

# DIOCESE OF MIDDLESBROUGH

Inspection of Religious Education  
Collective Worship  
and  
The Catholic Life of the School



**School:** St Bernadette's RC Primary School

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**Head Teacher:** Mrs Mary Cobbold

**Chair:** Monsignor D.C. Hogan

**Date:** 12<sup>th</sup> & 13<sup>th</sup> November 2013

**Inspector:** Mrs Theresa Rogerson

**A Report from:**

The Diocese of Middlesbrough Schools' Service  
Section 48 Inspection Team  
50a The Avenue  
Linthorpe  
Middlesbrough TS5 6QT

## INTRODUCTION

This inspection was carried out under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005.

The report of the inspection is produced for the Bishop of Middlesbrough (Code of Canon Law 804 and 806) and for the governors of the school. The Inspection reviews, evaluates and plans further improvements in the school's witness to the Catholic faith and Curriculum Religious Education. This process begins with the school's own self-evaluation. The Inspection schedule follows criteria set by the National Board of Advisers and Inspectors.

### What Inspection Grades mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding Catholic school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a Catholic school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Requires Improvement	These features, though of adequate quality, require improvement to be good.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate Catholic school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils.

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## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

St Bernadette's Roman Catholic School is an average size primary school situated in a suburban area to the south of Middlesbrough. The school serves the parish of St Bernadette's, Nunthorpe, and St Joseph's, in Stokesley. The parish church is situated 0.5 miles from the school. 93% of the pupils are baptised Catholics, 7% are from other Christian denominations. 90% of the teachers are Catholic. All the pupils are from white British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils supported at school action is below average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus and with a statement of special educational needs is above average.

Since the previous inspection there have been a number of staff changes including the appointment of a Deputy Head teacher in January 2013. The Religious Education Leader has been in post for 2 years and has successfully completed the Diocesan Nurturing Future Leaders professional development.

The school has achieved a number of nationally recognised accreditations including Basic Skills Quality Mark 2, Healthy School Award and Lets get Cooking Accreditation.

**Pupil Catchment:**

Number of pupils on roll: 201 plus 26 place Nursery

Planned Admission Number of Pupils: 30

Percentage of pupils baptised RC: 93%

Percentage of pupils from other Christian Denominations: 7%

Percentage of pupils from other World Faiths: 0

Percentage of pupils with no religious affiliation: 0

Percentage of pupils with special needs: 12%

**Teaching Staff:**

Full-time Teachers: 10

Part-time Teachers: 1(fte 0.6)

Percentage of Catholic Teachers: 90%

**Support Staff:**

Full-time Classroom Support Staff: 4

Part-time Classroom Support Staff: 6

Percentage of Catholic Classroom Support Staff: 60%

Percentage of teachers with CCRS: 20%

**Percentage of learning time given to R.E: 10% in all classes**

**Parishes served by the School:**

St Bernadette's, Nunthorpe, St Joseph's, Stokesley

# 1. OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

1

## MAIN FINDINGS

St Bernadette's is an outstanding school led by an inspirational head teacher, who, together with the Governing Body, positively promotes and develops the Catholic life of the school. The school's shared vision Live, Love, Laugh, Learn, permeates every aspect of school life. Parents, staff, Parish Priest and Governors speak extremely highly of the head teacher and the impact her positive and sustained leadership has had on the life of the school.

St Bernadette's is a truly welcoming school whose mission "to grow in the Light of Life" is lived out to the full. There is a real sense of belonging and relationships are extremely positive. The children are polite, confident young people who understand fully what it means to be part of a Catholic school. They recognise the welcome they receive from everyone in school and are particularly proud of the way they care for and look after each other. Parents share this sense of belonging, they "are proud to be part of such a wonderful community". There are excellent links between home, school and Parish.

Outstanding teaching in Religious education is a key strength of the school. Pupils make excellent progress in their learning and attainment is well above average. Leaders and managers have a highly perceptive and accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for development. Staff and governors are fully involved in school self-evaluation. Under the dedicated leadership of the highly skilled and experienced head teacher, the school continues to be rigorous in its pursuit of excellence.

### **What the school needs to do to improve further:**

- Further develop pupils' assessment skills, ensuring that peer and self-assessment is embedded throughout the school
- Continue to drive standards for higher level 4 skills in Religious Education at the end of Key Stage 2
- Enhance pupils' skills in planning, leading and evaluating Collective Worship, inspiring them in deep thought and heartfelt response

## 2. PUPILS

### **How good outcomes are for pupils, taking into account of variations between groups.**

Pupils at St Bernadette's have a strong sense of belonging to the school community and they make an outstanding contribution to the life of the school. They are confident and articulate in expressing their pride in the school and the success they achieve through working together and supporting each other. Pupils readily accept responsibility in a variety of roles ranging from making rules through the school council and acting as friendship builders in the school playground, to regularly updating the school's website. They value and respect the Catholic tradition of their school and respond to the needs of the less fortunate through a variety of fundraising activities.

Standards pupils achieve in Religious Education have continued to rise over the past three years. The vast majority of pupils make good progress and some make exceptional progress at the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils are highly motivated and they concentrate extremely well in class. Learning has a good balance of excitement, consolidation and challenge, within the tasks set by the teacher. Throughout the school pupils are enthusiastic about their learning and keen to do their best. There is a positive work ethic in all classes. Pupils with special educational needs are particularly well supported. The quality of work in pupils' books is a testament to their desire to improve and extend their learning and is evidence of their outstanding progress in Religious Education.

Pupils regularly prepare and lead Acts of Worship with confidence and are becoming more skilled in their response to pupil led Collective Worship. They engage in frequent opportunities for spontaneous prayer, for example, at prayer group and whole school collective worship in school, and in the Peace Garden outside in the company of the life sized St Bernadette.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life of the school</li> </ul>	<b>1</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education</li> </ul>	<b>1</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How well do pupils respond to and participate in the School's Collective Worship</li> </ul>	<b>2</b>

### 3. PROVISION

1

#### **How effective the provision is for Catholic education**

Good and outstanding teaching is highly effective in enthusing pupils at St Bernadette's and ensuring that they learn extremely well. Teachers have excellent subject knowledge and high expectations for all pupils. Planning is linked to an in depth knowledge of pupils' prior learning and work is differentiated in order to build upon and extend pupils' learning. Learning outcomes are shared in all lessons and next steps in learning identified. Teachers are highly skilled in the use of effective questioning so as to clarify, extend and challenge learning. In a year 6 lesson children were challenged to "go beyond the facts, give reasons why" when using scripture to ascertain how our scriptural beliefs are reflected in the Jewish faith. Similarly, in a Year 5 lesson on the story of the Exodus, pupils had the opportunity to consolidate their learning through the use of effective questioning in a hot seating activity with the characters of Moses and Pharaoh. In all classes there is a buzz of learning from the preparations for the Hanukah party in Foundation Stage to modelling the effective study of scripture in Year 6. Teaching assistants are appropriately deployed in all classes to maximum effect. The use of focussed marking is highly effective in allowing pupils to see where they are achieving and enabling them to focus on the steps in order to make progress. The climate for learning is one of mutual respect, positive praise and celebrated achievement.

At St Bernadette's Religious Education is recognised as the core subject in the life of the school. The Religious Education programme Come and See has been effectively introduced and the resources are used creatively to engage and motivate the pupils in order to maximise learning potential. The Religious Education curriculum fully meets the external requirements of the Bishops' Conference and is responsive to Diocesan circumstances.

Collective worship is central to the life of St Bernadette's. Pupils are taught how to plan, lead and evaluate daily Acts of Worship. Formal prayer opportunities are planned, prepared and delivered in partnership with the pupils. Half termly Masses in school are very well attended by parents and parishioners in addition to pupils, staff and governors. Parents expressed their appreciation for the opportunities they have

to attend Collective Worship in all its forms. The Year 6 pupils were keen to talk about their three day spiritual residential when they “Walk in the footsteps of the Northern Saints” and have quality time to reflect and enjoy quiet time together.

The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school is outstanding. The learning environment both inside and outside school clearly reflects its Catholic nature. High quality displays and sacred spaces all celebrate the school’s mission statement: “Walk in the Light of Love”. Purposeful and harmonious relationships are highly evident within the school and extend into the wider home and parish community. The children are proud of their patron saint and this is evident in the wonderful mosaic created by the children with the help of a local artist to celebrate the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of St Bernadette’s. Everywhere children’s work is displayed and their achievements celebrated. The large class photographs in the school hall reflect the unique nature of each individual child and create a strong sense of belonging to this Catholic school: pupils regularly say “Once a St Bernadette’s child, always a St Bernadette’s child”.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The quality of teaching and how purposeful learning is in Religious Education</li> </ul>	<b>1</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The extent to which the Religious Education curriculum promotes pupils’ learning</li> </ul>	<b>1</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school</li> </ul>	<b>1</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The quality of provision for the Catholic life of the school</li> </ul>	<b>1</b>

## 4. LEADERS, MANAGERS AND GOVERNORS

### **How effective leaders, managers and governors are in developing the Catholic life of the school**

The school leadership is deeply committed to the Church's mission in education. The Catholic mission of St Bernadette's is a source of inspiration, not only within the school but spreading out into the home and parish community. In the words of a Foundation governor, "children are embraced for their uniqueness within a learning community where we Live, Love, Laugh and Learn with each other". There is no room for complacency at St Bernadette's. This is reflected in the school's rigorous and accurate self evaluation. The head teacher is highly skilled in empowering leaders at all levels to engage in focussed monitoring and evaluation of provision for the Catholic life of the school. She is fully committed to ensuring the highest quality professional development for staff. Several members of staff have engaged in Diocesan Church Leader courses. The Parish Priest delivers training on Sacramental Development, engaging and supporting staff including those with faith other than Catholic, in spiritual discussion and learning.

The Religious Education leader fully engages with staff in planning and evaluating each topic in the come and See programme. New topics are introduced to staff through "Before you Begin" sessions in a spirit of quiet reflection and communal prayer. The lay chaplain provides pastoral support, catecheses, advice and support to staff and pupils. She is an invaluable link with the school and parish families.

Pupils engage fully with the Catholic Life of the school. Their understanding of the school's mission is outstanding and they work in a spirit of mutual respect and teamwork, proud of their achievements and proud of their school.

The Governing Body discharge their canonical duties very well. Led by the Parish Priest as Chair of Governors, they are extremely supportive of the school and fully involved in its mission for Catholic Education. Their accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development enable them to make a major contribution to the Catholic life of the school. They recognise and praise the pivotal

part the head teacher plays in supporting leadership at all levels, enabling well targeted planning and strategic action to be taken by the school.

Enthusiastic pupils, supportive parents, outstanding teachers, skilled and committed staff, a perceptive Governing Body and an experienced and highly motivated head teacher, all contribute effectively to St Bernadette’s outstanding capacity for sustained improvement.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How well leaders, managers and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life of the school, including collective worship, and plan improvement to outcomes for pupils</li></ul>	<b>1</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How well leaders, managers and governors monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education and plan for improvement to outcomes for pupils</li></ul>	<b>1</b>