

St Bernadette's Catholic Primary School

Clifton Road, Harrow HA3 9NS



Date of inspection by Westminster Diocese: 29 January 2020

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

A. Classroom religious education is outstanding

- The religious education curriculum fully meets the requirements of the Religious Education Curriculum Directory. The curriculum is very carefully thought out and its approach allows for pupils to deepen their knowledge and understanding in dynamic ways. They develop their religious literacy in a challenging, rich, lively and vibrant way.
- Religious education is set firmly at the heart of this school community and permeates every aspect of school life.
- Pupils' attainment and progress in religious education is outstanding.
- Teaching is strength of the school. Lessons are challenging, lively and engage all pupils. Relationships across the school between pupils and staff are positive and respectful with pupils challenged to take responsibility for their own learning.
- Very strong teacher subject knowledge, highly skilled questioning and discussion ensure pupils make rapid and sustained progress given their starting points.
- Children get a very good start to their faith journey in Early Years Foundation Stage through a rich, diverse and nurturing environment.
- The committed and experienced religious education leader is confidently driving the vision and implementation of the new approaches to teaching religious education across the school. Under the leadership of the passionate, well-respected headteacher and his committed leadership team, staff embrace the school's mission to provide the highest quality religious education for their pupils.

B. The Catholic life of the school is outstanding

- The school fully meets the 10% curriculum time requirement set by the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales. Religious education is at the heart of this vibrant, worshipping community.
- The Catholic life of the school permeates the whole school community in the outstanding opportunities it provides on a daily basis.
- The school mission statement, 'Preach the Gospel at all times and when necessary use words' is lived out by all on a daily basis.
- The vision of the dynamic headteacher has ensured that commitment to its Catholic identity is evident in all aspects of the school's work.
- Prayer, worship and liturgy are integral to the daily life of the school and evident in a variety of engaging ways. Pupils are friendly, confident and articulate about their school, their roles and their faith journey.
- The pupil chaplaincy programme ensures outstanding creative links with the parish and local community.
- Catholic Social Teaching is prominent within the curriculum and full life of the school. Pupils engage with the Common Good in a dynamic way and fully understand the theology underpinning their actions.
- Parents are overwhelmingly appreciative and supportive of the school and all its work.
- The headteacher, senior leaders and governors' shared vision in promoting the Catholic life of the school is instrumental in ensuring its continued success.

A. Classroom Religious Education

What has improved since the last inspection?

The school have worked hard to address previous recommendations and through dedicated continuing professional development, staff subject knowledge is strong. Staff use the Religious Education Curriculum Directory (RECD), 'Our Catholic Schools' the Diocese of Westminster document outlining its vision for education, known as the 'Red Book' and 'YOUCAT' to support their knowledge. There is a clear focus on Catholic Social Teaching and staff are skilled at analysing all groups of pupils using data to ensure they make excellent progress.

The content of classroom religious education is outstanding

The content of St Bernadette's religious education (RE) curriculum meets the requirements of the Religious Education Curriculum Directory in an innovative and exciting way. The school has recently become involved in a project which focuses on the cross-curricular aspects of RE. This has had a very positive impact on the way the curriculum is being taught across the school, especially in upper Key Stage 2 where it is most established. Pupils told the inspection team that since using this new scheme and using the 'concept' maps in their learning that it helps them to see God in all subjects. This is used in conjunction with other published schemes. There is a plan to extend the success of this project across the school and the All Saints' Trust. The school focuses on a parable termly in assemblies, collective worship and lessons and this is leading to an increased awareness of scripture across the school. Pupils' religious vocabulary is very well developed from the moment they enter school in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). The use of Bibles was prominent in classes on the day of inspection. Religious literacy and vocabulary is of a high standard and is prominent in all areas of the school building. A range of excellent resources is used to enhance the delivery of religious education. The curriculum is carefully monitored by the RE leader and the leadership team. Pupils are taught about other faiths and visits to places of worship of other faiths are carefully planned.

Pupil achievement in religious education is outstanding

The very creative curriculum and effective planning supports the development of children's religious literacy from very low starting points. By the end of EYFS children have achieved or exceeded the expected standard. Across the rest of the school pupils are enthusiastic learners and are exceptionally well versed in religious language and understanding. Pupils display a thirst for learning and are actively engaged in lessons. The school's tracking systems show evidence of all groups of pupils making excellent progress in religious education. Frequent moderation within school and across the academy trust ensures accuracy. Pupils are eager to learn and excel through very high teacher expectations. They know and understand what they should do to improve their work. In class, pupils' responses and work demonstrates the range of progress in religious education, across the school, from their starting points. The cross-curricular project has ensured that pupils can see that God is evident across the curriculum and they are eager to point out how this new approach to learning has made them see God can be found in everything they learn each day. One pupil in Year 6 said, 'I can now make links and connections and analyse beliefs and values across different subjects and topics.' Pupils see religious education as an important part of their lives and are eager to share their knowledge and faith with others.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

Pupils at St Bernadette's flourish through the outstanding care and support on offer at all levels. Teaching is typically outstanding across the school. Children in EYFS get an outstanding start to their school life. Teaching is engaging and nurturing in a rich and challenging environment. Questions are challenging and age appropriate and support staff actively support children's learning. Teachers

across the school have excellent subject knowledge. Their very high expectations ensure pupils are challenged which helps to develop pupils' religious literacy. This was evident in a Year 6 lesson, where pupils were making links between the Beatitudes and Christian life, in Year 4 where pupils were linking the Beatitudes to everyday life and in Year 1 to recognising and describing the Lord's Prayer. In all lessons observed pupils' were able to work independently and collaboratively on challenging tasks. Higher order questioning was evident in all classes and pupils were eager to share their learning and understanding of their faith. Pupils commented that they enjoyed RE lessons and older pupils were eager to share the work they have done through the cross-curricular project and how it has made lessons more interesting. Support staff are very well deployed to support pupils with additional needs across the school and were actively engaged in all RE lessons observed.

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

The leadership and management of religious education are outstanding. The RE leader and deputy headteacher work hard to create a vision for religious education in which staff and pupils consistently strive for excellence. They are fully committed to ensuring that religious education is planned, delivered and monitored robustly, ensuring the highest quality of teaching and learning for all pupils. The school's mission statement is central to all aspects of the school curriculum. Religious education is given the highest priority and has explored ways to include creativity and opportunities for cross-curricular links. The very strong subject knowledge from the fully Catholic teaching staff is developed through continual professional development and support from the All Saints' Trust. The headteacher has a clear commitment to encouraging staff to develop with the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies (CCRS). There is a creative approach to religious education, which results in highly engaged and committed teaching and learning, and excellent progress being made across all key stages. Teaching is monitored on a regular basis and staff are supported at all levels. The documentation provided to the inspection team was comprehensive and of a high standard. The school self-evaluation (SEF) is an honest and accurate document detailing the schools strengths and next steps. The governing body is well led by a committed and experienced chair of governors.

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

- Continue to develop assessment and tracking in line with the new Age-Related Standards.
- Embed the schools new approaches to teaching religious education to reflect deeper thinking and cross-curricular links, across the school.

B. The Catholic life of the school

What has improved since the last inspection?

The RE Glossary is used by pupils in Key Stage 2 as an aid to an understanding of religious vocabulary and was evident in classes on the day of the inspection. Pupils were able to say how they used it and how it helped them in their lessons.

The place of religious education as the core of the curriculum

is outstanding

The school fully recognises that RE is at the heart of the school and it has the highest priority, receiving at least 10% of curriculum time as required by the Bishops' Conference. School leaders, including governors, ensure that religious education is well resourced in line with other core subjects. Staff have access to training and support within the All Saints' Trust as well as from other valued providers enabling them to contribute fully to the ethos and distinctive nature of the school. The importance placed on RE is clearly seen in the very vibrant displays and icons around the school as well in classrooms and the outdoor environment. School leadership, including the well informed and proactive governors, offer excellent support in developing and reviewing the quality of RE.

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

is outstanding

Prayer and worship are central to the life of this school and are outstanding. There are many and varied opportunities throughout the school day for collective worship and prayer. Children in EYFS are immediately introduced to the prayer life of the school in an age appropriate way and are able to make the sign of the cross and recite the school prayer with confidence. Classes throughout the school have appropriate prayer focus areas and displays throughout the school building are of a high quality with scripture quotes prominent as one walks around the building. The 'Garden of Memories' in the playground is a special place to remember those from the school community who have died. A moving pupil-led worship in a Year 6 class on the Holocaust, showed the high levels of respect and reverence from pupils. The very well developed 'Pupil Chaplaincy' programme at the school allows pupils to take a leading role in many aspects of the school prayer life. Pupils lead assemblies focusing on the weekend's gospel, lead other pupils in prayer during 'Spirituality Week' and Stations of the Cross during Holy Week. During the months of May and October they lead the Rosary for pupils and for parents before school. 'Pupil Chaplains' read at Sunday Mass to strengthen links between school and parish. Staff and pupils are allocated to four house saints and each house celebrates their feast day with Mass, a non-uniform day and special activities. There is a progressive approach to learning traditional prayers throughout the school from learning the Hail Mary in Reception classes to understanding the Homily to saying the Creed in Year 6. The school undertakes an annual pilgrimage to Lourdes providing opportunities for some of the pupils and staff to share in prayer and reflection at the Grotto of Our Lady. Pupils' spiritual development is developed through the many and varied opportunities they have for quiet, reflection, sharing and discussion.

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

is outstanding

St Bernadette's is outstanding in its work to promote the Common Good and social justice. The school community has a dynamic and creative understanding of its call to human flourishing. The school's foodbank functions confidentially and with dignity and is supported by the pupils and parents ensuring that the most needy are supported. The school supports up to 20 families on a regular basis in this way. Catholic Social Teaching is embedded across the school. Each year group holds fundraising events to support local, national and international charities such as Catholic Children's

Society, Cafod and HCPT among many others. As members of the Comenius project, the school are linked to schools in Madrid and Poland. The school rule, 'Treat others in the way that we would like to be treated' is used to inspire and challenge children and staff. 'Here we make holiness through being cheerful' (St John Bosco), 'God has created me to do him a definite service' (St John Henry Newman) and 'Go out and preach the gospel and if necessary use words' (St Francis of Assisi) are the key drivers in the school's approach to teaching and learning. The many and varied roles that pupils have the opportunities to be part of such as the 'Chaplaincy Team', 'School Buddy' scheme, sports leaders, 'Change for Life' programme, UNICEF Rights of the Child and many more ensure they have an understanding of their call to be ambassadors and stewards of the earth. The school supports other schools, both Catholic and those of other faiths, with school improvement as they share their good practice. St Bernadette's is a learning hub for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and for PE within the local authority. The school has developed and shared its 'Parent Ambassadors' initiative, which supports their biggest communities ensuring that all families are welcomed and nurtured within this very 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

The partnerships between home, school, the All Saints' Academy Trust, the parishes and within the diocese are integral to the school's identity. Parents are overwhelmingly enthusiastic in their appreciation of the school and all that it does to support both them and their children. They spoke of the support that is available in many ways but particularly wanted inspectors to know about the school's foodbank for families in need. There was an overwhelmingly positive response to the parental questionnaire with close to 300 responses. A parent commented, 'I'm delighted with the amount of community work the school and parents are actively involved with. It reinforces the concept of a far reaching world beyond home and our Church.' The All Saints' Trust allows for a very strong collaboration with other schools within the trust. The headteacher of the secondary school met with inspectors to share his support for St Bernadette's and the very strong partnership that the schools share, benefitting staff and pupils from both schools. The school has strong links with the diocese and attends regular training opportunities. Links with the parish are strong and the new parish priest is a regular and welcome visitor to the school. The headteacher keeps close links with other neighbouring parishes to ensure that the school is highlighted in the wider community.

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

is outstanding

The leadership of St Bernadette's is outstanding in promoting the Catholic life of the school. The very well respected, dynamic and passionate headteacher, his senior leadership team and governing body are the driving force in school improvement. The headteacher and his team are highly ambitious with an outstanding commitment to ongoing improvement in all areas. The SEF is an accurate assessment of the strengths and areas for development. Parents are confident that the Catholic values of the school are at the heart of all decisions made by the staff and governors. School leaders are passionate about their school and are fully committed to the Church's mission in education. The governing body has a very strong commitment to the Catholic life of the school. They have high levels of expertise and understand their role in supporting and challenging the school. The link RE governor undertakes 'governor visits,' and reports on improvement priorities.

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

- Further develop the role of 'Pupil Chaplains' to expand their presence in the wider community.

Information about this school

- The school is a two-form entry Catholic primary school in the locality of Harrow.
- The school serves the parishes of All Saints, Kenton, St William of York, Stanmore, St Erconwald's, Wembley and St Anthony's, Colindale.
- The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholic is 77%.
- The proportion of pupils who are from other Christian denominations is 7% and from other faiths is 16%.
- The percentage of Catholic teachers in the school is 100%.
- The number of teachers with a Catholic qualification is 5.
- There are 13.8% 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 average.
- The number of pupils speaking English as an Additional Language is well above average.
- There is a well below average rate of families claiming free school meals.
- 25 pupils receive the Pupil Premium (6.8%).

Department for Education Number	310 3500
Unique Reference Number	132943
Local Authority	Harrow

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils	3-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on roll	459
The appropriate authority	The governing body and All Saints' Academy Trust
Chair	Mrs Pamela Singh OBE
Headteacher	Mr David O'Farrell
Telephone number	02082048902
Website	www.st-bernadette.co.uk
Email address	office@stbernadette.harrow.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	19 November 2014
Grades from previous inspection	
Classroom religious education	Outstanding
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 12 lessons or part lessons were observed.
- The inspectors attended one assembly and a number of 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.

Mrs Ann Staunton

Lead Inspector

Mr James Stacey

Shadow Lead Inspector

Mrs Yvonne Rutherford

Associate Inspector

Mrs Dee Abbott

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:

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