

St Bernadette Catholic Primary School

160 Long Lane, Hillingdon, UB10 0EH

Date of inspection by Westminster Diocese: 22 January 2020



Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

A. Classroom religious education is outstanding

- The religious education curriculum is rich and dynamic. It is thoughtfully mapped to meet the needs of pupils in this school and is based on Religious Education Curriculum Directory.
- The curriculum is progressive and developmental; it enables pupils to gain a deep understanding of the Catholic faith.
- Achievement is excellent. Pupils make outstanding progress, display good attitudes to their work. They are enthusiastic and participate well in lessons. Attainment is as good as other core subjects.
- Teaching is inspiring and religious education is delivered with the highest expectations. Teachers are creative and actively engage pupils as they learn to grapple with the Catholic response to topical issues. Direct scripture is used so pupils have a deep understanding of the relevance of the Bible in their lives and progression is well planned for, in activities that facilitate an understanding at greater depth.
- Pupils showed exceptional levels of religious literacy and linked their 'Christian Living' lessons in their responses. Most lessons are well structured, carefully planned and make sensitive comparisons to other faiths.
- The subject leader has high expectations, is reflective and has a dynamic vision for religious education. Structures are well embedded. There is effective participation in deanery moderation and the staff work cohesively to deliver an outstanding curriculum. Governors make an outstanding contribution to developing religious education.

B. The Catholic life of the school is outstanding

- St Bernadette Catholic School offers pupils many experiences that evidence what it means to live in accordance with the Catholic tradition. It expresses its Catholic identity in a vibrant and engaging way and is particularly successful at celebrating its Catholic life on social media.
- Religious education receives the 10% of the curriculum time at each key stage, as required by the Bishops' Conference
- It is evident to all that enter the school that this is a community rooted in Christ. Worship and prayer are central to the life of the school and spirituality is celebrated in a creative way. This school has carefully developed an approach to collective acts of worship that ensures a good balance of teacher-led and pupil-led worship. Pupils are adept at evaluating their experience of planning worship for impact and have evidenced that this knowledge is used to further develop worship.
- Pupils are articulate about their fundraising activities for Cafod and other charities and they clearly understand the Church's call to action for justice and peace.
- The strong links between home, school and parish are vibrant and engaging, creating a community centred on Christ. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the contribution this school makes to the development of pupils' faith.
- The leadership team and the governors are the driving force in the school's commitment to the faith education of pupils. There are excellent systems in place to support the development of new staff to the school.

A. Classroom Religious Education

What has improved since the last inspection?

The recommendations from the last inspection were: to ensure that the monitoring of the quality of teaching is accurate, rigorous and carefully monitored so that teachers are given clear and specific areas for development when these are identified; to develop further some simple marking and feedback systems so that the younger pupils in the school know clearly what they have to do to improve their work; to monitor carefully the implementation of a variety of schemes to ensure that there is sufficient time and training for comprehensive coverage of a coherent religious education curriculum. The school has clearly addressed these issues resulting in a programme of study that is clearly aligned to the Religious Education Curriculum Directory (RECD) and that ensures progression. Teachers therefore are equipped with the necessary tools to ensure that pupils have access to the highest quality teaching that includes feedback strategies for pupils to understand their next steps in learning.

The content of classroom religious education is outstanding

The scheme of work is creative in its design. It has been thoughtfully aligned to the needs of pupils and is based on the RECD. The subject leader for religious education has carefully examined schemes available and ensured that the content of the school's curriculum has the highest possible expectations and is meaningful for the school community. Topics are revisited as pupils progress through the school. Teaching staff are very clear of the expectations of the religious education curriculum in this school and most pupils exhibit outstanding behaviours for learning. The curriculum is systematic and includes distinct modules on 'Christian Living', which are encompassed into religious education lessons allowing pupils to gain a deep understanding of moral issues and to debate these in other subjects. This creative approach also provides pupils with the skills to enable them to articulate their understanding when studying other faiths.

Pupil achievement in religious education is outstanding

Pupils' achievement is outstanding when progress is measured from their starting points. The school is currently using levels of attainment to measure progress and has been involved in both internal and deanery moderation. There is evidence that moderation is stringent and that some pupils have clearly exceeded expected levels at the end of Key Stage 1 but have not been recorded as having done so. Attainment in religious education is generally better than in other core subject areas. Pupils excel through high teacher expectation and in the best practice observed pupils were accurately engaged in their own learning journey. Pupils are well versed in religious language and understanding, they confidently use religious vocabulary and can access scripture with ease to support their views. Different groups of pupils make excellent progress, pupils with additional needs are well supported by teaching assistants and in the best examples seen, teachers pitched work accurately to ensure the most able pupils have appropriate challenge.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

Teaching is creative. In Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), nursery pupils were exposed to good social teaching. When learning about aspects of the Good Samaritan, pupils enjoyed acting out in role and making armbands as well as helping hands to help provide language to articulate learning. In Reception pupils learned the same story. Progression was well planned for in activities that facilitated an understanding at greater depth. The teacher ensured challenge for the more able and had appropriate writing activities as well as activities that required pupils to articulate the responses of the different characters in this scripture story. Teachers in EYFS checked that pupils remembered their learning from last week and helped them to link that learning with current learning. Behaviour

for learning is outstanding in EYFS, pupils are exposed to a rich religious vocabulary, pupils' next steps in learning is catered for in an outstanding way to ensure pupils make rapid and sustained progress. In Year 1 activities are well chosen and children are enthused and excited about their learning. Direct scripture is used so pupils have a deep understanding of the relevance of the Bible in their lives. This was also evident in a Year 3 lesson where pupils were challenged to understand beliefs and content pertaining to scripture looking at the wedding feast at Cana and also in a Year 5 lesson on the Beatitudes. Teachers have strong subject knowledge. In Year 2 inspectors observed a 'Christian Living' lesson focusing on rights and responsibilities. Books in Year 2 evidence that these lessons focus on Catholic Social Teaching and are closely linked to Pope Francis' tweets as well as his encyclical 'Laudato Si'. In Year 6, pupils were immediately set to work, and enjoyed a thought provoking lesson that linked previous learning. Pupils were required to provide a response to human trafficking, examining Catholic beliefs, consider the stance of other faiths and ponder on a 'Big Question'. The resulting learning from this lesson was that pupils were thoroughly engaged and enthused. Pupils showed exceptional levels of religious literacy and linked their 'Christian Living' lessons in their responses. Most lessons are well structured, carefully planned and make sensitive comparisons to other faiths. Teachers in St Bernadette have very high expectations, this is also seen in marking and feedback. There is very good consistency across year groups. As pupils progress through this school they are provided with increasingly challenging and purposeful long writing tasks. In Year 4, scripture is well used, and in lessons seen, drama was used to capture the call stories of Jesus. This creative approach provided pupils with opportunities to consider the response of the disciples and to relate this to their own personal response. This approach encourages discussion and debate in a calm and systematic manner.

The effectiveness of leadership and management in promoting religious education is outstanding

The leadership of religious education is outstanding, leaders have thoughtfully analysed the RECD and through their creative vision and passion for religious education, have produced a programme of study that reflects the school community as a community striving for excellence. As a result of a carefully planned focus on Catholic Social Teaching as well as a focus on other faiths, pupils gain a deep understanding of the distinctive nature of Catholic education and are adept at articulating how this fits in to the wider community. The subject leader ensures new staff receive thorough induction procedures and is committed to ensuring that teaching is generally outstanding and never less than good. Staff in St Bernadette are highly motivated to provide an outstanding religious education curriculum for all pupils; they have sound subject knowledge. Currently staff are using levels of attainment and have recognised that the planned move to the standards document will enable more creativity in their teaching approach as well as a less stringent control that will recognise attainment at greater depth. Staff have access to high quality training through the diocese and share best practice within the deanery. Governors are highly committed and have been involved in self-assessment of religious education. They are actively engaged in improving the quality of religious education and provided evidence of being a critical friend providing challenge as well as offering support to the leader for religious education.

What should the school do to develop further in classroom religious education?

- To foster independence in learning that enables pupils to plan their next steps in learning and challenge themselves to gain a deeper understanding at every level of topics being studied.

B. The Catholic life of the school

What has improved since the last inspection?

The recommendations from the last report were: to create an outside area for quiet, prayer and reflection in the school's extensive grounds; to develop high quality prayer and worship more by allowing pupils of all ages to plan and present their own liturgies and acts of worship: to provide more opportunities for pupils to write, record and film in various formats the outstanding work they are being taught on Catholic Social Teaching. The school has clearly addressed all of these issues.

The place of religious education as the core of the curriculum

is outstanding

Timetables as well as evidence in books evidence that religious education covers the 10% of the curriculum at every key stage, as required by the Bishops' Conference. Religious education is at the heart of this school, the head teacher makes sure that this is evident to all through the use of social media, through its status on the timetable, the quality of its teaching staff and resources allocated to it. Governors offer outstanding support and the parish priest provides active guidance in developing and reviewing religious education in St Bernadette school. Parents recognise the effectiveness of leaders in supporting pupils and told inspectors how they value homework projects provided. Parents also told inspectors that 'this is an amazing, welcoming school where pupils are excelling in their faith development'. Parents welcome the work that the school does on other faiths and recognise the importance of this work in understanding and respecting the beliefs of non-Catholics in school and in the wider community.

The experience of Catholic worship – prayer and liturgy – for the whole school community

is outstanding

The school's high quality work on 'Adoremus', following the Congress on the Eucharist, has been followed by a similar approach to the 'Year of the Word'. Pupils have had an assembly centred on St Jerome and have begun to explore the gospel of Matthew in depth in liturgies and in assemblies. This school has carefully developed an approach to collective acts of worship that ensures a good balance of teacher-led worship and pupil-led worship. Pupils are adept at evaluating their experience of planning worship for impact and have evidenced that this knowledge is used to further develop worship. Pupils' experience prayers of petition and are encouraged to place their petitions at the foot of the cross or by the statue of Mary, thereby helping to develop understanding of Catholic tradition. Pupils are provided with a variety of opportunities for prayer including praying outdoors in their newly created prayer space. The parish priest and his catechist team work closely with the school to consolidate learning on sacramental preparation and this is much appreciated by the parent body. This school places a great focus on the development of other faiths and encourages pupils to be sensitive to and knowledgeable about other faiths.

The contribution to the Common Good – service and social justice –

is good

Pupils work in teams and inspectors met with the 'Chaplaincy Team', the 'Eco-warriors', the School Council and the 'Minnie Vinnies'. Inspectors also met with a group of Year 6 pupils. Pupils are fully involved in leading assemblies and are articulate about their fundraising activities for Cafod and a national children's charity. Pupils are generally articulate and told inspectors with confidence and clarity about how they help each other celebrate their gifts during worship. Pupils clearly understand the Church's call to action for justice and peace, however they were not always clear about the reasons for doing this work or of the theology underpinning their actions. Many of these teams are

newly established, leaders have a clear vision about the need to develop independence and have made a good start in this area. The focus on social media as a tool for communicating the excellent work done in school is a strength. Pupils know their school values and understand that these values require a personal response as part of being a member of a Catholic community.

The partnership with parents, school and parish, and collaboration as an integral part of the diocese through its relationship with the diocesan Bishop and those acting on his behalf

is outstanding

Parents are very supportive of this school and feel part of the school community. They recognise and express a deep gratitude for the faith development of the pupils. Parents express that they are partners in this faith journey and are enthusiastic about their welcome in school. Parents take part in liturgies and Masses. A parent questionnaire was conducted and analysed in the term prior to inspection. This questionnaire was overwhelmingly supportive of the leadership of the school and this was consolidated when parents met with inspectors during the inspection. The relationship between the school and parish is greatly enhanced by the proximity of the church to the school and both the parish and school appreciate being part of this diocesan community. Parents were enthusiastic about a recent assembly on other faiths and expressed satisfaction at the smooth transition procedures in place for Year 6 pupils. Parents spoke about the nurturing and supportive ethos of the school and in particular highlighted the support in place for pupils with special educational needs attending Masses and liturgies. Parents recognise and celebrate how assemblies and liturgies provide opportunities for pupils to flourish.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management in promoting the Catholic life of the school

is outstanding

The school's leadership is committed to the Church's mission in education, the leaders of St Bernadette School are creative and dynamic in their responses to promote Catholic life. The head teacher promotes the Catholic life of the school on social media sites with an energy and enthusiasm that is evident to all. Children's work and photographic displays in evidence on entering the building ensure that every visitor feels Christ's presence. The displays in the communal areas reflect the Catholic life in a very strong way, it is evident that Christ is at the centre of everything in this school. Governance is very strong, offering both challenge and support to the school based leadership team. Governors are reflective and are clear about the next steps needed to further consolidate the great work already done. Staff are fully committed to supporting the values and ethos of the school. It is evident that they are fully committed to supporting each other and the leadership to develop this truly vibrant and engaging Catholic community. Children's relationships with each other are very positive and the relationships between members of staff are also very positive.

What should the school do to develop further the Catholic life of the school?

- Ensure that pupils have an understanding of the theology underpinning their actions

Information about this school

- The school is a two-form entry Catholic primary school in the locality of Hillingdon.
- The school serves the parish of St Bernadette, Hillingdon.
- The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholic is 91%.
- The proportion of pupils who are from other Christian denominations is 7% and from other faiths is 1%. The remaining pupils are from families who have not declared a faith.
- The percentage of Catholic teachers in the school is 70%.
- The number of teachers with a Catholic qualification is 4.
- There are 8% of pupils in the school with special educational needs or disabilities of whom 5 have statements of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)/ Education Health and Care Plans (EHCP).
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is well above national average.
- The number of pupils speaking English as an Additional Language is in line with national average
- There is a well below average rate of families claiming free school meals.
- 23 pupils receive the Pupil Premium (5%).

Department for Education Number	3123402
Unique Reference Number	102423
Local Authority	Hillingdon

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils	4-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on roll	447
The appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Bernie O'Driscoll
Headteacher	Mrs Colette Acres
Telephone number	01895232298
Website	www.stbernadetteschool.co.uk
Email address	admin@stbernadetteschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	19 September 2014
Grades from previous inspection:	
Classroom religious education	Very Good
The Catholic life of the school	Outstanding

Information about this inspection

This inspection was carried out (i) under the requirements of the Canon 806 and (ii) in accordance with the Framework for Diocesan Inspections 2015 approved by the Archbishop of Westminster and (iii) under section 48 of the Education Act 2005.

- The inspectors would like to thank the governors, headteacher, staff, pupils and parents for their co-operation over the conduct of the inspection.
- During the inspection 14 lessons or part lessons were observed.
- The inspectors attended two acts of worship.
- Meetings were held with school staff, pupils and governors.
- Other evidence was gathered from contacts with parents through a questionnaire, scrutiny of a sample of pupils' work, observation of pupils in and out of lessons and examination of school documents.

Inspection Team

The inspectors are appointed by the Archbishop.

Ms Evelyn Ward

Lead Inspector

Mr Daniel Keane

Associate Inspector

Mrs Katherine Sheridan

Associate Inspector

Information about inspection

The purpose of Diocesan inspection is to report to and advise the Archbishop on the quality of classroom religious education and the Catholic life of the school. The inspection report is also used to inform parents and carers, and the wider Catholic community. Inspection provides an opportunity to support, challenge, evaluate and promote the work of Catholic schools. It also assists schools in the work of self-evaluation and improvement, and enables the Diocese to celebrate with schools their sense of identity and their strengths as Catholic schools.

Inspection Grades

- Outstanding
- Good
- Requires improvement
- Causing concern

This report is published by the Diocese of Westminster and is available at:

<http://rcdow.org.uk/education/schools>

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