



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

URN: 119584

Carried out on behalf of the Right Rev. Paul Swarbrick, Bishop of Lancaster on:

Date: 28th and 29th 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.....

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.....

1

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 strong family-focused school that values and nurtures all members within the school community.
- The head teacher who was appointed two years ago, has been inspirational in her vision and has established a strong team of staff and governors who are dedicated and committed guardians of the Catholic life and mission of the school.
- The school's mission statement has been recently reviewed and is a clear and inspiring expression of the educational mission of the Church.
- Leaders' self evaluation is good, and they fully understand what is needed to improve outcomes in religious education.

- Christ is at the heart of the school, with a lived sense of community, evident in the quality of pupil and staff relationships and the strong culture of welcome.

What the school needs to improve:

- To make adaptations to teaching and learning for pupils with a deeper knowledge and understanding of religious education, to enable them to demonstrate this in their written and verbal outcomes.
- To extend external collaboration with local schools to provide staff with highly effective continuous professional development in order to realise the bishop's vision for Catholic schools in the Diocese of Lancaster.
- To further develop the knowledge and skills of the newly formed governing body to drive the school's highly ambitious shared vision forward.

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

1

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 distinctive Catholic identity, charism, and mission of their school. They value St Bernadette's and how it helps them shape their faith. This was evident in discussions with pupils, as they could express an understanding that they are valued and cared for. Pupils spoken to on the day of the inspection said that they were happy at St Bernadette's and felt safe there. Pupils' behaviour is very good, and this was observed as they were arriving at school and as they moved respectfully around school. They spoke with inspectors about their understanding of the school community and their commitment to following the teachings of Jesus. Pupils put this into practice in their prayer and Laudato Si groups. Pupils seek opportunities to grow in virtue and serve those in need. They do this by organising community events to raise money for local charities such as 'Crisis' and more globally, 'Cafod'. The school's pupil parliament highlights the need for action to save our common home.

Pupils demonstrate respect for one another and spoke about the importance of following the school values, which have been introduced by the more recently appointed head teacher. Their understanding of the importance and significance of these values needs to be established and embedded. Pupils have a well-developed sense of respect for those of other faiths, religions, and those with no faith. Pupils value the school's areas of prayer and actively participate in opportunities provided by the school. The next steps would be to ensure that their active participation significantly enhances the Catholic life and mission of the school.

The provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school is exceptional. The head teacher has a powerful vision which she has shared with staff and governors. They work together to ensure that this shared vision is realised. The mission statement has recently been reviewed and is a

clear expression of the educational mission of the Church. It has a visible impact on the life of the school, where beautiful crosses depicting the school values are displayed very visibly, in every classroom. Pupils were keen to draw these to the attention of the inspectors. Staff are committed to the implementation of the mission statement, and this was evident when inspectors spoke with staff members. Staff and governors are committed and dedicated to the school and it is clear that the school has moved forward at an incredible pace throughout the last two years, under the leadership of the inspirational head teacher. The school provides excellent provision for pupils, staff, and families to grow in their faith and in Christ, who is very much at the heart of this school. The school is a supportive and joyful community and offers exceptional care for the children and families in their community. This can be evidenced in the parental questionnaires, with one parent stating, 'Our children's faith journey is encouraged and supported at St Bernadette's.' The school celebrates the presence of those from other faiths and cultures, often going to great efforts to understand and support their needs. Staff are exemplary role models for the pupils and inspectors observed the love, care, and mutual respect between all at the school. The school environment is outstanding and provides many opportunities for pupils to develop their spiritual faith.

The provision for *Relationships, Health and Sex Education* is carefully planned to use appropriate resources to ensure it meets the statutory and diocesan requirements and is monitored thoroughly by the subject leader, through lesson observations, pupil interviews and book scrutinies. Pupils were able to talk about what they had learned in these lessons.

Senior leaders and governors were able to articulate the Church's mission in education and they are all committed, dedicated and passionate about their duty as guardians of the Catholic life and mission of St Bernadette's. They are thorough in their task, making regular observation visits and providing feedback to staff and governors. This could be evidenced in governors' reports and minutes. The governing body is a newly formed team who provide support to the Senior leaders and staff. They are ambitious for the Catholic life and mission and prioritise it as an area for school improvement within the recently formed *Faith & Community* sub-committee. They are committed to enriching their own knowledge of Catholic education. They have clear systems in place for receiving the views of parents, staff, and pupils. All policies are scrutinised by governors to ensure the Catholic identity is reflective within the practice across school. Leaders and governors embrace and actively promote the bishop's vision for the diocese. They participate in the services offered by the diocese. Governors have laid firm foundations and understand their core leadership responsibilities. As a result, they are now in a strong position to challenge and hold the senior leaders to account, thus creating evidence of rigorous scrutiny and evaluation.

Staff new to the school are supported in their professional development, enabling them to participate fully in the Catholic life and mission of the school.

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.....

1

2

The pupils at St Bernadette's are developing secure knowledge and understanding of their faith through the newly established curriculum. They were happy to discuss their learning and had confidence in sharing what they have learnt. They are rightly proud of the work they produce in religious education and this work is the same quality as seen in their English books. Work in books is always well presented and shows a creative approach to learning. Pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) can access religious education fully and are ably supported well by the support assistants. Behaviour in religious education lessons is good with pupils engaged in learning. Pupils listen well and they respond well to activities. Through evidence seen in workbooks and from conversations, it is evident that most pupils can demonstrate effective use of prior knowledge when making links between religious ideas and using scriptural references accurately. All pupils spoke positively about religious education lessons and the impact learning has outside of the lessons. Pupils have shared their learning journey with governors. All pupils across the phases in school make consistently good progress in religious education. Pupils make good connections to what they learn in lessons that ensure that they are aware of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life. Pupils talked about being 'Courageous stewards of creation' but now need to demonstrate a fuller understanding of how this is applied in everyday life. Based on the evidence inspectors recognise that the school is on a determined journey to become outstanding but is currently good.

The quality of teaching and learning in religious education, as evidenced through pupils' religious education books and the teaching observed during the inspection, is of a good standard. The best lessons challenged pupils with the use of effective questioning. In all the lessons observed, teachers showed sound subject knowledge, which contributed to the good progress pupils made by all in the lessons. The use of resources including music, art and religious vocabulary and

routine access to Bibles, is a strength of the school. All learning is tailored to meet the needs of their learners with pupils reaching the expected standard. The religious education curriculum design captures the children's love of practical learning as seen in the variety of tasks in religious education books. Inspiring ideas hold pupils' attention as seen in a Year 5 lesson where the opportunity to share some of the key aspects of the Seder plate, which then informed leaflet writing for younger children. Classroom assistants provide some valuable support for pupils. Teachers use the start of each lesson to build on prior learning, using questioning to highlight key learning and vocabulary to ensure and identify where pupils are in their understanding. As a result, the children are engaged in the lessons, demonstrating good behaviour throughout. The learning established ensures that pupils achieve the expected standard in this subject, as confirmed by the subject leader. To enhance this further the subject leader knows that the next steps are to ensure that there are opportunities for challenges that meet the needs of all learners. The consistency of this good practice needs further adjusting to ensure the excellent progress of every pupil in the school.

The head teacher's and religious education leader's passion and drive for the subject underpin the outstanding support for all staff. This enables teachers to deliver lessons with confidence and enthusiasm and to ensure that standards in religious education are high. Their strong knowledge and experience give them the confidence and skill to adapt the school's approach to the subject in order to continually seek improvement. Collectively they have put together a religious education curriculum, which despite being in its infancy, provides creative ways in which the children's learning experiences are enhanced within the religious education curriculum. Employing a range of experiences including '*Come and See*' and incorporating '*Caritas in Action*' and other materials is ensuring that staff have access to resources that provide a curriculum that reflects the aspiration to be outstanding. All leaders, including governors, recognise the importance of religious education and share the head teacher's and religious education subject leader's passion in seeking the highest quality of religious education for all the pupils in the school. This aim is supported by governors who ensure that funds are available for the subject. The religious education subject leader and head teacher proactively support staff with the development of the curriculum that they strive to achieve. They draw on internal moderation to ensure that there is a culture of understanding of what expected standards are at St Bernadette's. Professional development is given priority and valued by all. Leaders and governors have a good understanding of the strengths of St Bernadette's and what is needed to improve. Governors are immensely proud and supportive of the school. They understand that there needs to be closer monitoring and analysis of the subject on its journey towards outstanding. Leaders and governors ensure that the religious education curriculum meets the requirements of the Bishops Conference, with 10% of the timetable dedicated to the subject across all year groups. The school's membership of Mater Christi Multi-Academy Trust will further enhance the sharing of good practice in religious education.

Collective worship

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

Collective worship key judgement grade:.....

1

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

1

Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for collective worship

1



There is a well-developed range and frequency of prayer and liturgy across the school, including the regular celebration of Mass. Pupils engage very well with prayer and liturgy and are active participants within it, showing reverence, attentiveness, and sacred silence. Pupils have an understanding of Catholic tradition and are experienced in planning and delivering prayer and liturgy supported by an adult. Pupils can describe how aspects of their prayer and liturgy are influenced by the liturgical year but rely on adults to guide their planning. Pupils willingly and enthusiastically undertake liturgical ministries that enhance the Catholic life of the school. For example, the Year 6 prayer leaders can articulate how their support enables younger children to pray when they join sessions in the oratory at lunchtime. Pupils are eager to share the mission and Gospel values of the school in their interactions with each other and how these are used as the basis of many prayerful moments in school. They can reflect on how their learning affects the way they interact with each other and leads them to take action in a Catholic context. Developing child-led evaluation of prayer and liturgy, leading to further improvement, has been identified as a next step by the school.

Prayer and liturgy is central to life at St Bernadette's. A wide range of significant moments are celebrated and shared by pupils, staff, governors, parents, and the wider parish. Prayer is valued by all and is fully embedded within the daily rhythms of the school. The school's Marian service and observance of holy days of obligation, further demonstrate the centrality of prayer and worship in school. Traditional prayer, opportunities to say the rosary, singing and dance also serve to engage pupils within the richness of the Catholic tradition. Staff commitment to prayer and liturgy is exemplary. They are role models to the pupils and offer great support within the planning and delivery of class, small group and whole school prayer and liturgy, promoting creativity in prayer and liturgy, enabling pupils to use their musical and artistic gifts to praise God.

Shared prayerful spaces at St Bernadette's, such as the oratory and community prayer station, are beautifully created, accessible, well-cared for and focused on the liturgical year as well as Catholic social teaching. Prayer intentions toward care for our common home can be seen throughout the school supporting this core theme of the school's charism and this is extended throughout the classrooms, where prayer spaces are given pride of place. As a result of the close working relationship with the parish priest, who the pupils hold in high esteem, a flourishing partnership with the parish has been secured, promoting more pupils and families to attend Mass.

Leaders and governors are passionate about the school's provision and the delivery of prayer and liturgy. They ensure that policies are in place to support staff and there is clear direction on how practice across the school should look. As a result, prayer and liturgy is age appropriate and reflects the ability of the pupils. A strength of the school is the carefully planned calendar that incorporates holy days of obligation, special occasions such as the pilgrimage to venerate St Bernadette's relics, opportunities for pupils and staff to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation during Lent and Advent. Other liturgical events and masses for the whole school community take place, where the Eucharist is celebrated. This strategic approach and leaders' knowledge ensures that pupils experience a variety of ways of praying that are part of the Catholic tradition. The school's vision for prayer and liturgy is commendable and a very generous budget is committed to this each year. Recent professional development to support staff in this area has led to enhanced resources being purchased and the quality of experiences across the school to be raised. Leaders and governors are committed to maintaining high quality prayer and liturgy and actively seek the views of pupils and parents in the evaluation of provision before planning for further improvement. The newly formed *Faith and Communities Committee* works collaboratively with all stakeholders to achieve this.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St. Bernadette's Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	119584
Full postal address of the school	Bowerham Road, Lancaster, LA1 4HT
School phone number	01524 63934
Name of head teacher or principal	Mrs Donna Shoulder
Chair of governing board	Mr Paul Wyre
School Website	https://st-bernadettes.lancs.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	Lancaster Roman Catholic Diocesan Trustees Registered
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	June 17
Previous denominational inspection grade	1 – Outstanding

The inspection team

Michelle Holden

Lead inspector

Mark FitzGibbon

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