

# St Bernadette's Catholic Primary Voluntary Academy

URN: 138016

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Bishop of Nottingham

04–05 June 2025

## Summary of key findings

### Overall effectiveness

The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school

#### 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

2

## Compliance statement

- The school's religious education programme ensures that 10% or more of the timetable is dedicated to teaching and learning in the subject.
- The school follows the guidance of the diocesan bishop in its choice of religious education resource for teaching.
- School leaders have worked hard and effectively to have impact on those areas identified for improvement in the last inspection.

## What the school does well

- Leaders, including governors, live out the Gospel values and are genuine examples of Catholic leadership. They set a strong example for others to follow and are well respected by all stakeholders.
- The school's mission statement, 'Striving for excellence in all that we do, reflecting the light of Christ to the world', is a clear and inspiring expression of the school's work; it is known and lived by all.
- The school's 'Cornerstone Values' provide pupils with exemplary points of reference which underpin their behaviour towards each other and the wider school community.
- St Bernadette's provides good religious education lessons and effective support for pupils with additional needs.
- The school places a strong emphasis upon pupil leadership within prayer and liturgy. Pupils are actively encouraged to take the lead in planning and delivering both class and whole school worship.

## What the school needs to improve

- Embed in pupils the knowledge and understanding of the theology which underpins Catholic social teaching, at an age-appropriate level.
- Provide pupils with regular opportunities to present their learning in a variety of ways, developing individuality, initiative and independence in religious education.
- Ensure that all pupils have regular opportunities to engage with spontaneous prayer and guided, silent reflection.

## 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

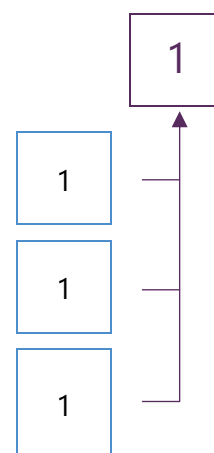
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

#### 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



Pupils at St Bernadette's clearly know that they are valued and cared for as unique persons, created by God. They exhibit highly positive attitudes to school life, having understood and embraced the school's 'Cornerstone Values' from their earliest years. They understand the theology, in child-friendly terms, of the Catholic mission of the school, and how they can help to implement it. 'Lumen Christi' is not only embroidered on the uniform worn by pupils, it is taken into each day as a duty to be a 'mirror' to reflect the light of Christ on others. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary, reflecting in pupils a deep respect for themselves and others. They relish the junior leadership opportunities the school provides. These are plentiful and varied, ensuring that pupils experience the identified responsibility of being in a group which has a clear purpose that contributes to the Catholic ethos. The chaplaincy team, mini-vinnies, safeguarding crew, well-being ambassadors, and subject champions are all active in promoting the school's mission and attending to the needs of others as part of their developing understanding of Catholic social teaching. They relish the opportunities for spiritual and moral development that the chaplaincy provision offers.

The school's mission statement has a significant impact on the life of the school, helping to unite the community, and embed its particular charism, so that the school is a beacon of Catholic practice, rooted in scripture. All understand and embrace the mission statement, and it pervades the school's daily life. Staff are role models in embracing and promoting the mission, and their enthusiasm and active participation in implementing it is clearly in evidence. The school's sense of open welcome is shared with all, with particular concern for the most vulnerable. Pastoral care seeks to prioritise those with greatest need, but also reaches out more widely, exemplified in the charitable works undertaken, such as support for a local hospice and a local food bank,

and singing for older people in the community at parish events. Chaplaincy provision is a central and celebrated aspect of the Catholic life and mission of the school. The chaplaincy programme is skilfully planned and implemented to nurture the spiritual and moral development of pupils and staff.

Leaders are energetic in promoting the Catholic mission and are a source of inspiration to staff. They are thoughtful and reflective and have skilfully embedded an ethos which ensures that Christ is at the heart of the school. The recent development of Catholic social teaching is a prime example of how leaders ensure that staff and pupils can take ownership of Catholic principles within the school's daily activities. School leaders are well supported by governors and the Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Multi-Academy Trust, who are active in evaluating, challenging and supporting all developments. They are highly ambitious in their desire for continuous improvement. Upholding the Church's preferential option for the poor can be seen in the school's outreach to local, national and global charities. Leaders and governors have overseen a flourishing partnership with the local community, particularly the parish. They ensure that secure structures are in place to support the wellbeing of staff. Continuing professional development on the Catholic life and mission of the school is regular and very effective.

## Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

### Religious education key judgement grade

#### Pupil outcomes

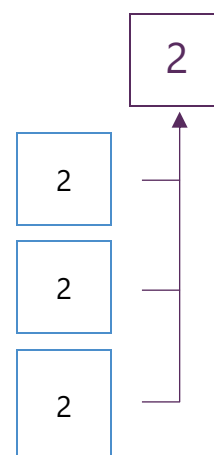
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

#### 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



Pupils make good progress in religious education. Pupils are developing secure knowledge, understanding and skills, based on the expectations of the curriculum for each year group. Pupils' ability to speak with confidence about what they have learnt in religious education is good. For example, in a Key Stage 1 class, pupils can recall details about the story of Pentecost and suggest emotions that the disciples may have experienced. Pupils across the school are developing a good level of religious literacy, including some subject-specific vocabulary, and are using this to think ethically and reflect spiritually, particularly in the older year groups. A parent commented that their child 'shows joy in RE' and regularly shares their learning at home. Pupils demonstrate exemplary behaviour in class, attentive when listening and responsive to teachers' questioning. In some instances, pupils' responses are limited in depth and detail, but their willingness to learn is impressive. Most pupils take care with their written work and present it well. Most pupils understand how well they are doing, and what they need to do to improve, giving examples of how they use their 'purple pen' for making their work more accurate.

Overall, teacher subject knowledge is good: teachers teach with confidence, including those new to the religious education curriculum. Teachers understand the value of religious education and bring enthusiasm and commitment to their work. In the strongest lessons, teachers assess pupils' knowledge acquisition accurately, provide challenge to all learners appropriate to their starting points and create an environment where pupils can respond fully in a range of creative ways. The 'knowledge organisers' and consistent religious education displays in classrooms support pupils' independent learning development. The emphasis on developing a good understanding of vocabulary has been particularly effective in raising standards, particularly in upper Key Stage 2. In the most effective lessons, teachers use questioning to identify where pupils are in their understanding, and to give positive feedback. Sometimes, this interaction lacks

challenge in responses, missing opportunities to develop deeper reflection and articulation. Teaching assistants give discrete and helpful support to identified pupils. Some teachers provide pupils with opportunities to present their learning using a variety of forms; this is not outstanding because the variety offered is limited in range and response. Teachers do not consistently enable pupils to respond as individuals, relying more frequently on learning tasks which give pupils less opportunity to show signs of individuality and creativity. Choice of presentation style for pupils is at an early stage of development.

Leaders and governors ensure that the religious education programme fulfils the requirements of the Religious Education Directory. This enables staff to deliver lessons that are well resourced and influenced by bespoke staff training. Regular monitoring of religious education lessons, and pupil outcomes by leaders and governors, supports teacher development. Where feedback to staff has had the greatest impact, teachers use a range of effective teaching strategies which maximise pupils' acquisition of religious knowledge. The subject leader for religious education has an inspiring vision of outstanding teaching and learning. Recent planned developments have provided staff and pupils with a consistent approach to the structure of lessons. This has resulted in regular 'knowledge retrieval' practice across school which is beginning to deepen the recorded responses by pupils. The subject leader's high level of expertise is readily shared with staff. The religious education curriculum, including the study of other world faiths, does not always enable learners to progress sequentially through the content. As a result, some pupils are not acquiring key knowledge in the appropriate order and therefore have gaps in their learning. Leaders have ensured that regular enrichment opportunities, such as visitors presenting assemblies about their own faith practices, engage and enhance pupils' experiences.

## 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

1

2

Pupils respond well to the experiences of prayer and liturgy in school. They show reverence and respect at all times and understand the importance of this area of school life. There is an atmosphere of calm during worship, allowing pupils to pray silently or out loud in communal prayers. Pupils recognise the singing of hymns as another way to pray and do so confidently. During a Key Stage 2 celebration of the word, pupils sang 'God's spirit is in my heart' as they lit candles which symbolised the Holy Spirit as tongues of fire. Pupils plan and lead celebrations of the word with increasing independence and confidence. These occasions include listening to scripture, traditional prayer and music. Pupils are beginning to reflect silently for short periods of time; where this practice is most effective, pupils can articulate the impact of prayer and liturgy in their daily lives. However, opportunities for silent and personal reflection are not consistently embedded in the practice across the school. Pupils routinely evaluate the quality of prayer and liturgy, consider how it could be improved and work with staff to make suggested improvements.

Prayer is woven into the daily life of the school. Pupils pray the Rosary during May and October and take home 'travelling cribs' to pray with their families during Advent. Pupils of all ages voluntarily attend and lead daily Bible reading opportunities during breaktimes. As a result, they can explain how this opportunity helps them to have a better understanding of how to be a good example to others, following Jesus' example in the gospels. Older pupils are particularly skilled in recalling and linking suitable scripture to themes chosen in celebrations of the word. Pupils regularly attend Mass in the local parish church and in school. Links with the parish have been well established over time. The recent introduction of 'parish prayer partners' has been warmly embraced by parishioners and pupils alike. Families appreciate the welcome they receive when they attend school Masses and other celebrations. Staff are good role models inspiring pupils to

participate fully in worship opportunities. Leaders, including the lay chaplain, are skilled in supporting pupils to plan and lead well-constructed celebrations of the word. St Bernadette's benefits from the expertise of leaders who are pro-active in giving pupils the opportunity to learn new hymns and sing well. The school makes good use of spaces available for prayer including classrooms, corridors and the prayer garden, and has identified a suitable space for a school chapel.

Leaders and governors have an excellent understanding of the different skills and levels of participation that are reflective of the age and capacity of pupils, and are embedding the diocesan structure and guidance. They recognise the importance of prayer and liturgy and this is reflected in the prioritising of time and other resources, including the deployment of a lay chaplain. The school's policy on prayer and liturgy has recently been updated and is useful to relevant staff when they are planning celebrations of the word. The school provides regular opportunities for the celebration of the Eucharist, and the planned calendar of celebrations reflects the liturgical year. This ensures that all major feasts and Catholic traditions are highlighted, supporting the faith formation of both pupils and staff. High quality professional development is offered to staff in prayer and liturgy. Leaders support other staff well and, as a result, they are developing their knowledge and confidence in planning and leading their own high-quality prayer. Leaders regularly seek the views of all stakeholders, including pupils, about the quality of prayer and liturgy, and respond to feedback in a timely fashion.



## Information about the school

Full name of school	St Bernadette's Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	138016
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	8133325
Full postal address of the school	St Bernadette's Catholic Primary Voluntary Academy, Anne's Crescent, Ashby, Scunthorpe, DN16 2LW
School phone number	01724 842382
Headteacher	Mark Strong
Chair of local governing body	Janice Moran
School Website	<a href="http://www.stbernadettesacademy.co.uk">www.stbernadettesacademy.co.uk</a>
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	Our Lady Of Lourdes Catholic Multi-Academy Trust
Phase	Primary
Type of school	Academy
Admissions policy	Non-selective
Age-range of pupils	3-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	12 June 2018
Previous denominational inspection grade	1 - Outstanding

## The inspection team

Alixena Lubomski  
Amanda Greaves

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