



DIOCESAN CANONICAL INSPECTION REPORT

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL, RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AND COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

St Norbert's Catholic Voluntary Academy

Fieldside, Crowle, North Lincolnshire, DN17 4HL

School URN:	138827
Inspection Date:	28 March 2022
Inspectors:	Mrs F Boucher and Mrs C Murphy

Overall Effectiveness	Previous Inspection:	Outstanding	I
	This Inspection:	Outstanding	I
Catholic Life:		Outstanding	I
Religious Education:		Outstanding	I
Collective Worship:		Outstanding	I

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

St Norbert's Catholic Voluntary Academy is an outstanding Catholic school.

- St Norbert's Catholic Voluntary Academy is a calm oasis where every pupil is cherished and supported to fulfil their God-given potential. Pupils describe their school as a place where, 'they teach you how to be like Jesus' and link this understanding to their school's mission, as everyone learns to 'live, love and learn in the footprints of Jesus'. Leaders and governors are well informed and work incredibly well together for the benefit of the whole school community. All target areas from the last diocesan canonical inspection have been fully addressed and further developed.
- Religious Education at St Norbert's is outstanding. Pupils take pride in their work, producing this in great quality and quantity; they enjoy their learning and are active participants in lessons. As a consequence of lessons which are never less than good, staff ensure that almost all pupils make progress from their starting points so that they reach at least the levels expected – and beyond. Leaders, including governors, are rigorous in their approach to monitoring and evaluating Religious Education; they are relentless in their drive for high standards.
- The Catholic Life of St Norbert's is outstanding. The behaviour of pupils is exemplary; mutual respect is evident at all levels. The school's mission and Catholic virtues shine through the life of the school, placing Catholic Life in a central position. Parents praise the care and consideration shown to all at St Norbert's, led by the example of a strong and dedicated headteacher. Through imaginative planning and a shrewd approach to budgeting, this school sets out to 'poverty-proof' its pupils – and succeeds in doing so; equity, equality and ambition live here.
- Collective Worship at St Norbert's is outstanding. Pupil-led worship is flourishing because staff and leaders, including governors, are dedicated to this aspect of school life: they ensure that a varied diet of worship is on offer. Pupils show a degree of sophistication during spontaneous prayer, as they listen and draw together shared ideas 'in the moment'. Whole school and class-based times of prayer are highly prized; pupils recognize togetherness in communal prayer as important, saying that 'it is special to know that we are all praying' at the same time.

FULL REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

- St Norbert's Catholic Voluntary Academy is part of the St Thérèse of Lisieux Catholic Multi-Academy Trust family of schools.
- 127 pupils attend this smaller than average primary school in mixed-age classes. The school belongs to the parish of St Norbert and its large catchment area serves the families living in Crowle, Luddington, Eastoft, Epworth, Belton and Keadby.
- 23% of pupils are baptised Catholics. 45% of pupils are from other Christian denominations. 32% of pupils have no religious affiliation.
- 13% of pupils have special educational needs and/or a disability; 2% of pupils have an education, care and health plan, which provides an extra level of support to address their needs.
- 11% of pupils are in receipt of pupil premium funding, where additional money is allocated to support those who are, for example, looked after by the local authority or who are known to be eligible for free school meals.
- Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds.

WHAT DOES THE SCHOOL NEED TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

■ Catholic Life, Religious Education and Collective Worship

Share the outstanding practice across

- Catholic Life
- Religious Education
- Collective Worship

so that schools within the St Thérèse of Lisieux Catholic Multi-Academy Trust, and across the Diocese of Nottingham, can benefit from and emulate the effectiveness of St Norbert's Catholic Voluntary Academy.

■ Religious Education:

Further develop the religious literacy skills of pupils across the school by:

- identifying the key vocabulary to be taught in Religious Education lessons and topics and subsequently retained by pupils
- checking pupils' understanding of vocabulary during lessons and swiftly identifying any misconceptions

CATHOLIC LIFE

THE QUALITY OF THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

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- The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school.
- The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school.
- How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school.

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The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school – outstanding

- Almost all pupils appreciate and value the Catholic Life of the school; they contribute in abundance. Pupils are knowledgeable about their school's mission, 'to live, love and learn in the footprints of Jesus' and are active participants in bringing this about at St Norbert's.
- Pupils are extremely respectful at all times. They rise to the very high expectations of behaviour and manners, greeting adults and visitors readily and showing an ability to initiate polite and appropriate conversation beyond their years.
- A strength of the school is pupils' ability to take a leading role in activities which reflect the Catholic Life of the school, including times of worship. Pupils are keen to do good work, with many offering to be *Leading Lights* in order to support the school's chaplaincy provision. Pupils apply for, and hope to be voted into, various positions of pupil leadership; almost universally, they relish the opportunity to organize and be responsible.
- Pupils have an excellent understanding of loving relationships and sexual development, appropriate to their age and capability. The focus in their study is exemplary and in keeping with a Christian understanding of personal development and respect.
- Pupils' attitudes to a holistic education, and what it means to be part of a prayerful community, are joyous. There are high proportions of girls in the school: these have a strength of character which ensures that they work effectively and confidently alongside the boys, which provides a harmonious and level playing field for personal growth and collaboration.

The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school – outstanding

- The provision for Catholic Life is underpinned by the well-established mission and values within St Norbert's. Staff at all levels show full commitment to and respect for this area of school life, showing enthusiasm and commitment to prayer, professional development and their vocational work in education.
- Staff ensure that there is a strong sense of community within the school; they model relationships which are of the highest quality, demonstrating for pupils how to maintain positive and mutually respectful associations with others.
- The school environment is carefully planned and decorated to reflect the school's Catholic character. Concrete signs in displays and artefacts reiterate and celebrate the importance of Catholic Life and the school's mission.
- The school ethos demonstrates a very strong commitment to Catholic social teaching. Staff promote care for others in a number of ways, such as through the school's 'poverty-proofing' strategy and by maintaining links with chosen charities, such as *Connecting Communities* and *Face Africa*; they encourage pupils to show care for the environment and for other people through study of Pope Francis' writings, such as his encyclical letter 'Fratelli Tutti'.
- The chaplaincy provision within the school is centered on developing pupils' relationship and encounter with God, enhancing their spiritual lives and increasing their independence in times of worship. As a result, the prayer life of the school is joyful and inspiring.
- Pastoral care is prominent: it is a strength within the provision for the Catholic Life of the school. Commitment by staff to their pupils, and each other, is exemplary. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, staff ensured that high levels of pastoral care continued; strong policies and practices, already in place, were maintained.

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school – outstanding

- Leaders, including governors, demonstrate a deep commitment to the Catholic Life of the school and are inspiring role models. They recognise that the development of the Catholic Life of the school is a core responsibility: at St Norbert's, this is treasured.
- The school's own evaluation of its work and successes in relation to Catholic Life are rigorous and accurate. Leaders, including governors, have thorough plans to ensure that Catholic Life permeates the ethos, values, relationships, prayer life and learning time within the school; they create focused plans and evaluate these carefully to further develop pupils' experiences of life in a loving and hard-working community.
- Professional development opportunities are well designed. Leaders link with the St Thérèse of Lisieux Catholic Multi-Academy Trust and the diocese to make the most of training and networking; in-house support ensures that staff at all levels are supported in their understanding of the Catholic Life of the school and the part that each stakeholder plays within it.
- Engagement with parents is highly effective. Parents are grateful for the efforts made by those in positions of leadership: they recognise the positive impact leaders have on their own children, commenting that the school's ethos 'promotes a path for them to live as good Christians throughout these years and beyond'. Parents and grandparents welcome the opportunity to join the school family for celebrations; they feel included and involved.
- The school actively promotes the bishop's initiatives and themes so that his vision is realised at St Norbert's. In-depth work was undertaken to explore with pupils the recent Synod questions; Pope Francis' words, and his picture, feature in and around the building, reminding the pupils of their place within the wider, and global, Catholic family.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

THE QUALITY OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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- How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education.
- How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education.

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How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education – outstanding

- Pupils consistently achieve high standards of Religious Education; these are consistently above diocesan averages. Pupils take pride in their work and are able to talk eloquently about their learning and why Religious Education is important to them and to their school community. They make rapid progress from their starting points and this progress is sustained through each key stage.
- Pupils acquire knowledge quickly and at some depth. As they move through school, they gain the confidence to ask questions and engage with more difficult ideas and concepts. Their engagement with the recent Synodal questions demonstrates sophistication and an openness to current and even controversial issues. Pupils show a strong awareness of Catholic social teaching and their responsibilities to others; they have regular contact with external agencies, such as CAFOD, and this filters in to their understanding in Religious Education.
- Pupils respond well to a wide range of a learning opportunities. They make links with and to a variety of sources including prayers, scripture and online sources. The quality of learning seen in recent *Visio Divina* work in Year 6 demonstrates a strong ability to draw together different strands of knowledge around a central theme. Pupils pick out this work as something they especially enjoy.
- Pupils reflect on their work and, in the older years, this is done at some length, enabling pupils to deepen their understanding of often difficult ideas. Pupils explain what the different symbols in their books mean and how this helps them to know what to do to improve. They understand the 'driver' words and how this helps them to get better in their work.
- Behaviour in lessons is exemplary, with almost all pupils engaged with their learning, showing a respect for their teachers and also their classmates. Pupils demonstrate that they cooperate with one another in a group to share ideas and produce a final piece of work of high quality.
- Pupils from all attainment levels are able to succeed; they show this knowledge through drama and art and do not always rely on their writing ability. Some pupils would benefit from more explicit teaching of unfamiliar vocabulary earlier in lessons, so that they can make more progress more quickly.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education – outstanding

- Teaching is never less than good. During the pandemic, Religious Education was given such high priority that standards at the end of the year rose. Great care was taken to ensure that disadvantaged pupils were not left behind in their learning. The strong Catholic Life, with its emphasis on social justice, provides added context for much of the work in Religious Education.
- Teachers have high levels of subject knowledge and are confident in planning and delivering lessons which engage and challenge. They are aware of the differing needs of pupils; they plan imaginative and creative ways to deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding; they have high expectations of all pupils and this is seen in the quality, quantity and standards of presentation in workbooks.
- Teachers have a strong knowledge of assessment; they work together to make sure that judgements are accurate. Teachers also make use of the expertise from the diocese to confirm these judgements. Teachers with less experience are supported in knowing and understanding the standards expected.
- In their marking and feedback, teachers make use of key 'driver' words to focus pupils' learning and give guidance for improvement. Focusing on the 'driver' words gives a cohesion to teaching and assessment and sets a starting point for differentiation. Teachers skilfully build into lessons periods of reflection, so that previous knowledge is embedded and used as a starting point for fresh learning.
- Pupils are systematically taught the elements of Relationships, Sex and Health Education curriculum using new materials from Ten:Ten and a scheme called Journey in Love. Individual books helpfully record progress in this area.
- Occasionally, teachers miss opportunities to check and strengthen pupils' understanding of new and challenging vocabulary early enough in the lesson; as a result, pupils can sometimes embark on activities and tasks without a complete understanding of some elements of the learning.

The extent to which leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education – outstanding

- Leaders at all levels have a deep knowledge of the standards of Religious Education. They are experienced and skilled in self-evaluation and action planning. They enhance the Come and See programme with regular visits and visitors to ensure that pupils have rich learning experiences. Work in pupils' books illustrates the commitment to Religious Education in terms of teaching time.
- Monitoring is regular and exacting, including during periods of school closure. Leaders use a wide range of ways to evaluate teaching and learning, including seeking pupil voice. Governors are skilled and very knowledgeable about Religious Education and the Relationships, Sex and Health Education curriculum. Governors review books with school leaders and talk to pupils; they are able to clearly articulate the strategies used during the pandemic to keep standards high in Religious Education.
- Leaders take nothing for granted: improvement and action planning contribute to a strong and effective learning and teaching cycle. The majority of the actions in the development plan were completed or well underway at the time of the inspection, but leaders still look for ways to develop and strengthen Religious Education.
- Leaders ensure that the bishop's themes and wider church events are woven through the pupils' learning so that, as a result, pupils acquire strong religious literacy which engages with current issues. They have skilfully created a learning environment where all elements of the Catholic nature of the school, including Collective Worship, give a richness and wider context to the learning in lessons.

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- Leaders prioritise continual professional development at all levels. Support for inexperienced practitioners enables them to quickly acquire the knowledge they need to plan and deliver challenging and engaging lessons. Leaders carefully monitor standards of teaching so that support is bespoke and targeted.
- Leaders in the St Thérèse of Lisieux Catholic Multi-Academy Trust recognise the expertise present at St Norbert's and the school is well placed to share this best practice with other colleagues.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

THE QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP	I
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- How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship.
- The quality of provision for the Collective Worship.
- How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship.

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How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship – outstanding

- Collective Worship holds the interest and attention of all pupils across the school. Pupils listen intently and respond with reverence; when questions are asked, they make thoughtful contributions which show the quality of their understanding. Pupils sing with enthusiasm, uplifting the spirits of the school community.
- Pupil-led liturgy is well-embedded: pupils leading prayer exude confidence as a consequence of regularly doing so. They plan creatively and with thought: they include various methods to put across the message they have chosen, using scripture, drama, silence, song and different types of prayer. The impact is significant upon those present.
- The Collective Worship prepared by pupils reflects a sound knowledge of the Church's liturgical year and seasons. Records of liturgies show that this is a typical feature of pupils' understanding over time and across year groups.
- The pupil chaplaincy team is aptly named as the *Leading Lights*. The team is large and reflects high quality pupil relationships. In addition to whole school Collective Worship, class-based liturgy is celebrated weekly in each classroom, which enables a wider number of pupils to have an opportunity to plan and lead times of prayer.
- A key strength of the school is the independence seen in pupils when leading prayer, since upper Key Stage 2 pupils have an ability to request and summarise the spontaneous prayer of others. They do this with reverence, and in keeping with the tradition of the Church, by listening to what has been volunteered, pausing for a silent prayer to be individually considered and then inviting a shared, verbal response to be made as a community. This is powerful.

The quality of provision for Collective Worship – outstanding

- High quality provision is the hallmark of Collective Worship at St Norbert's. Staff managed to keep this consistent throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, recognising its centrality to the life of the school and seeking to keep the community connected spiritually during the pandemic period.
- A highlight of the school is the way in which Collective Worship themes, neatly planned within the Church's liturgical year, seasons and feasts, also draw attention to papal encyclicals so that the writings and letters of Pope Francis are known to the pupils. The bishop's themes are included in a similar way. This means that staff keep the community 'up-to-date' with how Collective Worship can be enhanced by linking to current issues and thinking.
- Staff ensure that priority is given to Collective Worship in terms of planning and resourcing, so that each experience can be of the highest quality for pupils and all present.
- Staff are very well informed about how to support pupils, and each other, during Collective Worship, which enables times of prayer to be cherished by all. During pupil-led liturgy, staff are confident to contribute and support in order to further enhance worship: for example, they swiftly question or reinforce where they can see that this will help to deepen the experience. At other times, staff act as role models to lead prayer and provide a range of approaches to inspire pupils.
- Opportunities are planned to include wider members of the school community in Collective Worship. Parents and parishioners enjoy the opportunity to attend times of worship: they are extremely complimentary and positive about the impact this has on their own spirituality as well as recognising the benefit for pupils.

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship – outstanding

- Leaders, including governors, are driven to ensure that Collective Worship is central to school life. The headteacher leads by example and inspires those around her to become deeply involved and committed. As a consequence, teamwork is strong and effective.
- Leaders have an excellent understanding of the pattern of the Church's year and its relevant feast days. These are incorporated into the liturgical plans for the year; records are kept to remember, monitor and evaluate the breadth of liturgy on offer – which helps to shape what is to follow.
- Clergy and governors are a visible presence. They contribute significantly to the leadership of Collective Worship, showing mutual support to the headteacher and key staff; they have an active role in shaping school development and success. For example, during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Sacrament of Reconciliation was celebrated outdoors and conducted over several hours to accommodate the long queue of pupils wishing to avail of it; after each Mass, the priest and a group of pupils will have 'a debrief' in order to consider what worked well and 'what might be even better next time'.
- The spiritual development of pupils and staff is considered in planning. Leaders, including governors, include professional development opportunities designed to fulfil the needs of individuals as well as the team; new members of staff are very well supported so that they can, in turn, support Collective Worship in the classrooms. Staff also have opportunities for spiritual nourishment at an adult level.
- Leaders, including governors, make accurate judgements in their own school self-evaluation of Collective Worship. Modestly, they recognise that it is outstanding, though they still plan ahead with targets to further improve the Collective Worship experiences for the whole school community.

SCHOOL DETAILS

School Name	St Norbert's Catholic Voluntary Academy
Unique Reference Number	I38827
CMAT	St Thérèse of Lisieux Catholic Multi-Academy Trust

The inspection of this school was carried out on behalf of the Bishop of Nottingham under Canon 806 of Canon Law in accordance with the *evaluation schedule* for diocesan canonical inspections in the Diocese of Nottingham. The inspection reviews and evaluates how effective the school is in providing Catholic education. The process begins with the school's own self-evaluation and the inspection schedule is in line with the criteria set by the National Board of Religious Inspectors and Advisers (NBRIA).

During the inspection, the inspectors observed 4 Religious Education lessons and 3 Acts of Collective Worship.

Meetings were held with the headteacher, who is also the subject leader for Religious Education, the deputy headteacher, the Trust's CEO and two governors. Discussions were also held with pupils and parents.

The inspectors scrutinised a range of documents including reports of the governing body, action plans, the school development plan, monitoring forms, assessment information and parental response forms. Inspectors also examined the work in pupils' Religious Education books.

Chair of Governors:	Mrs M Robinson
Headteacher:	Mrs P Tonge
Date of Previous School Inspection:	02 July 2015
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WHAT INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS MEAN

Within the report, the following grades are used:

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Requires Improvement
Grade 4	Inadequate

In the context of the whole school, the overall effectiveness grades have the following meaning:

Grade 1	Outstanding	The school is a highly effective Catholic school. Pupils' needs are exceptionally well met.
Grade 2	Good	The school is an effective Catholic school. Pupils' needs are met well.
Grade 3	Requires Improvement	The school is not yet a good Catholic school, it is not inadequate however, and there are aspects that require improvement. There will be a monitoring visit within the next 18 months and the school will be re-inspected within 3 years.
Grade 4	Inadequate	There are features in need of urgent and immediate attention. The school is not meeting the basic minimum requirement for adequacy as a Catholic school. The school will receive an annual monitoring visit and will be re-inspected within 3 years.