



Archdiocese of Birmingham

Section 48 Inspection Report

ST CUTHBERT'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Gumbleberrys Close, Stechford, Birmingham, B8 2PS

Inspection dates:

28th February and 1st March 2019

Lead Inspector:

Rose Brookes

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS:

Outstanding

Catholic Life:

Outstanding

Religious Education:

Outstanding

Collective Worship:

Outstanding

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection:

Outstanding

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

This is an Outstanding Catholic school because:

- Staff and governors witness strongly to their faith and Catholic school values. All the governors and a high percentage of the staff have a strong faith and they attend the parish church to worship. Pupils are fortunate to see a living faith in the staff.
- As a result, there is continual close communication about Catholic Life between the senior leadership team, the governors and the parish. The very strong parish links are a strength of the school.
- The school creates opportunities for the school and parish to celebrate their faith together. Young parents, parishioners and governors willingly participate in the Eucharist. Staff encourage pupils to take leading roles in these liturgies thus enabling the whole Catholic community to celebrate their faith.
- St Cuthbert's is referred to by staff, governors and pupils as an oasis of peace in the midst of the city. The senior leadership team work very hard to ensure that staff are content and confident in their teaching role. As a result, teachers have outstanding Religious Education subject knowledge and they enjoy teaching in this happy school. Pupils are highly motivated because they love their Religious Education.
- The school is blessed to be supported by The Sisters of Mercy who serve in the parish and school community. The friendly and supportive parish priest is a member of the Vocationist Fathers.
- Governors and staff are very proud of the pupils and see them as the school's greatest asset. In turn, pupils are polite and grateful for the wonderful care which they receive from staff. The behaviour of almost all pupils is exemplary.

FULL REPORT**What does the school need to do to improve further:**

- Provide further training to develop the pupils' ability to initiate, plan and lead Collective Worship. This would allow pupils to be more independent in initiating, planning, delivering and leading Collective Worship across the school.
- Create more opportunities for pupils to experience different forms of prayer, such as meditation.
- The beautiful prayer garden, which has recently been developed, now needs to be used more frequently for different kinds of pupil led prayer.

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

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

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.**

- St Cuthbert's is a happy, welcoming and inclusive school. Its excellent Catholic ethos is reflected in the positive attitudes of pupils, the high level of support and care given by all the staff and the clear sense of purpose and spiritual direction of its leadership.
- Through the inspirational direction of the headteacher, the school has successfully developed a comprehensive and secure Catholic community with Christ at the centre. This provides a very positive environment, enabling all pupils to grow in their faith.
- There are strong links with the parish community. Pupils are trained as altar servers and regularly assist at parish and school Masses. Parents, parishioners and governors frequently attend school Masses.
- During the inspection, the dedicated governing body spoke with pride about the very close partnership between the two Catholic primary schools, namely, St Cuthbert's and Corpus Christi School, and the parish.
- Chaplaincy support for the school is excellent. The parish priest and Sisters of Mercy have established an effective partnership with the staff and pupils. This provides valuable support and guidance in developing the Catholic Life of the school.
- The very dedicated Religious Education link governor is the leader of the Sunday parish children's liturgy group, which is very well attended by pupils from the school.
- A teaching assistant regularly creates a large and beautiful display board in the parish church. This is linked to the liturgical year and informs the parish about the Catholic

Life of the school. As a result, parishioners become more actively involved. For example, the parish and school party, after the St David's day Mass, was very well attended by parents, past staff and governors.

- All the staff and governors are very committed to their work in the school. They frequently attend weekend Masses in church. They love to be involved at all levels in the Catholic Life of this 'faith filled' community where the Gospel values are lived out.
- The school fosters excellent partnerships with parents and carers. Nurture groups, counselling and additional forms of support are provided, which include signposting families to appropriate agencies. The willingness to support and guide pupils and their families is outstanding.
- All the pupils appreciate, value and actively participate in Catholic Life. They take the school's mission statement of, 'Love one another as I have loved you', as their guide and they have a deep understanding of the message it gives to the school.
- The pupils are culturally very diverse and bring a richness of their own to the school. Gospel values and the virtues, promoted by the Catholic Schools' Pupil Profile (CSPP), are reflected in the openness, trust, tolerance and respect that are key features of St Cuthbert's school community.
- Pupils show a deep respect for themselves and others as made in the image and likeness of God. The behaviour of almost all pupils is exemplary. They show an ability to listen, to give thanks, to forgive and be forgiven. They are deeply appreciative of the great care that is provided by the school on many levels. They refer to St Cuthbert's school as part of their family.
- A major strength of Catholic Life is the shared vision of all the staff, brought about by their enthusiasm and mutual support. They are a cheerful, dedicated and highly effective team. They know the pupils well and speak with pride of the way they contribute to their spiritual and moral development. They are excellent role models for the pupils and demonstrate a strong commitment to the Catholic ethos of the school.
- During the inspection, pupils spoke eloquently about how they are very involved in fundraising. Charities are invited to the school to explain to pupils about their work. Pupils choose appropriate charities to support, such as Father Hudson's, Acorns, the local foodbank, CAFOD, and the Rwanda Appeal.
- All staff embrace the opportunities to develop their Catholic spirituality. This has led to a high percentage of teaching staff achieving their Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies (CCRS).
- The school has formed a fruitful partnership entitled, 'Sursum Corda' (Lift Up Your Hearts), with a group of Catholic schools, formed with a common aim, to nurture the faith for all members. This collaboration offers excellent opportunities for pupils and staff to enhance Catholic Life across the schools. All the schools benefit from sharing good practice and developing the skills of staff and governors.
- St Cuthbert's is a happy school. Staff, pupils and governors refer to the school as an, 'oasis of peace', where everyone feels supported.
- The sacraments have a very high profile in the Catholic Life of the school. Preparation for Reconciliation, First Holy Communion and Confirmation is thorough. The parish priest, headteacher and Religious Education leader plan a programme of catechesis for pupils and their parents.

- Over the past four years, the development of Spiritual, Moral, Social, Vocational and Cultural Education (SMSVC) has been a key priority and it is now a real strength of the Catholic Life of the school. The school has highly successful strategies for engaging with parents and carers. As a result, the school is seen as a place of refuge for parents, who understand that the school's mission is to serve the community with compassion and love.
- Nearly all the pupils can identify the sort of person God is calling them to be now and in the future. An annual vocations week enables them to have an age appropriate understanding of vocation and respond with enthusiasm.
- Pupils clearly understand the consequences of their own actions and the influence this has on others. They realise the importance of their contribution towards creating a harmonious and happy environment.
- Pupils are listened to and their opinions sought. There is an active school council, providing them with a voice to project their views. Suggestions made are carefully considered by staff and governors and actioned where appropriate. Pupils make a valuable contribution to the evaluation of Catholic Life. This does much to build their self-esteem.
- The school environment reflects its mission and strong Catholic identity. In addition to well presented, informative displays, a beautiful prayer garden provides pupils with opportunities for quiet reflection. There is an attractive photographic collage in the school entrance that depicts the mission of the school. Staff, governors, parents and pupils have all participated in its composition.
- The high-quality displays around the school and in the classrooms reinforce the Catholic mission of the school, as well as providing pupils with resources to support their learning. The interactive displays also encourage pupils to pray.
- Provision for relationship and sex education is thorough and developed at an appropriate level for all pupils. It is consistent with the teaching of the Church. This enables pupils to explore feelings and emotions and how they impact on themselves and others.

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision of the Catholic Life of the school.

- Catholic life is passionately led by the inspirational and highly committed headteacher. She is very well supported by two assistant headteachers and the hard-working Religious Education subject leader. Together this highly effective senior leadership team ensure that all areas of Catholic Life are given the highest priority.
- Leaders and governors share a strong commitment to the Church's Mission in education and they are very successful in promoting and developing the Catholic Life of the school.
- The monitoring and evaluation of Catholic Life takes place through lesson observation, learning walks, book scrutinies and professional conversations with staff and pupils. The Religious Education subject leader and the link governor frequently meet to participate in monitoring activities.
- Governors know the school well through their frequent visits and they regard monitoring its Catholicity and spiritual direction as their highest priority. They have a

thorough understanding of how the school witnesses to Christ. Consequently, they are able to fulfil their duties and responsibilities well.

- Leaders and governors are highly ambitious for the future development of the school. They are constantly seeking ways to improve the provision for Catholic Life.
- Systems used by the school for monitoring and evaluating the impact of Catholic Life provision are embedded. Leaders see self-evaluation as crucial to future improvement. They have conducted a thorough audit of Catholic Life in order to identify areas of strength and those in need of development.
- Information from this structured monitoring is used effectively by the headteacher and Religious Education subject leader. Consequently, they can make secure evaluations about the impact of the school's Catholic Life on pupils' spiritual and moral development.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education.

- There is a constant focus on the quality of teaching and learning in order to improve pupil outcomes. All staff have high expectations of the pupils and are confident in their own subject knowledge. They employ a wide range of teaching strategies, which include excellent questioning techniques to challenge pupils and deepen their thinking skills.
- An excellent variety of resources, including ICT, are used to make lessons interesting. Pupils are fully engaged and respond enthusiastically to the exciting range of tasks, questions and opportunities to collaborate that their teachers provide for them.
- Lessons observed by inspectors were planned to build on pupils' prior learning, with clear learning objectives and well-matched activities to engage all learners.
- Pupils enter the Nursery and the Reception classes with very low levels of knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith. However, due to good teaching, they quickly begin to make excellent progress so that by the end of the foundation stage most pupils are working at expected levels.
- In both key stages 1 and 2, most pupils, from their varied starting points, make very good progress with many making outstanding progress.
- The evidence from lesson observations and work scrutinies confirms the school's judgment that average attainment continues to be good for the majority and for many pupils it is above expectations.

- Historically, boys' attainment has been lower than girls. Closing this gap has been an area for staff development. An emphasis has been given to creativity, kinaesthetic learning and thinking skills. As a result, the gap between boys' and girls' attainment has narrowed, especially in key stage 2. The school will need to continue with this focus, so that boys' attainment is consistently as good as girls' attainment across the school.
- During the inspection, a Year 3 class was working in small groups creatively using percussion instruments to accompany the different verses of a psalm. The teacher had cleverly planned a sequence of lessons which enabled all pupils to enjoy their learning, to remain focused and to be highly motivated.
- This inspection confirms the school's judgement that all Religious Education teaching is very good with many outstanding elements.
- Both boys and girls enjoy Religious Education and they can speak with conviction about why they enjoy it. This enjoyment contributes to the good or better progress that almost all pupils make.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons is exemplary because pupils experience a wide variety of learning activities that enable nearly all pupils to succeed.
- Standards in Religious Education compare favourably to English and the amount of work in all classes is good. Pupils' work in their Religious Education books is of a high standard and it indicates an appropriate range of resources and strategies to promote learning.
- All teachers use a variety of questioning techniques to ensure that pupils can reflect on their faith and how they can apply it to their lives. Observations and interviews show pupils are keen to learn, are able to work collaboratively or independently and enjoy debating and discussing key messages within their lessons.
- During the inspection, the Year 6 teacher used his expert subject knowledge to explain why Christians are anointed in confirmation. He also challenged pupils to look at the meaning of the Nicene Creed. This activity demonstrated the pupils' excellent knowledge of traditional prayer.
- The school ensures that pupils with special educational needs and pupils with English as an additional language are very well supported. Teachers and other adults are very aware of the pupils' capabilities and of their prior learning and understanding, and plan very effectively to build on these. This means that all pupils, irrespective of ability, can make progress in their Religious Education skills, knowledge and understanding.
- All teachers challenge pupils to respond to questions about their own and others' feelings. This enables them to consider the consequences of their actions. All teachers have high expectations for all pupils. This is reflected in teachers' marking. All pupils are challenged to respond fully to gap questions about how they can apply their Religious Education to their lives. For example, a Year 2 pupil answered the question 'If you had been a wise man, what gift would you have taken with you and why?', with the response, 'I would give gems because they are shiny, and Jesus is the light of the world.'
- Pupils reflect and have a good awareness of the faith and traditions of other religious communities. Each year group studies a different faith and visits the appropriate place of worship. As a result, pupils have a good understanding and respect for other

cultures and faiths.

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education.

- St Cuthbert's has an experienced and highly effective Religious Education subject leader. He continually works collaboratively with the very dedicated headteacher to ensure that thorough Religious Education monitoring procedures are in place. As a result, senior leaders and governors accurately know the school's Religious Education strengths and areas for development.
- During the last four years, governors and senior leaders have focused on recruiting and developing a highly effective team of Catholic teachers who have strong faith and outstanding Religious Education subject knowledge. Inspirational staff development and pastoral care have resulted in teachers who are confident, happy and highly skilled.
- Standards of Religious Education are monitored and evaluated by the headteacher and the Religious Education subject leader. They are frequently reported to and discussed with governors.
- Pupil liturgical leaders' evaluation reports, pupil questionnaires, interviews and informal discussions are used to gain pupils' views. These are shared with staff to celebrate and, where necessary, used to develop good practice.
- Teachers' planning and pupils' work are monitored by senior leaders, and outcomes from observations are shared with staff in order to identify strengths and areas for development.
- The Religious Education link governor takes part in regular learning walks with the headteacher. These are formally recorded, acted upon and the impact of actions is measured.
- Views of parents are collected through questionnaires and evaluations of inspire workshops. Parents are very happy with the way their children enjoy Religious Education and the school provides many opportunities for them to be involved in their child's learning.
- St Cuthbert's works collaboratively with the Sursum Corda group of Catholic schools to moderate the assessment of Religious Education. As a result, staff feel confident about their assessment judgements.
- The governors fulfil their statutory and canonical responsibilities regarding Religious Education. They ensure that the requirements of the Bishops Conference are met in terms of curriculum time for Religious Education and the priority that Religious Education is given in the school. This is borne out by their pro-active role in monitoring standards in Religious Education.
- Religious Education receives 10% of weekly taught curriculum time.
- School developmental planning tackles key areas for improvement systematically and builds on areas of strength. For example, leaders' monitoring of Religious Education highlighted the need to improve marking and feed-back to pupils. Support and professional development were provided for teachers. As a result, staff now consistently challenge pupils through gap task questions, which enable them to apply their learning to their lives.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

The quality of Collective Worship.	Outstanding
How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship.	Outstanding
The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school.	Outstanding
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship.	Outstanding

**How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship.
The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school.**

- During the celebration of Mass and school assemblies, all pupils conduct themselves with extreme reverence and respect.
- The pupil liturgy leaders frequently monitor prayer areas throughout the school to ensure that they have the correct colours and displays to match the Church's year. Consequently, pupils have a good understanding of the liturgical year.
- Pupils know that they need to talk to God in their lives. They can confidently talk about what prayer means to them and they know what the different types of prayer are. All pupils have a very good knowledge of the diocesan recommended traditional prayers for their year group.
- Prayer is central to the life of this school. All year groups have newly updated prayer bags and their value is acknowledged by many families. During the inspection, a governor spoke about how his child took home a class prayer bag and invited the family to use it to pray. As a result, family opportunities for prayer are being created in homes.
- Pupils participate enthusiastically in Collective Worship displaying reverence and respect. They contribute using their skills in a variety of ways, such as servers, readers, offertory and technical responsibilities.
- One of the strengths of St Cuthbert's is that the pupils love to sing hymns and the responses in Mass. During the inspection all the pupils, including the very youngest children, were visibly uplifted by the whole school assembly. The pupil liturgy leaders plan the whole school assemblies, conduct the readings, choose the hymns and compose the bidding prayers.
- The school is focusing on increasing the opportunities for pupils to initiate, plan and lead Collective Worship through the pupil liturgy leaders and the prayer group. Both these groups were created in September 2017. As a result, key groups of pupils are learning about leading Collective Worship. The school now needs to develop this further by creating more opportunities for pupils to lead prayer in different contexts across the school.
- Staff show a very good knowledge of prayer. As a result, pupils have an excellent knowledge of traditional prayer. However, teachers would benefit from training in other forms of prayer, such as meditation.

- Pupils at St Cuthbert's know that they need to talk to God in their lives. They are very good at spontaneously praying to God and writing bidding prayers.
- During the inspection, the whole school took part in the celebration of Mass for St David's feast day. It was very well attended by parishioners, parents of all faiths and governors. This high level of participation by the local adult community is a frequent occurrence. As a result, St Cuthbert's is making a very valuable contribution to the parish. There is a genuine enthusiasm for Collective Worship, reflected in the quality of communal singing, in the quality of prayerful silence and the depth of reverent participation in communal prayer.
- There are a very high proportion of Catholic staff and governors who practise their faith in the local parish church. This has a profound and visible effect on the spiritual and moral development of all pupils, and it is reflected in the respectful way in which pupils lead and take part in prayer and liturgy.
- St Cuthbert's have worked hard to create a wide variety of interactive displays and prayer areas that encourage pupils to pray both in the classrooms, the corridors, the hall and the school grounds.

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

- The school leaders treat their responsibility to lead and model best practice in Collective Worship with very high importance. The headteacher routinely leads acts of Collective Worship.
- Governors are dedicated and highly committed. They frequently attend Collective Worship and they regularly evaluate its impact.
- Parents also regularly complete questionnaires to evaluate the Collective Worship they attend. Their evaluations are very positive and show that they strongly agree that prayer and liturgy are central in the life of the school.
- The senior leadership team and class teachers formally observe and evaluate Collective Worship. Their comments are put into the school development plan and acted upon. This has led to pupils experiencing a good variety of prayer styles and traditions.
- The planning of Masses and liturgies is very well organized. Collective worship is carefully planned to support the virtues promoted by the CSPP. It is continually evaluated by the senior leaders, teachers and governors. As a result, pupils are being trained to lead prayer and liturgies to support the virtues that are the focus for each half term.

SCHOOL DETAILS

Unique reference number	103470
Local authority	Birmingham
<i>This inspection was carried out under canon 806 of Canon Law and under Section 48 of the 2005 Education Act.</i>	
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary Aided
Age range	3-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on roll	237
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John McCabe
Headteacher	Sarah Hobbs
Telephone number	0121 675 2205
Website address	http://www.stcuthbertsrc.schooljotter2.com
Email address	enquiry@stcuthbt.bham.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	March 2014

INFORMATION ABOUT THIS SCHOOL

- St Cuthbert's is a one-form entry Catholic primary school serving the parish of Corpus Christi in Stechford, Birmingham.
- The percentage of Catholic pupils is currently 65%.
- The percentage of disadvantaged pupils is above the national average.
- The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/ or disabilities is broadly in line with the national average.
- The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic origins is above the national average.
- The percentage of pupils with English as an additional language is above the national average.
- Attainment on entry is well below the national average.
- Since the last inspection there have been a significant number of new appointments to the governing body. Four new teachers have been appointed, who are either newly qualified teachers (NQTs) or recently qualified teachers (RQTs). The school management team has also been restructured.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION

- The inspection was carried out by two Diocesan Inspectors - Rose Brookes and Dominic Collins.
- The focus of the inspection was on the impact, quality and leadership of the school's provision of Catholic Life, Religious Education and Collective Worship.
- The inspectors observed teaching across seven Religious Education lessons to evaluate the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. All of these lesson observations were conducted jointly with senior leaders.
- The inspectors completed a work scrutiny and held discussions with pupils to evaluate their understanding of Catholic Life, the impact of Religious Education teaching on their learning over time and their experience of Collective Worship.
- Meetings were held with the vice-chair of governors, the Religious Education link governor, the staff governor and another foundation governor. The headteacher, the RE subject leader, the parish priest and two sisters of mercy were also interviewed.
- The inspectors attended a whole school Mass, whole school Collective Worship and undertook a learning walk to look at aspects of learning and teaching in Religious Education, the presentation of the Catholic Life of the school and pupils' behaviour.
- The inspectors reviewed a range of documents including the school's self-evaluation, data about pupils' attainment and progress, Analyse School Performance (ASP) data, the school development plan, the Religious Education action plan, teachers' planning and learning journals.