

Catholic Schools Inspectorate inspection report for St John the Baptist Catholic Primary School

URN: 148093

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

Date: 1 - 2 December 2022

Overall effectiveness

The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school.....

2

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.....

2

Religious education (p.5)

The quality of curriculum religious education.....

2

Collective worship (p.7)

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

2

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

Fully

Summary of key findings

What the school does well

- There is a strong sense of community, evident in the lived-out mission of the school and the quality of relationships.
- The school environment promotes the ethos and prayer life of the school well.
- Pupils, staff, and leaders demonstrate commitment to Catholic Social Teaching, caring for our common home and serving the most vulnerable.
- Teachers are confident in their subject knowledge in teaching religious education and use effective questioning to maximise learning and support pupils' understanding.
- The school is very committed to the pastoral care of all pupils. Pupils are well cared for and nurtured; they respond positively, respectfully and with a high standard of behaviour.

What the school needs to improve:

- Develop effective strategies to engage families in the school's prayer life.
- Increase opportunities for internal and external moderation to ensure that religious education assessment is accurate.
- Embed robust monitoring, analysis, and self-evaluation systems for religious education and collective worship to improve outcomes.

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:.....

2

Pupil outcomes

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

2

Provision

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

2

Leadership

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

2

Pupils understand the school's mission statement, 'We will prepare the way by loving, living and learning with the Lord' and are proud to share it with others. Pupils actively participate in the school's mission and consequently show love and respect for those around them, including those of other faiths and religions. Three 'mission weeks' throughout the year allow pupils and staff to reflect on and explore the mission more deeply, enabling them to understand it fully; it is known and lived by all. Pupils are happy and positively responsive to the school's Catholic identity, confidently explaining that 'We are all part of God's family and all friends together'. They talk about following the example of Jesus, and their behaviour in lessons and outside the classroom is exceptionally good because they understand this. The priority given to Catholic Social Teaching means that pupils grow in virtue by accepting responsibility in caring for our common home through initiatives such as Cafod's 'LiveSimply' award and various social action projects. They recognise the importance of helping those less fortunate through harvest collections and fundraising for local charities, such as Sifa Fireside and Father Hudson's Care. Staff are positive role models for pupils, and pastoral provision is strong.

The school's distinctive, attractive, engaging environment reflects and greatly enhances its mission. Pupils evaluate displays and subsequently contribute to the development of the school's Catholic life. The school provides good opportunities for the spiritual and moral development of pupils and staff. The highest priority is given to the pastoral support of pupils and families to promote their well-being. Indeed, pupils relish the chance to actively engage with the school's well-planned chaplaincy provision offers. Pupil liturgy leaders have been established, but their role is not yet fully developed. The provision for relationships, sex, and health education (RSHE) meets statutory and diocesan requirements. Still, it has not been closely monitored to determine whether the well-planned curriculum is being covered adequately.

The development of Catholic life and mission is a high priority for leaders and governors. A recently developed 'children's charter' from the multi-academy company (MAC), which the head teacher took the lead in developing, outlines the approach and aspiration of the school to deliver a comprehensively Catholic educational experience to all pupils. Leaders' self-evaluation of Catholic life and mission is evident, and subsequent improvement planning is clearly identified in the official school improvement plan; however, pupils are not yet fully integrated into the self-evaluation process in a way that further enhances school development. Governors take pride in their roles and are committed to their responsibilities. They support, contribute and challenge, but need to adopt a greater involvement in the evaluation of the Catholic life and mission of the school. Leaders and governors work well with the local parish, and the school greatly values the spiritual formation that the parish priest offers both pupils and staff. Parents are complimentary of the school and supportive of its mission. The school has strategies for engaging with parents to benefit pupils, though this area of the school's work is not yet fully developed. The school promotes the archbishop's vision and fully responds to diocesan policies. Policies and procedures are carefully designed to ensure that all staff understand the head teacher's vision and, as a result, there is consistency in understanding and provision across the school. For example, an early career teacher commented to inspectors that clear policies help with the induction process and enable a greater understanding of the school's Catholic life and mission.

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

Pupils are developing secure knowledge, understanding, and skills in religious education. They can articulate what they have learnt confidently, showing an awareness of key concepts; they make good progress against the planned curriculum in each classroom. Pupils approach religious education lessons with interest and enthusiasm, leading to exemplary levels of behaviour. They are engaged in the learning process and can answer teachers' questions and ask good questions, enhancing their learning. Their religious literacy skills are developing, and they easily understand and use religious vocabulary. The quality of work in exercise books is good, and pupils understand how well they are doing in religious education and what they need to do to improve. Most outcomes within the scheme of work are covered; however, where there are gaps in coverage, the learning sequence is inconsistent and impacts pupils' understanding of the curriculum. Pupils talked animatedly about the school's innovative approach to 'Godly play' and how this helps them to reflect deeply when understanding Scripture and the purpose of life; pupils benefit from this opportunity to expand their religious knowledge and understanding through creative means, which also develops their spirituality. Pupils achieve at least average attainment in religious education. Data analysis and trends have enabled staff to identify the progress of particular groups of pupils and put in place measures to address the gaps identified over the last couple of years.

The teaching of religious education is a strength of the school and is always at least good. Teachers are confident in their subject knowledge and have a good understanding of how pupils learn, appropriate to the phase they are teaching; this leads to lessons which are planned well and provide a wide range of creative opportunities to engage pupils. Teachers are skilled in using questions during lessons; they target questions to the needs of specific pupils and provide an appropriate level of challenge. This makes pupils think more deeply and respond more fully, thus enabling pupils to make further progress. Teachers provide pupils with feedback, which ensures pupils understand

what they need to do to progress in their learning. The use of teaching assistants to assess by observation at the start of lessons captures pupil responses. It supports the class teacher in identifying the knowledge that pupils, including those with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND), have and understand. Regular assessments against teachers' planning are carried out; however, assessment against age-related standards is inconsistent. Opportunities for both internal and MAC-wide moderation are not utilised to determine whether teachers' assessments are accurate and consistent. Other adults are effectively used, as are good-quality resources, optimising learning for pupils. Teachers recognise the impact religious education has on pupils' moral and spiritual development and provide time for deeper reflection in lessons. Pupils' efforts and work are regularly celebrated during class and assembly, increasing pupil motivation.

Leaders and governors ensure that religious education is comparable to other core subjects regarding resourcing, staffing, and accommodation. Leaders and governors have a vision for improving religious education, and self-evaluation helps inform this; however, the findings of monitoring and analysis are not always frequent or rigorous enough. Leaders' feedback to staff does not always provide enough detail about how they can improve their practice to improve standards further. The head teacher's reports to governors offer a good level of detail in outlining the progress the school is making towards its improvement targets; this ensures that governors have a clearer picture of developments in religious education.

Collective worship

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

Collective worship 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 are reverent and respond well to experiences of prayer and liturgy offered by the school, showing their ability to reflect in silence and join-in community prayer. They readily participate in prayers with their peers and listen attentively during class liturgies. Pupils understand that there are different ways of praying, including responding to Scripture, praying traditional prayers and independent meditation. The re-introduction of the school choir has been a positive step; however, there are limited opportunities for experiencing other liturgical music to enhance the quality of prayer and worship. Regular prayer and liturgy opportunities encourage pupils to reflect on their own lives and lead them to action, putting the needs of others first. Pupils' knowledge of the Church's liturgical year is strong, and they can articulate how these seasons influence the school's prayer life and help them grow deeper in their faith and closer to God. A regular feature of prayer is the use of a liturgical wheel, which has undoubtedly impacted pupils' knowledge and understanding of the cycle of seasons and feasts. Pupils enjoy opportunities to prepare and lead acts of worship, though this needs further development. Pupil evaluation of prayer is inconsistent, though it does form part of the school's self-evaluation of this area of work.

Staff are committed to developing the spiritual life of pupils, whilst the parish priest and governors recognise the efforts of staff in supporting the formation of pupils. Planned prayer and liturgy form part of a regular and comprehensive programme of routine gatherings, including the celebration of Mass, assemblies, and class worship. Their commitment is enhanced by a close partnership with the parish priest, who visits the school regularly to answer pupils' 'I wonder' questions and to support their spiritual formation. Seasonally appropriate Bible passages are carefully chosen by staff and enhance the quality of their provision; staff plan and lead classroom-based prayer and liturgy well. They understand the elements well and use the model of 'gather, listen, respond, go forth', effectively. Focused prayer areas in classrooms are of a high standard, and the school uses

the spaces available to maximum effect in promoting prayer and reflection. In particular, the school has many high-quality areas to inspire spontaneous prayer. Parents are supportive towards the school and its contribution to the spiritual formation of their children; however, more opportunities to include families in the school's prayer life are needed.

The school's policy on prayer and liturgy is carefully formulated and used by staff. Staff speak confidently about how prayer and liturgy are central to the life of the school and the positive impact it has on the school community. Leaders and governors have planned the school's calendar and timetable to include opportunities to celebrate Mass regularly and to observe key times in the liturgical year. Some training for staff around prayer and liturgy has been provided, including opportunities for spiritual formation. The need for more regular training opportunities is recognised by the MAC, which has plans to support this area further. Leaders, including governors, are keen to improve prayer and liturgy by identifying key priorities; however, the quality and impact of worship are not yet reviewed consistently or rigorously enough in a way that enables leaders to gain an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for improvement in this area.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St John The Baptist Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	148093
Full postal address of the school	Arran Way, Smiths Wood, B36 0QE
School phone number	0121 770 1892
Name of head teacher or principal	Ian Gallagher
Chair of governing board	Paul Bentley
School Website	https://www.sjb.solihull.sch.uk/
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	Our Lady and All Saints Catholic Multi Academy Company
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy
Age-range of pupils	3 to 11
Trustees	Archdiocese of Birmingham
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	May 2016
Previous denominational inspection grade	2

The inspection team

Melanie Elliott

Lead inspector

Debbie Enstone

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