



Catholic Schools Inspectorate inspection report for St Chad's Catholic Primary School

URN: 140144

Carried out on behalf of the Most Rev. Bernard Longley, Archbishop of Birmingham on:

Date: 6-7 December 2023

Overall effectiveness

The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school.....

1

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.....

1

Collective worship (p.7)

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

1

The school is fully compliant with the curriculum requirements laid down by the Bishops' Conference

✓

The school is fully compliant with all requirements of the diocesan bishop

✓

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

Fully

Summary of key findings

What the school does well

- The mission statement and values unite the community and underpin all areas of school life. Christ is at the centre of this school.
- Pupils demonstrate a deep sense of belonging to this welcoming, inclusive community. They value and enjoy school and their learning in religious education and appreciate all the school offers them.
- Leaders and staff have embraced Catholic social teaching and make explicit links to it in all areas of school life and learning. As a result, pupils live out their faith in their daily lives.
- Leaders and governors are ambitious for the school. They have systematically secured rapid improvement and are committed to ensuring future growth.

- Parents greatly value the school's strong Catholic ethos and its positive influence on their children and families.

What the school needs to improve:

- Provide pupils with increased opportunities to plan and lead whole school activities to support the school's Catholic life and prayer life.
- Provide opportunities for all pupils to present their learning in religious education using various creative forms of expression.
- Strengthen pupil understanding of how well they are doing in religious education so they can better understand how to progress their learning.

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:.....

1

Pupil outcomes

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

1

Provision

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

1

Leadership

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

1

Pupils are proactively committed to the school's mission and values, which are central to the school's life. They have frequent opportunities to explore these in depth. Pupils of all ages understand the importance of living their faith, as evidenced by their engagement with various charities and initiatives linked to the demands of Catholic social teaching. Pupils are enthusiastic about their involvement with Cafod, Missio, and the local food bank, among others. Pupils' ability to confidently articulate the links of their actions to the theory of Catholic social teaching is extremely strong. Pupils embrace the 'St Chad's Way', and their behaviour and attitudes in lessons and around the school are excellent. They have a strong self-worth and demonstrate respect and care for others. Every pupil in the school has a leadership responsibility and understands the value of their service to the school community: opportunities include liturgy leaders, Minnie Vinnie's, school council representatives, prefects, anti-bullying ambassadors, and eco-warriors. A parent commented, 'My children feel special, loved, and valued within the school. They are encouraged to take on responsibilities and to be proud of their achievements and talents.'

The mission statement is at the school's heart. Pupils regularly focus on the school virtues and the values expressed within the Catholic School Pupil Profile. Leaders and staff are fully committed to providing a supportive environment and a range of activities which enable every pupil to flourish. The school creates opportunities for every child to reflect on their God-given vocation. This is supported by a range of activities aimed at putting faith into action and empowering pupils to be advocates for those in greatest need in society. Relationships between staff and pupils are excellent. Staff consistently witness the school's Catholic mission and are excellent role models. A staff member told inspectors, 'Decisions are driven by Catholic life. It's such an integral part of our school.' The parish priest is a valued school supporter who generously gives his time. The school environment has had considerable improvements since the last inspection. It now vibrantly reflects

the school's Catholic identity and ethos and shows they are fully alive in its daily life. Personal, social, and health education, as well as relationship, sex, and health education, are well thought through, planned, and delivered to reflect Catholic teachings and principles. Great care has been taken to share details of the schemes with parents.

Leaders and governors are passionate about promoting and developing the Catholic life of the school. They have developed keywords and phrases as the language of St Chad's, which has created a culture where the presence of Christ is undoubtedly placed at the heart of school life. Leaders have taken great care to ensure the whole curriculum now contributes to pupils' spiritual and moral development. Parents are well-supported as the first educators of their children and are incredibly positive about the provision for and impact of the school's Catholic mission on their children. One parent commented, 'My children are receiving a distinctly Catholic education, and both flourish academically and spiritually.' Induction and training opportunities are varied and valued by staff, who also appreciate the support and care senior leaders and governors provide them. Regular, rigorous monitoring of Catholic life and mission is undertaken by pupil mission and liturgy leaders, senior leaders, the link governor for religious education and the multi-academy company (MAC). This ensures that people's findings are always accurate because they are corroborated. The priorities identified from monitoring systematically inform the well-focused school development plan.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade:.....

1

Pupil outcomes

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education.....

1

Provision

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

2

Leadership

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

1

Overall, from their varied starting points, most pupils develop secure knowledge and understanding of their learning in religious education. They make substantial progress with the planned curriculum for the subject. This progress is more significant than in other core subjects and has been sustained. Pupils' religious literacy across both key stages, but especially in Key Stage 2, is robust and is crucial in enabling them to grow in their understanding of faith and its application to daily life. Pupils value religious education and are extremely positive about their lessons, participating enthusiastically and desiring to do well. They respond well to the structure of their lessons, the regular opportunities to recall prior knowledge, and the blue dot challenge questions posed by staff, ensuring that everyone is challenged appropriately. Pupils take pride in their work. They have many opportunities for extended writing in religious education but limited opportunities to present their learning in a wide variety of creative ways. Pupils confidently discuss their work but not all pupils know how to improve their achievements.

Teachers understand how pupils learn, and they communicate high expectations to pupils about religious education. They create a safe, positive, and respectful environment for learning. Many teachers are confident in their subject knowledge, and effective support is available to strengthen all teachers' subject knowledge and confidence. Teachers know their pupils well; they are aware of the different needs of pupils in their class and provide valuable support to individual learners. Bespoke support is also offered in the new Oak Tree hub and by some teaching assistants. Teachers consistently plan well-structured lessons that effectively sequence learning and provide opportunities for pupils to systematically retrieve and consolidate prior knowledge. The learning focus for each lesson is identified. Teacher questioning is effective and, at times, excellent. In the best cases, it is focused on probing and extending learning. Teachers reinforce positive learning behaviour and celebrate pupil contributions. They recognise religious education's impact on pupils' moral and spiritual development. Teachers provide regular feedback to pupils, but there are

inconsistencies between classes, which lead to differences in how achievements are celebrated and the clarity with which pupils know how to improve their work.

Leaders and governors maintain religious education at the heart of the curriculum. They ensure that the curriculum content meets the *Religious Education Curriculum Directory* requirements and that appropriate time is given to teaching the subject. The quality of work pupils produce parallels that of other core subjects. Senior leaders are passionate and committed to religious education. The religious education lead has a strong vision for the subject, which is also owned by staff. She is a supportive role model, as is the head of the school, who demonstrates best practices through modelling and team teaching. Together with the executive principal, they have carefully considered the intent, implementation, and desired impact of the religious education curriculum so that progression in learning is evident. Leaders ensure that staff receive regular, relevant training and updates. They understand the importance of monitoring and assessment. They have searching, robust systems for monitoring the delivery and impact of religious education. The link governor undertakes focused visits and reports to the governing body. The school improvement plan recognises the key role of religious education and identifies clear, pertinent priorities. Leaders ensure that staff receive regular, relevant training and updates.

Collective worship

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

Collective worship key judgement grade:.....

1

Pupil outcomes

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

1

Provision

The quality of collective worship provided by the school

1

Leadership

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

1

Prayer and liturgy are central to school life, providing pupils with multiple daily opportunities to speak to God. During worship, pupils participate respectfully and prayerfully, taking a full and active part. They value the varied opportunities to engage in prayer and reflection at class and the whole school level; they can confidently explain the difference prayer makes to their lives. Pupils enjoy attending Mass every Tuesday in the parish church or school hall. Classes take turns undertaking liturgical ministries: serving, reading, and writing bidding prayers. Pupils value opportunities to use Scripture in prayer and do so confidently. They love singing hymns, and they sing with great, joyful enthusiasm. Hymns are also effectively used to deepen pupils' understanding of religious concepts, as seen in a lesson on the Magnificat. Older pupils speak positively of the powerful experience of guided meditation during Advent. All pupils strongly understand the liturgical year and the importance of prayer in responding to world events. Pupils have regular opportunities to plan, lead, and evaluate prayer in their classes and enjoy working collaboratively with others. Younger pupils value the support provided by staff, while older pupils are independent in their planning and undertake more detailed evaluations. Pupils are keen to take more of a lead in whole school prayer.

Prayer is an integral part of school life, and the school day is permeated with prayer. All members of the school community understand its importance, and a focus on the Church's liturgical year offers a variety of opportunities and experiences. A staff member told inspectors, 'The school has a completely inclusive culture where prayer and liturgy are centred around developing a relationship with God for the greater good of the wider world community.' Staff meetings start with a prayer, and voluntary staff prayers on a Thursday morning are well attended. Staff speak of the profound effect that working in a prayerful environment has on their lives. Displays around the school and the prayer table in each classroom are vibrant and supportive of the school's prayer life. Pupils are proud of the new prayer room and excited about the outdoor prayer space which is being developed. Links with the parish are highly effective, and pupils are regularly involved in parish

worship; a parent described the link as seamless. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school's work in nurturing faith, an example being the use of focused prayer bags during Lent and Advent.

Leaders and governors ensure that prayer is central to the life of this happy and successful school. They and the staff clearly understand quality worship, as expressed in the school policy. School leaders expertly use the liturgical calendar as the basis for whole school planning, and high profile is given to feast days and holy days. Careful consideration is given to deepening the prayer experience of every pupil in an age-appropriate way. Staff are excellently inducted into the school's practices, and they value the high-quality modelling and support leaders provide. Staff can participate in training opportunities relating to prayer and liturgy. Consequently, staff understand and embrace the centrality of prayer in the life of the school. Staff promote pupils' planning, leading, and evaluation of prayer and liturgy. The governing body is active in its commitment to the school's prayer life, and governors often attend whole school worship, enabling them to verify the accuracy of reports leaders submit to them. Monitoring and evaluation of worship by leaders, governors, the MAC, and pupils is regular and well-established, with clear links to the school improvement plan, which details explicit and well-formulated areas for improvement.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Chad's Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	140144
Full postal address of the school	Catholic Lane, Sedgley, Dudley, DY3 3UE
School phone number	01384 889423
Name of head teacher or principal	Mandy Grubham
Chair of governing board	Philip Hancox
School Website	www.st-chads.dudley.sch.uk
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	St John Bosco Catholic Academy
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy
Age-range of pupils	3 to 11
Trustees	Archdiocese of Birmingham
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	March 2017
Previous denominational inspection grade	1

The inspection team

Basia McLaughlin

Lead inspector

Teresa Cotter

Team inspector

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