



Catholic Schools Inspectorate inspection report for **St John’s Catholic Primary School**

URN: 146859

Carried out on behalf of the Most Rev. Cardinal, Archbishop of Westminster on:

Date: 26 -27 June 2024

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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

- Given the major re-building programme that the school is working through, the leadership team and staff have worked hard to ensure that the pupils’ experience is never less than good.
- Pupils show high levels of sensitivity to the needs of the most vulnerable; this is seen in their charity work and their care for each other.
- Staff embrace the mission of the school and strive for excellence, which in turn inspires pupils to do likewise.
- Pupils’ experience of religious education is good leading to an increase in their knowledge and understanding, and their ability to reflect spiritually.

- The prayer and liturgical life of the school is good and highly valued by staff.

What the school needs to improve:

- Embed Catholic social teaching across the curriculum.
- Ensure consistency in religious education lessons, so that high quality teaching and learning is experienced by all.
- Further develop prayer and liturgy by reviewing pupils' response, leading them to full, active and conscious participation.

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:.....

2

Pupil outcomes

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

2

Provision

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

2

Leadership

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

1



Pupils understand the distinctive Catholic nature of their school and are confidently able to express the mission, 'Learning and living God's truth in love'. Given the major disaster recovery situation the school has faced, pupils are able to articulate that the school is not simply a building but a community of people working and learning together. Pupils strongly appreciate that they are cared for by staff. This is a happy school in which pupils feel secure. The behaviour of pupils is exemplary; they are very courteous and welcoming. Pupils appreciate that their school is guided by the teachings and example of Jesus. They have high levels of sensitivity to the needs of the most vulnerable; this is seen in their charity work and their care for each other. The Mini-Vinnies are effective in leading the charity work of the school, encouraging others to grow in virtue. The support for the local food bank is a good example of pupils putting faith into action. Pupils have a well-developed sense of respect for those of other faiths, religions and none. The pupil chaplaincy team model their faith to other pupils, actively supporting the Catholic life and mission of the school.

The mission statement is a clear expression of the aims of Catholic education and pupils effectively revisit it in their first religious education lesson of the year. The Catholic life and mission are highly visible in the school environment and make a strong impact on pupil learning. Staff embrace the mission of the school and strive to be the best version of themselves, and this inspires pupils to do likewise. Gospel values underpin the behaviour policy of the school; for example, staff are committed to forgiveness as an integral part of the classroom and playground. The school works hard, given the building issues, to create a strong sense of community. There is a welcoming spirit of hospitality, especially for the most vulnerable. Pupils are well aware of the school's commitment to Catholic social teaching, however, there are more opportunities for this to be embedded across the school curriculum. The pastoral support for pupils is very good, for example, the support given to pupils who are carers. There are well structured opportunities for spiritual and moral

development especially seen in the assembly programme. The provision of relationship and sex education is good. It meets both statutory and diocesan requirements.

The leadership of Catholic life and mission is outstanding. Given the major disaster recovery situation, the school has benefited from high levels of support from the Trust. Together with governors, the school's leadership team has risen to the challenge of the crisis and secured the long-term future of the school. Leaders and governors are fully committed to the Catholic educational mission. There is an enthusiasm and energy for putting that mission into action. Leaders and governors are fully engaged with the Trust and have a dynamic relationship with the diocese. Links with the parish are very strong; the school has benefitted from the use of the church and hall. The school enjoys strong parental support and has worked hard to foster the partnership with parents, especially in communications with them. An example is the 'family prayer at home' initiative. Leaders and governors are very sensitive to the wellbeing of staff, placing the dignity of workers at the heart of policies and practices. There is a strong commitment to developing staff, especially new members. The governing body has had a period of instability, but is now in a very strong position as the critical friend to the leadership team. The governing body and Trust are highly ambitious for this Catholic school.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade:.....

2

Pupil outcomes

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

2

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.....

2



Pupils are developing secure knowledge and understanding and skills as seen in the good progress made over the last two years. Support for all learners is good. Pupils' achievement is comparable to other core subjects. Pupils in upper Key Stage 2 can confidently contribute to class discussion, as seen in a lesson on recognising the wonders of God's creation; deep philosophical questions were discussed. Good levels of religious literacy were evident in pupil books, showing that they can use their knowledge, understanding and skills effectively to reflect spiritually and to think ethically and theologically. Pupils can engage in independent learning; their exercise books demonstrate the commitment to completing their tasks. Pupils' books are consistently well presented, indicating the high regard pupils have for this subject. Pupils are engaged in reviewing their own learning and can make links to previous learning. In a lesson on 'why God asks us to live justly', pupils made links to a range of different Bible passages from previous lessons to support their thinking. Pupils enjoy religious education lessons and consequently behaviour is of a very good standard.

Teachers are confident in their subject knowledge, and as a result, pupils are taught well. Planning is good; this was seen in a lesson that focused on how 'we are all neighbours in our world' where the teacher constructed a clear sequence of activities that supported the pupils' conceptual thinking. Where teaching assistants are used, there was evidence that they were confident in supporting individuals with complex needs. Teacher questioning can be strong; in a lesson where pupils were learning about special places in Jesus' life, the teacher critiqued pupils' responses using logic to help them learn. Teachers celebrate pupil effort and create well-ordered learning environments. Classroom displays are of a good quality. Marking is not yet fully consistent, however there is some excellent practice in which pupils are engaged in acting upon diagnostic feedback. Teachers are sensitive to pupils' need for reflection time, and in giving these opportunities recognise the impact

that religious education lessons can have on spiritual and moral development. It is evident that high quality teaching is a feature of some lessons, however there is a need for this good practice to be shared so that this is a feature across all classes.

The school currently meets the requirements for the curriculum and time allocation set by the Bishops' Conference. Leaders and governors ensure that religious education is comparable to other core subjects. They have resourced this area of the curriculum well, as seen in the budget given to support the continuing professional development of staff. Teachers have been supported in developing their subject knowledge through a range of courses, and this is already having a positive impact in the classroom. There is a clear strategic vision for religious education in the school and the recently appointed subject leader for religious education has put in place good levels of support for teachers, especially those new to Catholic education. There are systems in place to monitor the quality of religious education and there is evidence that support is put in place where needed. Moderation of pupils' work is leading to improved teacher understanding of assessment and the careful planning that needs to take place to enable all pupils to achieve.

Collective worship

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

Collective worship key judgement grade:.....

2

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

Pupils respond well to the experiences of prayer and liturgy offered by the school. Singing is a notable strength of the school; a member of staff commented that, 'the singing to God by the children at our weekly hymn practice is beautiful and shows how much pride they have in their school'. Further developing the response of pupils to prayer and liturgy would lead pupils to higher levels of full, active and conscious participation. Pupils are aware of the variety of ways of praying; for example, spontaneous prayer is actively encouraged and as a result, pupils are able to articulate their intentions. Pupils undertake some liturgical ministries confidently and can articulate the ways in which their experience of prayer and liturgy can lead to action. They understand that Jesus focused on the least and the lost, and they try to model this in their prayer life as well as in their actions. There is good evidence in the class prayer journals that pupils are able to reflect on their experience of prayer and liturgy. In a class led liturgy on sharing, pupils showed reverence and appropriate levels of engagement.

Prayer is a central feature of life in school and each day is punctuated with regular times of prayer. The school provides a good range of prayer experiences that represent the richness of the Catholic tradition. A good example of this is the rosary club offered by Year 6 pupils at lunchtimes in the month of May. The celebration of Eucharist and the Sacrament of Reconciliation are key features of the school. As well as regular school Masses and holy days of obligation, there is a rota for classes to take turns to join the parish Mass in the church on Wednesday mornings. All classrooms have a prayer table that is well resourced. The 'Family Prayer at Home' resource, written by some staff is welcomed by parents. Staff are models of good practice to other staff and pupils in leading prayer. Scripture is a core part of prayer and liturgy in this school. Pupils have frequent opportunities to reflect on scripture and pray. The weekly Gospel assemblies reinforce the unfolding of the liturgical year based on appropriate readings. Priests are regular visitors to the school, providing

opportunities for pupils to develop in their prayer life. Staff help pupils to plan liturgies, ensuring that these times of prayer are relevant and reverent.

The school's policy on prayer and liturgy is fit for purpose. Leaders, including governors, have a clear vision and strategy to develop pupils' liturgical formation, appropriate to their age and capacity. The recently introduced prayer progression policy demonstrates the commitment of the school to help pupils learn key prayers in a sequenced way. There are clear systems in place to monitor classroom-based prayer and liturgy, which support staff in developing their expertise. Leaders have created a good plan for prayer and liturgy in the school that reflects the Church's liturgical year. An example of this is the Marian procession and the Blessed Sacrament procession. The Year 6 pupils who are 'school chaplains' have responsibility for developing pupil led prayer across the school. They support other classes in working with pupils to plan prayer times. Teachers and pupils are using the planning sheets to good effect. Leaders have ensured that staff have regular opportunities to develop their understanding of prayer and liturgy in order to improve the experience for pupils. Staff work well to develop the prayer life of the school, and parents are appreciative of this; one parent stated that 'there is a family feel here that reflects the Catholic tradition'.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St John's Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	146859
Full postal address of the school	Berry Lane, Rickmansworth, Hertfordshire WD3 7HG
School phone number	01923 774004
Name of head teacher or principal	Patricia O'Donnell
Chair of governing board	Christopher Briggs
School Website	https://www.stjohnsrickmansworth.co.uk
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	All Saints Catholic Academy Trust (ASCAT)
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy
Age-range of pupils	4-11
Trustees	N/A
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	9 June 2017
Previous denominational inspection grade	Good / Outstanding

The inspection team

Matthew Dell	Lead inspector
Christine Curtis	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