



# St Bonaventure's Catholic Primary School

URN: 109255

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Bishop of Clifton

01-02 May 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

#### Religious education (p.5)

The quality of curriculum religious education

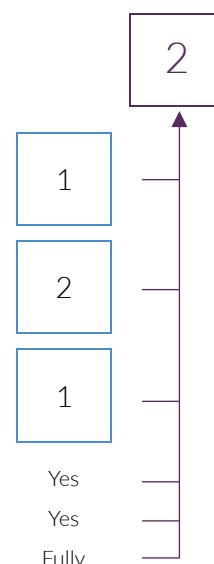
#### Collective worship (p.7)

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

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



## What the school does well

- St. Bonaventure's puts Christ at the centre of all it does. It is extremely welcoming, inclusive and celebrates the value and contribution of all members of the community. Positive relationships between pupils, staff and parents are treasured and based on good communication, care and mutual respect.
- Pupils have an exceptional understanding and take pride in the unique identity and ethos of their school. They are living ambassadors for the school mission; demonstrating a deep sense of belonging as well as moral responsibility to 'walk the walk' as they put faith into action.

- Leaders articulate a clear vision for religious education and collective worship across the school. Their combined expertise communicates high expectations and provides astute and bespoke professional development and support.
- A culture of prayer and worship provided by the school engages pupils and nurtures their own relationship with God. They are enthusiastic in their participation, 'sacred silence' and communal singing.
- Governors and Trustees work in partnership and together, are highly ambitious for the school reflecting their responsibility to its mission in all decision making.

### What the school needs to improve

- To grow capacity amongst all staff to actively drive and contribute towards further enriching the school's Catholic life and mission as well as enhancing experiences in prayer life and chaplaincy for all.
- To fully implement the new RED curriculum resource whilst ensuring consistency in teaching and learning throughout the school.
- In response to the new Prayer and Liturgy Directory, expand St. Bonaventure's community of prayer by developing the depth and richness of staff and pupil led prayer opportunities and experiences.

## 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

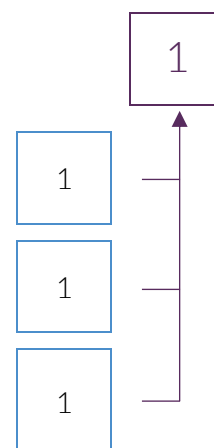
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

#### 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 enjoy being part of this joy-filled, welcoming and inclusive school community. They express pride in the school mission statement, 'Striving to be the best we can, guided by the light of Christ' and clearly articulate how it guides them in all aspects of school and home life. Pupils feel valued, safe and cared for by staff and show respect for others. A parent commented, 'There's a real sense of kindness, respect and care that shines through.' Gospel values and Catholic social teaching principles are explicit throughout the school environment and underpin the inspirational 'Walk the Walk' faith award scheme. Pupils grasp opportunities to grow as active citizens in their awareness and support of the local, national and global community. As classes, small groups or individuals, they enthusiastically initiate and engage in outreach projects such as collecting for Cafod, the local foodbank, Julian Trust, and raising awareness about humanitarian issues such as refugees and countries hit by natural disasters. There are numerous opportunities for pupils to feel they can make a difference through leadership groups such as school council, class leaders, language ambassadors and eco stewards, as well as much-valued chaplaincy teams who actively seek ways to enhance the school mission further.

The school's mission statement is an uplifting expression of Catholic life and has a far-reaching positive impact on the entire community. Extensive work on Gospel values places 'love thy neighbour', 'seek the truth' and 'care for our common home' as the foundation for termly mission and curriculum initiatives. This approach provides a shared common language and framework for all. Staff are fully committed to living out the mission, stating 'faith is always part of the conversation'. There is a lived sense of community, evident in positive relationships and clear communication. Staff know their pupils well, celebrating uniqueness whilst providing quality pastoral care and support for those pupils and families with needs. The learning environment

demonstrates its commitment to Catholic identity through high quality communal and classroom displays and prayer spaces. Chaplaincy teams plan and lead assemblies about the Jubilee year outreach projects, oversee the St Francis prayer garden and lead some prayer experiences. Provision for personal, social, health and relationship education ensures all statutory and diocesan requirements are met and valued. One parent commented, 'The aspiration for excellence, the focus on inclusion, the outward eye on the poor through the curriculum and charity work, the loving relationships displayed by all inspire me.'

Leaders and governors are fully committed to the Catholic life and mission of the school and are highly regarded by staff, parents and the wider community. Parents state they fully understand the school's Catholic mission and are wholly supportive of it. The school engages well with the local parishes and priest; a regular visitor and valuable support. The school values parents as first educators, and consistently seeks ways to keep them engaged and informed through detailed newsletters, parent focus groups in addition to SEND and EAL groups. Governors are proud of their school and give generously of their time to support activities linked to faith life. They are involved in its evaluation, passionately supporting and professionally challenging to the benefit of the whole school community. The school enjoys a strong partnership with the Diocese and Newman Trust; participating in services offered as well as actively contributing to Bishop Bosco's vision of working collaboratively for the common good. Whole staff wellbeing is a priority; providing ongoing professional support and pastoral care for the staff team. Induction for early career teachers is wholistic and supportive, with a teacher stating it 'shaped who I am as a teacher'.

## Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

### Religious education key judgement grade

#### Pupil outcomes

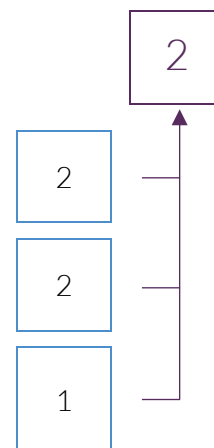
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

#### 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 thoroughly enjoy their learning and approach their lessons with great interest, passion and enthusiasm. They particularly enjoy creative activities such as drama, learning about and producing artwork. Behaviour in lessons is excellent because pupils are fully engaged. From the earliest ages, pupils' recall of scripture is strong and they are able to make links to prior learning and use religious vocabulary well. As a result of the whole school oracy initiative, pupils speak fluently and confidently about their learning as well as expressing their own opinions and reflecting on the opinions of others thoughtfully. In the best cases, pupils demonstrate good understanding of scripture whilst making perceptive links with church teaching, and relevance to everyday life. The approach to assessment is well embedded and used effectively across the school. Pupils are proud of their work, and through assessment ladders and the gold stars system, they are clear about expectations, when they are doing well and what is needed to move their learning on. In the best cases, they are challenged further with extension questions and are able to self-evaluate their own work. By the end of Key Stage 2, most pupils, including vulnerable learners, achieve well in relation to age and phase expectations.

Teachers are committed to delivering quality religious education and remain enthusiastic as they embrace the new Religious Education Directory (RED). Staff are well prepared due to ongoing focused training and support from leaders and the diocese, on their journey of professional development. In the best examples, teachers are dynamic and confident in their subject knowledge, communicating high expectations, offering clear explanations and scaffolding learning so that pupils make good progress. Focused questioning seeks to find pupils' starting points, build on previous learning, extract meaning from scripture or Church teaching and make links with daily life. However, this is not always consistent with some variation between classes and year groups. The school's approach to pupils' moral and spiritual development and their ability to meaningfully make sense of their experience of the world is a strength. A parent

observed, 'I'm impressed by how religious education and moral development has been weaved through the foundations of the education at St Bons'. Pupils are provided with good quality resources to present their learning in a variety of forms such as diary entries, prayers and artwork. Shared big books capture 'explore' activities and focused conversations in class. Pupil effort and achievement in discussion or work books is often celebrated.

Leaders and governors maintain religious education at the very heart of the curriculum. They ensure that the taught curriculum meets the requirements of the new RED and parity in expectations with other core subjects. Leaders have a high level of expertise and clear vision for teaching and learning in religious education, which is well communicated with the staff team. They have devised an inspirational 'Walk the Walk' approach to Catholic social teaching principles which accompanies the curriculum. The subject leader has worked with the diocese in the formation of new units for the curriculum. Ongoing professional development remains a priority and all diocesan training is accessed, in addition to in-house training and support from leaders and the parish priest. Timely additional and bespoke training is provided by leaders to develop teachers' subject knowledge and pedagogy, as identified through very close monitoring. Leaders, as well as the RE link governor, recognise the value of monitoring and evaluation, with robust systems in place including lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' work, seeking the views of staff and pupils and analysing data informing accurate school evaluation. Detailed reports are shared with staff, governors and trustees and routinely inform next steps.

## 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

1

#### 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

1

Pupils enjoy prayer and liturgy; they are reverent, fully engaged and consciously participate from the earliest ages. They appreciate the opportunity to be still; learning to be comfortable in 'sacred silence'. Pupils feel part of a community of prayer who sing and sign with great joy! Prayer punctuates the school day, with one pupil saying, 'It's a way of connecting with God which I like'. Pupils have a good understanding of the feasts and colours representing the liturgical year and the prayers associated with the seasons. Chaplains led Lenten reflections with 'Lent in a Bag' and planned a Stations of the Cross reflection for the community. During inspection, many pupils brought in flowers for the Crowning of Mary service and a small group of pupils met for a lunchtime rosary club. Holy days of obligation are celebrated in the neighbouring church. Pupils are keen to lead weekly class worship; developing confidence in planning using the diocesan four-part resources as well as Mark 10 Mission. Pupils know some of the traditional prayer of the church but there are fewer opportunities to contribute spontaneous prayers or intercessions. They learn to reflect and evaluate on worship experiences which are recorded in class and chaplaincy floor books.

Prayer is central to the life of the school and is part of the daily experience for all. An effective weekly schedule of worship includes a Gospel or liturgical season focus, spirituality and Catholic social teaching, child-led class worship and a celebration assembly. Seasonal scripture passages are central to prayer, and pupils are familiar with some traditional Catholic prayers. However, access to the rich variety of prayer is limited. A prayerful environment is created using music and creative focal points in each class and communal areas which are presently designed by staff. Senior leaders and the parish priest are inspiring role models to staff and pupils by engaging and leading prayer and liturgy. Whilst staff prepare prayers to begin meetings, leaders recognise the need for further training and formation in order to develop staff confidence and skill, and they benefit from ongoing support from the parish priest and diocese. Leaders are fully committed to including parents and parishioners in the prayer life of the school. A parent states, 'I am very

encouraged by the prayer corners around the school and have been invited to a parents' prayer group that runs... in the presbytery. (we are) encouraged at how "alive" in faith the school is'.

Leaders and trustees understand the importance of the centrality of prayer in the school. Prayer has a high profile in the school physical environment through class and communal prayer spaces, in newsletters and on the website. Leaders have a thorough understanding of prayer and reflection to mirror the liturgical year, seasons, holy days and feasts. They confidently bring this understanding as well as their own faith experience and particular needs of the school community to their planning of prayer and liturgy. Leaders talk of spirituality as 'the golden glue' in nurturing pupils' relationships with God through prayer. Together with the support of the parish priest, they ensure that prayer, collective worship and liturgy are relevant and have a clear purpose and message appropriate to the needs of all pupil and staff participants. Leaders and governors make an ongoing financial commitment to quality resources as well as professional training and through regular monitoring, are able to seek ways to enhance the prayer life further. The governing body is active in its commitment to the school prayer life and they frequently attend whole school worship, as well as monitor the quality of provision which informs the school evaluation.



## Information about the school

Full name of school	St Bonaventure's Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	109255
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	8013417
Full postal address of the school	St Bonaventure's Catholic Primary School, Egerton Road, Bishopston, Bristol, BS7 8HP
School phone number	01173532830
Headteacher	Sarah Ballantine
Chair of Governors	Kate Lavington
School Website	<a href="http://www.st-bonaventures.bristol.sch.uk">http://www.st-bonaventures.bristol.sch.uk</a>
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	Newman
Phase	Primary
Type of school	Voluntary Aided School
Admissions policy	N/A
Age-range of pupils	4-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	10 - 11 <sup>th</sup> October 2018
Previous denominational inspection grade	Outstanding

## The inspection team

Rita E McLoughlin  
Carol Baron

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