

Catholic Schools Inspectorate inspection report for St Bernadette's Catholic Primary School

URN: 116391

Carried out on behalf of the Right Rev. Philip Egan, Bishop of Portsmouth on:

Date: 28 - 29 June 2023

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.....

1

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

- St Bernadette's is a community where all know and embrace the mission statement and charism, recognising it as a golden thread which runs through all aspects of school life.
- Catholic social teaching has been introduced throughout the curriculum, children are able to make strong links between scripture, teaching and their lived experience.
- Pupil voice is heard throughout the school community and they feel confident that they will be heard and can influence change for the better. They gladly embrace their personal responsibility to care for our common home, pursue the common good and serve those in need.
- The pupil chaplaincy team provide rich prayer experiences for their peers, being proud ambassadors of passing on their faith.

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.

- The leader for religious education provides excellent support to the staff, ensuring that they feel confident in their delivery of good quality religious education throughout the school.

What the school needs to improve:

- Develop a consistent approach to ensure challenge for all pupils, enabling them to demonstrate deeper knowledge and understanding.
- Provide staff with quality professional development to enable them to be highly effective in delivering high quality collective worship, including how they can best support pupils to plan and lead their own 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:.....

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

Pupils clearly understand the distinctive Catholic identity, charism and mission of their school. They know that the school community is committed to following the teaching and example of the Gospel and know that they are part of a community of faith. Their active participation significantly enhances the Catholic life and mission of the school. Pupils demonstrate an excellent understanding of Catholic social teaching, which is present across the curriculum, and are proactive in finding ways of responding locally, nationally, and globally; citing work with the Farnborough Foodbank, CAFOD and Fairtrade. They gladly embrace their personal responsibility to care for our common home, talking enthusiastically about the work of the stewardship council. One child said 'We do it because God said we should help one another, love one another. It's in Genesis – God tells us to care for nature.' Pupils demonstrate a deep sense of respect for those of other faiths. They have a deep understanding that not everyone in their community is Catholic and talk about the ways which they ensure that everyone feels valued and included. They talk of the kind, supportive culture created by the staff which enables these conversations to take place. Pupils highly value the opportunities given to them to take on chaplaincy leadership roles within the school. They appreciate the opportunities to plan and lead liturgical prayer with their own classes and across the school. Pupils truly take the lead in passing on their faith to others.

Recent work on the charism of the school, based around the life and example of St Bernadette, has enhanced the centrality of the mission statement. The school excels at being a community based in Catholic tradition and practice, with regular opportunities to celebrate their distinctive identity planned into the taught curriculum and the cycle of prayer and liturgy. There is a lived sense of community, evident in the quality of relationships. The school welcomes all in a spirit of generous hospitality, and staff demonstrate a willingness to support the most vulnerable in their

loving and practical interactions with pupils and families. Staff are exemplary role models for pupils who talk about kind, supportive teachers who make learning fun and create a culture in which it is 'OK to make mistakes and learn from them'. The school has ensured that its identity is evident to all visitors and members of the community, through well thought out displays, statues, and prayer spaces, and a highly cherished relic of St Bernadette. One child said, 'It feels very special to have this; she's with us now.' Parents appreciate the efforts of school staff to support them in their child's faith journey. Responses to the parental survey were overwhelming supportive of the school. One parent said, 'the school gives children support at every level and is a great foundation for a living faith.'

Leaders have prioritised spending to develop the school environment in response to suggestions from children, and made budgetary decisions around providing support for most vulnerable, both educationally and materially. There is a high level of pastoral care for staff who feel well supported. The governor for religious education is highly ambitious for the Catholic life of the school, she actively engages in diocesan training, school monitoring, and is a regular visitor to the school. Self evaluation is ambitious and rigorous and leads to well targeted and planned improvements. Professional development occurs frequently and is well-planned and effective. Staff speak highly of the support received from leaders and value opportunities to plan with colleagues across the federation. Staff new to the school feel well supported with access to effective and focused induction.

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

The pupils speak enthusiastically about their religious education lessons and welcome the opportunity to learn about their faith. One pupil said, 'Each time we think about God, our faith grows.' They appreciate the support they receive from teachers and the range of activities planned for them. Carefully planned learning journeys support the children to know more, remember more and do more; as a result, pupils achieve well in most years. Pupils are religiously literate and engaged young people. They are able to articulate what they have learnt, make links across their learning and reflect spiritually, showing an awareness of key concepts and using some subject specific vocabulary and making links to scripture they have studied. Greater provision now needs to be made to allow children to extend their responses in order to better demonstrate their deeper knowledge and understanding. Pupils are proud of their work. In some classes, children were able to work independently and take the initiative to choose how to present their work and were able to give reasons for their choice. Some children were able to articulate the next steps in their learning and explain how they have made progress – this now needs to be extended to all children through a consistent approach to feedback. In all lessons observed, children were engaged and keen to improve their knowledge, understanding and skills.

Teachers are confident in their subject knowledge; this was evident in every lesson observed. They have a good understanding of how pupils learn. Planning is linked to assessment, so that pupils learn well and build on prior knowledge. Teachers provide pupils with opportunities to present their learning using a variety of forms of expression; pupils speak enthusiastically about the creativity they can demonstrate and give examples including home learning making Easter gardens. This inspires them and adds to their enjoyment of religious education. Time has been ring-fenced to allow for effective professional development which enables teachers to deliver the curriculum confidently, and staff welcome the opportunity to work collaboratively. For example,

when the Catholic social teaching unit was introduced, staff worked across the federation to plan, and welcomed the opportunity to share resources and ideas. However, provision for pupils in the lower year groups sometimes lacks challenge and does not give children the opportunity to demonstrate deeper thinking. Follow up 'orange questions' in some books enable children to deepen their learning, but this is not yet consistent. Teachers recognise the impact religious education has on the moral and spiritual development of pupils and give space and time for reflection in lessons.

Leaders ensure that religious education is taught in line with the diocesan guidance, and resources are used imaginatively to enhance the delivery of the curriculum. Leaders and governors ensure that religious education has full parity with other core curriculum subjects, which includes professional development, resourcing, timetabling, staffing and accommodation. The subject leader for religious education has a clear vision of teaching and learning and a good level of expertise in securing this vision; she is effective in supporting staff. Leaders ensure that there is an appropriately sequential curriculum which ensures planned progression. Leaders recognise the limitations which were placed on enrichment opportunities during the Covid pandemic, and are keen to re-establish them, for example, the links with the local Gurkha community. This has already been identified as an area for further development by leaders and governors. During the inspection, Year 6 children visited Wintershall, and spoke enthusiastically about the experience. Leaders and governors' self-evaluation is informed by thorough monitoring, analysis and self-challenge.

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 respond well to experiences of prayer and liturgy provided by the school and participate fully in them. They understand a variety of prayers that are part of the Catholic tradition and are able to explain the liturgical year and how it influences the prayer life of the school. In Key Stage 1, pupils participate respectfully in teacher led liturgies, and are engaged and prayerful. Consideration needs to be given to how the younger pupils can be more actively involved, including having a more direct role in leading on some aspects of the prayer and liturgy. Pupils in Key Stage 2 are able to deliver liturgies confidently. They are able to evaluate and suggest improvements. The chaplaincy team are very proud of their role and welcome the opportunity to plan and deliver worship across the school. All pupils in Key Stage 2 are involved in leading prayer and liturgy with support from the leader for religious education. Pupils demonstrate they have the skills and confidence to plan prayer and liturgy, and staff need to ensure that they are given greater opportunities to do this.

Appropriately planned prayer and liturgy are central to the life of the school, and form part of routine gatherings of pupils, staff and leaders. There is a well-planned pattern of prayer that reflects the rhythm of the prayer life of the church, for example, the pupils talked about the rosary club, Stations of the Cross and reconciliation . Senior leaders are models of good practice to other staff and pupils as participants in and leaders of prayer and liturgy; pupils and staff spoke highly of the Gospel assembly led each week by the head of school. As pupils further develop their skills in planning and leading prayer and liturgy, the provision needs to ensure there are increasing opportunities for pupil involvement and leadership in collective worship. Leaders have made excellent use of available space to create focal points which are well-cared for and enhance the prayer life of the school, including the provision of a permanent, well-resourced prayer room. This is highly valued by the pupils, who are very proud of it. Families are regularly invited to join the

children for prayer and Mass. Leaders have developed resources to promote prayer links with families, such as prayer bags, and a school prayer book which is available on the website. The school works well with the local parish to help pupils participate more fully in the liturgy. Classes regularly join the parishioners for weekday Mass and the parish priest and other members of the local Salesian community are regular visitors to the school.

The school's policy on prayer and liturgy is fit for purpose and is useful to relevant staff. Leaders understand the different levels and skills of participation that are reflective of the age and capacity of the pupils. There is a clear strategy for building up these skills as pupils progress through the school. The school calendar has been planned to ensure that there are regular opportunities for the whole community to celebrate the Eucharist, particularly at key times of the year. Holy days of obligation are observed in school, and the pupils were celebrating receiving their First Holy Communion with a special celebration Mass. The Sacrament of Reconciliation is offered at key times in the liturgical year, such as Lent and Advent. The work of the leader for religious education in supporting the chaplaincy team has ensured that high quality, pupil led liturgy is embedded in the prayer life of the school; this now needs to be extended to facilitate others supporting pupils to plan and lead. Leaders have demonstrated a commitment to securing the centrality of prayer and liturgy through the allocation of budgets and other resources. The views of the pupils are sought and taken into account in decision making, enabling the pupils to feel fully engaged in the planning and delivery of prayer and liturgy in the school.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Bernadette's Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	116391
Full postal address of the school	Tilebarn Close, Cove, Farnborough, GU14 8LS
School phone number	01252 548123
Name of head teacher or principal	Paula Dix
Chair of governing board	Gerard Owens
School Website	www.st-bernadettes.hants.sch.uk
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	n/a
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age-range of pupils	4 to 11
Trustees	Catholic Diocese of Portsmouth
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	November 2016
Previous denominational inspection grade	Good

The inspection team

Veronica Woodward

Lead inspector

Roxy Ashworth

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