



DIOCESAN CANONICAL INSPECTION REPORT

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

St Norbert's Catholic Voluntary Academy

Tollgate, Spalding, Lincolnshire, PE11 1NJ

School URN:	146257
Inspection Date:	17 March 2022
Inspectors:	Mrs F Boucher and Mr M Fitzwilliam

Overall Effectiveness	Previous Inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This Inspection:	Good	2
Catholic Life:		Outstanding	1
Religious Education:		Good	2
Collective Worship:		Outstanding	1

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

St Norbert's Catholic Voluntary Academy is a good Catholic school.

- St Norbert's Catholic Voluntary Academy is a good and improving school, where all are cherished and the whole community strives to demonstrate and exemplify 'a love of God, love of one another and love of life itself'. Pupils are courteous and polite, keen to share their pride in their school. Staff are warm and welcoming, creating a happy atmosphere for all. Leaders, including governors, are a strength of the school across Catholic Life, Religious Education and Collective Worship; their drive, passion and commitment, along with high levels of efficiency, leads to continual, positive change.
- Religious Education is good. Staff work hard to plan and deliver good lessons so that most pupils learn and concentrate well. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are a credit to the school. Leaders are unrelenting in their drive for improvement in Religious Education, setting out targets and plans to ensure that staff receive the development they need and pupils access the quality resources required. The vision for this subject is ambitious, in line with the high expectations for pupils.
- The Catholic Life of St Norbert's is outstanding. The mission of the school is understood and furthered by all members of the community: as well as being displayed throughout the building, pupils can articulate the school's values and principles. The behaviour and conduct of pupils is exemplary; staff are excellent role models. The environment is beautiful: this is testament to the high regard shown for the Catholic Life of the school. Parents are highly satisfied with the family atmosphere, care and values fostered at St Norbert's.
- Collective Worship at St Norbert's is outstanding. Having addressed the targets from the last inspection, pupil-led liturgy is flourishing. Liturgy takes many forms, providing a rich diet for pupils throughout the school. From their earliest years, pupils plan and lead prayer with their peers and the wider school community. Prayer is a central feature each day. Uninterrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic, worship remained at the heart of school life through the school's attention and diligence to online opportunities.

FULL REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

- St Norbert's is a single-form entry Catholic primary school set in rural Lincolnshire.
- The school serves the Catholic community of Spalding and Holbeach and the surrounding area, within the parish of The Immaculate Conception and St Norbert's Spalding and Holy Trinity Holbeach.
- There are 207 pupils currently on roll. 63% of the pupil population are baptized Catholics; 15% are from another Christian tradition; 7% have another faith background; 14% have no religious affiliation.
- Since the last inspection, a new acting headteacher has been appointed.
- 10% of pupils received school support in respect of their special education needs and/or disability. 2% of pupils have an education health and care plan which supports their individual and specific additional needs.
- 19% of pupils are in receipt of pupil premium funding, which mitigates against any inequalities related to family circumstances.
- 55.1% of pupils speak English as an additional language, which is significantly above the national average.

WHAT DOES THE SCHOOL NEED TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

■ Catholic Life and Collective Worship

- Explore ways in which the outstanding practice firmly in place at St Norbert's can be used to support and inspire other schools within the Trust and across the Diocese of Nottingham.

■ Religious Education:

- Improve pupils' understanding and use of key vocabulary in order to further develop and enhance the religious literacy skills of pupils across the school.
- Ensure that all teachers secure the subject knowledge and expertise required to more consistently
 - assess what pupils know in Religious Education
 - identify what pupils do not know in Religious Education
 - amend plans according to pupils' knowledge and understandingso that the use of the best assessment practice is replicated in all classes.

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

- The Catholic Life of St Norbert's school is highly prized by pupils. They are active in their involvement in shaping Catholic Life and living out its mission, contributing enthusiastically and responding willingly.
- Pupils are deeply respectful of themselves and others, recognising that each person is precious in the eyes of God. They talk openly about the importance of gratitude and forgiveness: this is a lived reality in school. Pupils say, 'We forgive each other; we say sorry – but we make sure that we do it and not just say it'.
- Pupils seek justice for those within and beyond the school community. By 'walking for food', they participate in an ongoing charity project which incorporates a commitment to covering a daily mile on foot; in recognition of the plight in Ukraine, they are dedicating their Lenten commitment to prayer and almsgiving. Pupils at St Norbert's have a clear understanding for and commitment to serving others, commenting, 'we are thankful for what we have'.
- The school's chaplaincy provision sits at the heart of school life and pupils see this as such. Pupil leaders support younger pupils, and peers, to further their spiritual development; pupils across the school, of all ages, lead worship and create meaningful prayer times, which contribute positively to the Catholic Life of the school.
- Pupils have an excellent understanding of loving relationships and sexual development, appropriate to their age and capability. Their work in whole class books, linked to personal development, reflects their rounded and measured thoughts and captures their evolving thinking.

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

- The school's mission statement is a lived reality at St Norbert's. It is visibly apparent in display, word and deed. By promoting, supporting and fostering 'a love of God, love of one another and love of life itself', all members of the school community show commitment to the educational mission of the Church.
- Catholic Life is central to all that is undertaken in the school. Staff show their unswerving commitment through the quality of relationships, demonstrating the school's embedded Catholic values. They are dedicated to professional development in relation to Catholic Life, including the sharing and furthering of their own prayer life.
- The strong sense of community is palpable within the school; this is reiterated by the opinion of parents, who are highly supportive of the school's Catholic Life and its positive impact on their families. Prayer is a central feature: this was well maintained throughout the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, since online worship became a priority while the community was required to spend time apart.
- The school environment exemplifies the importance placed by staff on Catholic Life. The school's Catholic character shines through: the high-quality wall displays; the abundance of prayer tables and prayer stations dotted around the building; the care taken in classrooms to reflect each class' prayer life and the Church's liturgical season; the use of inspirational quotes and statements linked with key people, such as Pope Francis.
- The commitment of staff to those most in need is seen clearly through the policies and the structures put in place, including those related to Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE).
- The pastoral plans and practices at work in the school reflect high levels of care for pupils. Equal attention is afforded to members of staff, so that the needs of almost all are catered for and considered.

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

- Leaders, including governors, are a strength of the school; their enthusiasm is inspirational. They are deeply committed to the Church's mission in education and dedicated to the development of the Catholic Life of St Norbert's. The impressive acting headteacher extends her supportive nature to those outside her own setting, aiding school leaders in other parts of the St Thérèse of Lisieux Catholic Multi-Academy Trust.
- School leaders, at all levels, know the school well and evaluate outcomes, provision and leadership accurately. Monitoring and evaluation activities, and ambition for progression and improvement, ensure that Catholic Life is in sharp focus at all times.
- Professional development opportunities for staff are offered regularly; this results in effective and ongoing support for staff, whose skills and understanding are shaping the Catholic Life of the school.
- Highly successful strategies are employed to engage and involve parents in the Catholic Life of the school, which benefits the pupils and families within the community. Parents are highly appreciative: they praise the efforts of leaders to keep the Catholic Life alive throughout the various lockdown periods during the COVID-19 pandemic; they observe the kindness shown to neighbours and residents, exemplifying the school's Catholic values.
- Governors are regular visitors who are deeply involved in working for the continual improvement of Catholic Life within the school. They acknowledge that the support from the St Thérèse of Lisieux Catholic Multi-Academy Trust is helping them in their work to challenge and support school leaders. Governors help to ensure that pupils' 'God-given talents are on show', speaking with passion about the importance of each child fulfilling her or his potential.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

THE QUALITY OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION	2
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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 – good

- Pupils enter St Norbert's at a variety of different starting points. Work in pupils' books demonstrates that they are making good progress over time and that this is comparable to diocesan expectations by the time they leave Year 6.
- Pupils say how much they enjoy Religious Education. They are almost always prepared to start their learning and demonstrate good listening skills. Pupils are keen to share their knowledge: those in the strongest lessons are able to articulate their thoughts and feelings across a wide range of themes.
- The quality of pupils' work is good and, in some classes, even better. Religious Education books are well presented and pupils comment on how proud they are of the work they have produced. Pupils confirm the challenge they are given, saying, 'we have to work hard'. There is evidence of extended pieces of writing captured in Religious Education books or Literacy books alongside opportunities to be more creative. Diocesan expectations are met.
- The behaviour and attitudes of pupils are exemplary. They listen intently to their teachers and respond with respect when their peers share ideas or personal perspectives. The manners modelled by all adults in the school are consistently mirrored by all young people.
- Pupils are very enthusiastic when given the opportunity to learn about the other faith lives of members of their community and beyond. They say that their understanding of other faiths has been enhanced prior to lockdown through visiting places of worship or welcoming visitors to the school.
- The school has adopted Journey in Love to deliver Relationships and Sex and Education (RSE). The programme is thoughtfully designed and refers explicitly to Catholic teachings and principles, resulting in pupils and their families responding in a very positive manner.

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

- The quality of teaching is at least good; it is outstanding in some classes. In the most successful lessons, class teachers are very clear on what they want pupils to know at the end of a session or at the conclusion of a unit of work. These teachers check carefully that essential knowledge is explicitly understood before moving onto the next step through providing activities which pupils need to complete independently.
- The Religious Education subject knowledge of most teachers is strong, particularly in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in upper Key Stage 2. When subject knowledge is strong, teachers check that pupils understand key concepts; they provide greater challenge and ask questions which allow pupils to make connections to knowledge gained in the past.
- The Come and See programme is used consistently throughout the school. A varied range of strategies is used to different effect. Some teachers do not yet plan to allow pupils to demonstrate that they can remember essential knowledge over time or that they can complete independent work. In other classes, teachers more effectively plan opportunities which requires pupils to answer questions using the range of knowledge and skills they have developed over time. The next step is for all teachers to secure the subject knowledge and expertise required to identify what pupils do and do not know in Religious Education and amend their plans accordingly.
- Feedback given to pupils aims to provide them with clear steps for how they can improve their work. Teachers ensure that success is celebrated both in class and in assemblies, which motivates pupils even further. Marking in workbooks is consistent with the school's policy.
- The promotion of key vocabulary for pupils is rightly an area of development in Religious Education improvement planning. By concentrating on this aspect of teaching and learning, staff seek to enhance and further develop pupils' religious literacy skills: this work should continue so that pupils can reflect more fully, both verbally and in written form, their theological understanding, in keeping with their age and stage of development.

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

- The leadership of Religious Education is outstanding. Led by the dedicated and committed acting headteacher, the school has a clear and accurate evaluation of strengths and weaknesses. Leaders are ambitious for all pupils in the school, including those with special educational needs and disabilities.
- At the centre of the ongoing school improvement is the skillful leader of Religious Education. Alongside other leaders, she has established a clear and ambitious vision to raise standards beyond where they already lie. She celebrates and highlights the achievements of the school as a means of promoting the best practice; she has established a plan which will provide all teachers with the training and support needed to raise standards in Religious Education even further.
- All stakeholders at the school recognise the important and positive role of school leaders, particularly during the lockdown caused by COVID-19. Parents recognise 'the extra mile' all staff went to ensure that pupils continued their Religious Education and other studies.
- The chair of the local governing body, other governors and the St Thérèse of Lisieux Catholic Multi-Academy Trust are committed to the education and wellbeing of all pupils. They play an important role in monitoring standards within Religious Education to ensure that other leaders continue to aspire for the best.
- Work is assessed regularly; school leaders use their diocesan links and the St Thérèse of Lisieux Catholic Multi Academy Trust to ensure it is as accurate as possible. In classes where teaching is most effective, this assessment is used to identify if pupils understand the most essential knowledge and if they are ready to progress to their next stage in learning. The use of the best assessment practice now needs to be replicated in all classes.

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 engages pupils, holding their interest and absorbing them in participation. The quality of communal singing, moments of silence and times of collective prayer confirm the view that Collective Worship is highly valued by pupils.
- Pupil-led worship is well embedded in the liturgical life of the school. Pupils across the school regularly plan and lead worship, employing creative strategies to ensure it captures the hearts and minds of those present: for example, they incorporate drama, scripture, traditional prayer and artwork. Young children make verbal suggestions about what the script could include, thus impacting directly on what is subsequently shared with the school family.
- Pupils reflect confidence in their abilities to lead Collective Worship. They talk with understanding about themes related to the liturgical year; they can reflect on particular liturgies they have enjoyed. When discussing the impact it has upon them, they say that prayer 'actually means more than the words' because 'when we pray, it is not just a ritual; we take time to think what the words mean'.
- Older pupils relish the opportunity not only to lead worship themselves, but to support others in learning how to do so. They acknowledge past pupils who influenced them as they moved through the school; they consider that they themselves are role models for younger pupils, reflecting that 'if they do what we do, and a bit more, then it will make our school a better place – with their ideas and our ideas'.
- Pupils are aware of how their own behaviour and manners are influenced by the prayer life and spirituality they experience in school. They like the way in which praise for acts of kindness is incorporated into worship times; they see the importance of being connected to others in prayer; they notice that, in different year groups, they are exposed to various forms and styles of prayer, citing as examples The Angelus, the prayer for the Synod and The Lord's Prayer.
- Pupils of other faiths are comfortable when talking about the prayer life of the school and their own traditions. They recognize the respect shown for them and their faith, and that this is a typical feature of the school family.

The quality of provision for Collective Worship – outstanding

- Collective Worship is well embedded into life at St Norbert's; praying together is part of the daily experience for pupils and staff. All members value these times, relishing the opportunity to gather and pray as a community.
- Provision ensures that Collective Worship is carefully thought out and planned, taking account of the liturgical year and through the choice of relevant and age-appropriate themes. For example, Year 1 were helped by their teacher to deliver Jesus' message to love other people; in supporting the pupils to reinforce this further, adults had filmed the pupils spraying foam into heart-shapes and patterns, showing that love can also emerge and flow to fill a space.
- Staff have commitment and drive to ensure that Collective Worship is of the highest quality; this is reflected in the skills employed, resources used and the timing of liturgy in relation to the Church's feasts and seasons. Staff use a wide variety of methods and styles of prayer to engage and enthuse pupils to explore their relationship with God.
- The spiritual development of pupils is important to staff; they have worked hard to re-establish in-person worship following the COVID-19 period, having led worship online throughout times when there were lockdown rules in place. Staff are highly supportive of the sacramental life of the school and how this links to the parishes.
- Opportunities are taken to involve parents and families in times of worship and this is much appreciated. Parents admire staff for their dedication to this aspect of school life.

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

- Leaders are excellent role models in leading and supporting Collective Worship. They are a visible presence; they ensure that the school week includes whole school, key stage and class-based occasions for prayer. The role of Collective Worship leader is well established, and well executed, because of the special priority placed on prayer in this school.
- Leaders have worked hard to support staff in elevating creativity in worship, so that this is more impactful for those present. Through strong professional development and carefully targeted plans, staff have gained the confidence to develop pupils' ideas and practice. For example, pupils write invitations to classes, building anticipation and excitement about what they are to share when gathered together; they stick decorated hearts on the carpet as a pathway of love to lead the school family towards the hall.
- Leaders agree that the level of participation in Collective Worship throughout the school has risen since the last inspection and this is seen in how pupils are so happy to share, plan and lead liturgy. Monitoring and evaluation activities draw from a range of feedback: pupil written responses; class evaluation records; the 'evaluation station' comments noted by the pupil chaplain and 'Mini Vinnie' groups.
- Governors are highly supportive of Collective Worship and promote this in a variety of ways. They are frequent visitors and participate enthusiastically in liturgy; they help to ensure that the environment fully reflects the value placed on worship, including paying close attention to the enhancement of outdoor spaces, such as Our Lady's garden and the soon-to-be designed Rosary garden.
- Links with the parishes are important to all at St Norbert's. Clergy speak of how well the school is 'immersed in Catholicity, which 'screams out from wherever you are'. The pupils have been supported in sharing their thoughts on the Synod questions, knowing that Pope Francis is interested in their ideas and that the parishioners are keen partners in keeping Collective Worship strong and healthy.

SCHOOL DETAILS

School Name	St Norbert's Catholic Voluntary Academy
Unique Reference Number	146257
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 6 Religious Education lessons and 2 Acts of Collective Worship.

Meetings were held with the acting headteacher, the subject leader for Religious Education, the parish priest, the Trust's Interim CEO and a group of 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 Janet Havemann Bowser
Headteacher (Acting):	Mrs Jenna Withers
Date of Previous School Inspection:	04 March 2015
Telephone Number:	01775 722889
Email Address:	enquiries@st-norberts.lincs.sch.uk

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.