always at least good, with many staff

commenting on how the subject-specific training they have received at school, MAC, and diocesan levels has supported this. A recent focus on extended writing has enabled various opportunities for pupils to express their thoughts and feelings through 'Stretch to the Stars' questions. This practice is seen in many pupils' books but is not yet securely established throughout the school. Teachers provide pupils with opportunities to present their learning in various ways to meet their differing needs. Thoughtful use of resources, such as religious artwork, is used effectively to engage pupils further and optimise learning. The effective deployment of staff, including support for pupils with additional needs, is commonplace throughout the school.

Leaders and governors ensure that religious education is paralleled with other core subjects and prioritise staffing numbers to support pupils with significant needs. The new subject leader for religious education has growing confidence and is developing expertise in improving provision and outcomes for the subject. She is keen to enhance teaching and learning in religious education, ensuring that teachers, including apprentice teachers, are supported in improving their practice. Although the monitoring of religious education is evident, including lesson observations and work scrutiny, this is not consistent or robust enough to identify targeted focused improvements; as such, the impact of these procedures is not yet maximised. Furthermore, rigorous analysis of monitoring, careful self-evaluation and alignment between school improvement documentation, including the Catholic self-evaluation document and the religious education action plan, are not evident. Thus, priorities in religious education could be more well-targeted. The head teacher reports to the governing body to outline progress towards priorities in subject developments so they are well-informed.

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 relish the variety of prayer and liturgy experiences offered to them and understand and articulate their impact. Pupils discuss how 'Prayer changes our behaviour and teaches us to do what Jesus wants us to do'. The prayer and liturgy offered at St Benedict's for pupils, staff, and the school community include silent reflection, whole-school prayer, meditation, and liturgical music. Indeed, pupils sing with great eagerness and expression. Pupils are given the opportunity to enhance their experiences of prayer and liturgy by working collaboratively with prayer buddies and as part of the Mini-Vinnies programme. The school encourages pupils to undertake these liturgical ministries willingly and provides opportunities to evaluate the quality of the prayer and liturgy provision. More opportunities to prepare prayer and liturgy across the school would improve pupil confidence and skill. Pupils articulate how prayer and liturgy influence and are influenced by the school's curriculum and broader life. Additionally, pupils understand how to reflect on their experiences of prayer and liturgy, clearly expressing how these experiences have prompted them to act.

Carefully organised prayer and liturgical activities form an integral part of school life. These occasions include liturgically-appropriate scripture readings, selected to ensure active and meaningful participation from all attendees. Staff demonstrate skilled participation in these religious practices, serving as role models for their pupils and the wider school community. They speak confidently about how prayer positively impacts pupils and the school community and supports everyone's moral and spiritual development. The school's prayer and liturgical life is enriched by incorporating music and other artistic expressions, such as retreat days and collaborations with visiting artists. Prayer bags, sent home at key liturgical times of the year, have initiated prayerful experiences for pupils with parents. Where this has been successful, pupils use these opportunities to plan follow-up liturgy for their peers. The 'gather, listen, respond and

go forth' model structures staff's planning. However, whilst pupil-led prayer is planned for, the quality is inconsistent across the school. Subsequently, staff do not always have a comprehensive understanding of how to help pupils prepare and lead well-constructive, high-quality worship due to limited professional development from leaders. The school effectively utilises available spaces to create prayer areas within classrooms and other locations, ensuring these spaces are well-maintained and conducive to prayer and reflection. Strong connections with the local parish through Mass and sacramental preparation further support students and their families in engaging with liturgy, fostering a more profound sense of community and faith.

The impressive MAC *Holy Spirit Experience* booklet, which outlines the Catholic life and worship opportunities offered to pupils, is a testament to leaders' vision to support every child on their faith journey. Leaders, including governors, recognise the varying levels and skills of participation in prayer and liturgy that reflect pupils' ages. Subsequently, they have set out expectations regarding pupil-led liturgy. However, these expectations are not consistently followed by staff across the school. In addition, a policy on prayer and liturgy exists but lacks the precise detail required to provide staff with a clear understanding of leaders' expectations for pupil-led prayer and liturgy at St Benedict's. Leaders have strategically planned the school calendar and schedule to include regular opportunities for prayer and liturgical experiences, including Eucharistic celebration. Additionally, regular formation opportunities are organised for staff within the school and MAC to deepen their faith. Leaders evaluate the impact of prayer and liturgy as part of the school's ongoing self-assessment and improvement processes, actively seeking pupils' feedback as part of this evaluation, which leads to action planning.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Benedict's Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	141812
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	937 3501
Full postal address of the school	Church Walk, Atherstone, CV9 1PS
School phone number	01827 712320
Headteacher	Paula Parker
Chair of governing board	Philip Richardson
School Website	www.stbenedictsonline.co.uk
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	The Holy Spirit Catholic Multi Academy Company
Phase	Primary
Type of school	Academy
Admissions policy	Non-selective
Age-range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	March 2018
Previous denominational inspection grade	2

The inspection team

Melanie Elliott
 Claire Restell

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