

St Bernadette's Catholic Primary School

URN: 106116

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Bishop of Shrewsbury

21–22 November 2024

Summary of key findings

Overall effectiveness

The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school

2

Catholic life and mission (p.3)

How faithfully the school responds to the call to live as a Catholic community at the service of the Church's educational mission

1

Religious education (p.5)

The quality of curriculum religious education

2

Collective worship (p.7)

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

2

The school is fully compliant with the general norms for religious education laid down by the Bishops' Conference

Yes

The school is fully compliant with any additional requirements of the diocesan bishop

Yes

The school has responded to the areas for improvement from the last inspection

Fully

Compliance statement

- The school dedicates ten percent of teaching time to religious education. This subject is taught using *The Way, The Truth and the Life* in Early Years, Year 5 and Year 6. All other classes have implemented *The Vine and The Branches*.
- The school is using the *Life to the Full* resources to teach relationships and sex education, and leaders ensure this is done through a Catholic lens.
- Areas for improvement from the previous inspection have been fully met. Pupils have deepened their understanding of the liturgical year. Senior leaders and teachers have targets related to the Catholic life and mission of the school.

What the school does well

- The inspirational headteacher and passionate subject leader lead by example.
- Gospel values that permeate through daily life at St Bernadette's make the school a shining light of God's love in their community.
- The commitment and dedication of staff ensures pupils make good progress in their religious education lessons.
- There is a variety of opportunities to pray and celebrate throughout the liturgical year.
- Outstanding pastoral care and inclusivity enable pupils' self-esteem, and spiritual and moral development to flourish.

What the school needs to improve

- Ensure that feedback in religious education lessons informs planning so that all groups of pupils understand how to become independent learners.
- Develop staff confidence and skill by providing training to support their understanding of prayer and the delivery of more reflective approaches for celebrations of the word.

Catholic life and mission

How faithfully the school responds to the call to live as a Catholic community at the service of the Church's educational mission.

Catholic life and mission key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

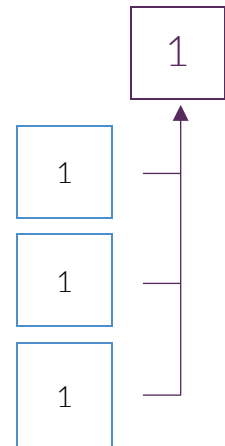
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

Provision

The quality of provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school

Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school



'I have come that they may have life and have it to the full' (John 10:10), St Bernadette's School aspires to live this Gospel message so that pupils experience God's love every day. Pupils review the Catholic life and mission annually and make links with Catholic social teaching. A recent day of reflection on stewardship energised and deepened the pupils' understanding. Pupils know that 'planting bulbs and picking up litter' is about taking care of our world. Pupils learn to live out this mission with each other and develop an understanding of their responsibility to help others in their local community. Pupils describe St Bernadette's as a 'happy place' where 'they are never lonely', and 'the cooking is so good'. They appreciate that their 'acts of kindness' are recognised in their weekly celebration assemblies. Therefore, all pupils including the Wellbeing Champions, Mini Vinnies, school councillors and eco councillors understand they can and do make a difference. Pupils express this simply as, 'It makes us feel happy because we are helping others to feel happy'.

The staff's willingness to engage in activities that enhance the school's Catholic life and mission reflects their dedication and vocational approach to the service of others. They feel part of a family as they help each other and pupils to 'walk in the footsteps of Jesus'. Pastoral care is outstanding and is led by an enthusiastic and effective pastoral leader, who together with school staff, and Stockport Mental Health and Ethnic Diversity teams, provide a wide range of opportunities for both pupils and their families. They engage with many other agencies that provide enriching and life affirming experiences for those who need them, and they work hard to improve attendance. Inclusivity and welcome for all are features of St Bernadette's. The Peace room offers opportunities for pupils from other cultures and faiths to feel part of this school family. Catholic social teaching is integral to the mission of the school. They are on a journey to enable pupils to understand more fully the links between their charitable acts and Pope Francis's letter, Laudato Si. High quality displays celebrate the achievements and learning of the pupils. Relationships and sex education is led by members of staff who ensure the subject is taught

through the Catholic lens and understand that 'this is one part of the child's development and spiritual journey'.

St Bernadette's is a shining light in the Brinnington community and is led by the inspirational headteacher who has unwavering support from the experienced senior leadership team. Leaders and governors ensure that wellbeing of staff is an important focus and this, together with their commitment to place pastoral care of pupils as their 'highest priority', means that there is a warmth that permeates throughout daily life. All staff embrace the Catholic mission and vision for the school, and provide a nurturing environment for the school community, which enhances the lives of the pupils and their families. Leaders place Gospel values at the heart the school's policies and procedures, and this results in trusting and meaningful relationships. All questionnaire responses are overwhelmingly positive and reflect the successful partnership the school has with families. Leaders and governors are passionate about their commitment to Catholic social teaching. Decisions taken daily in school and at governing board meetings demonstrate exemplary commitment to service of those in greatest need. Leaders provide engaging opportunities for staff to understand their role in promoting the mission of the school, however there are not enough planned opportunities for staff and pupils to reflect on the effectiveness of their work or to celebrate their achievements.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

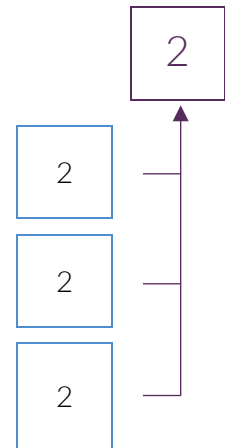
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

Provision

The quality of teaching, learning, and assessment in religious education

Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for religious education



All pupils enjoy their religious education lessons and engage fully in their learning. This results in exemplary behaviour in all classes, allowing pupils to make good progress from their starting points. Pupils confidently share their ideas with partners, concentrate well and listen carefully to the teacher. This means they understand what they are being asked to do during the lesson. Written work in books shows a variety of pupils' own responses structured within writing frameworks, and by the end of Key Stage 2 pupils are given more opportunities for extended writing. This means older pupils have more freedom to express their views and opinions. Some pupils confidently answer open ended questions and can explain the meaning of key vocabulary. Pupils have good knowledge of the religious education curriculum, and they demonstrate excellent recall of previous learning. However, in most lessons, time is not used efficiently to ensure all pupils have appropriate and creative ways of remembering and knowing more from their previous learning. Feedback in lessons and in books is not always clear, so opportunities are missed to deepen understanding for those pupils who are ready for more challenging questions.

Teachers and support staff have high expectations for pupils. They understand the importance of religious education in daily life at St Bernadette's. Teachers confidently plan lessons that cover all the topics in the religious education schemes used. *The Way, The Truth and The Life* continues to be taught in Early Years and Upper Key Stage 2. *The Vine and The Branches* has been successfully introduced in all other year groups. Teachers use a range of teaching styles and opportunities to make lessons interesting, and pupils enjoy activities such as drama, freeze frames, art, hot seating and music. Teachers also provide a range of enrichment activities. For example, Year 6 Bible Buddies read stories from the Bible to children in Foundation Stage 2, who enjoy learning about The Lost Sheep and begin to understand that God loves them. Also, teachers use photographs taken during a class Mass in church to learn about the meaning of the Mass. Lessons observed and written work in books show that, although teachers use a variety of tasks and open ended questions, not all teachers adapt their feedback to promote

independent learning and challenge. In the best lessons adult support is used effectively to make sure pupils' needs are met so that all pupils are ready to learn. This support is then continued to keep pupils on task throughout the lesson.

The inspirational headteacher, and dedicated team of staff ensure pupils' needs are nurtured so they are ready to learn. The subject leader is passionate about high quality religious education being taught; therefore, he provides meaningful support and effective training for staff. Staff appreciate this and know they can approach the subject leader and other senior leaders for advice if needed. Curriculum professional development is prioritised by leaders and governors and is a strength at St Bernadette's. All staff attend relevant courses to ensure they are fully up to date with diocesan training and as a result they feel confident when planning and teaching religious education. Planning and teaching are at least good in all classes, however checking for understanding in lessons and using further questioning isn't consistent across the school. This means some opportunities are missed to provide effective feedback, which would help pupils who may need more time to fully understand their learning or challenge those pupils who are ready for more challenge. Regular monitoring of lessons is planned but does not always highlight specific areas for improvement.

Collective worship

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

Collective worship key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

How well pupils participate in and respond to the school's collective worship

2

Provision

The quality of collective worship provided by the school

2

Leadership

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

2

2

Pupils respond well to all opportunities for prayer and liturgy. Their singing is uplifting and joyous. Their own prayers are meaningful and show that they are developing an understanding of what prayer means to them. 'I pray when I'm feeling down or upset. I ask God to cheer me up'. Pupils of all ages participate fully in times of prayer. Parishioners and parents comment on how respectful they are in the weekly Masses that classes attend in church. Pupils also use signing as a way of praying. There are opportunities to plan and lead different types of prayer and liturgy and pupils in Key Stage 2 make good use of a planner when doing this. However, they rely on significant support from teachers. Pupils understand the Church's liturgical year. They confidently describe various times of the year and make links with the types of prayer they experience during different liturgical seasons. During the Monday celebration of the word, pupils have time to reflect on how the Gospel reading is linked to the school values. The youngest children can express how they can respond to the Gospel message 'I can give mummy a hug and a kiss'. Older pupils can articulate where they pray, 'Normally, I pray near the window because that's the best place to see God'.

Staff commitment to the daily pattern of prayer means prayer is a normal part of daily life at St Bernadette's. Pupils speak confidently about these times. Staff make every effort to use the space in the classrooms, music, and resources creatively to make celebrations of the word feel special and different to lessons. Staff offer opportunities for families to join them for prayer and liturgy during the year and parents are responding positively to this. Reaching out to families so they feel part of the school community is a priority for staff and this is done in many ways. Invitations to class prayer times, Masses, fortnightly newsletters, Wednesday Word, and Prayer bags and travelling cribs in Advent are some of the creative ways in which this happens. A variety of resources are used to enrich prayer times, many of which are recorded in the class prayer book. These books are beautifully presented and are a valuable resource for reflection. Because St Bernadette's is an inclusive school, pupils joining from other cultures and faiths are embraced.

Displays in the Peace room celebrate Diwali and show rangoli patterns alongside other special times in the Christian calendar such as Remembrance, and prayer trails in Advent and Lent.

Senior leaders and governors are committed to ensuring prayer is an integral part of the school day, therefore considerable resources are allocated so that all teachers can attend training organised by the diocese. The policy for prayer and liturgy, which is based on the new *Prayer and Liturgy Directory* is a useful resource for staff, however teachers' confidence and understanding of how to provide prayerful experiences is not consistent in all classes. Senior leaders are experienced in leading prayer and provide some opportunities for training, mentoring and modelling celebrations of the word. However, there is not a robust monitoring plan to target more specific support for individual teachers to increase confidence and understanding of prayer. Leaders are working with the new parish priest to ensure the preparation for the Sacraments of Reconciliation and First Holy Communion continue to be part of the links with the parish. Throughout the year special feasts and significant times are celebrated, and families are invited to join the school community. Parental responses indicate that they appreciate these opportunities.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Bernadette's Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	106116
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	3563509
Full postal address of the school	St Bernadette's Catholic Primary School, Foliage Road, Brinnington, Stockport, SK5 8AR
School phone number	01614304601
Headteacher	Sinead Jones
Chair of governors	Sarah Howe
School Website	www.st-bernadettes.stockport.sch.uk/
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	N/A
Phase	Primary
Type of school	Voluntary Aided School
Admissions policy	Non-selective
Age-range of pupils	3-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	1 December 2017
Previous denominational inspection grade	1

The inspection team

Susan Lyonette
Linda Davison

Lead
Team

Key to grade judgements

Grade	England	Wales
1	Outstanding	Excellent
2	Good	Good
3	Requires improvement	Adequate and requires improvement
4	Inadequate	Unsatisfactory and in need of urgent improvement