



St Bernadette's Catholic Primary School

URN: 147163

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Archbishop of Birmingham

22–23 January 2026

Summary of key findings

Overall effectiveness

The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school

2

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

2

Collective worship (p.7)

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

2

The school is fully compliant with the general norms for religious education laid down by the Bishops' Conference

Yes

The school is fully compliant with any additional requirements of the diocesan bishop

Yes

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

Fully

Compliance statement

- This school fully complies with the general norms for religious education laid down by the Bishops' Conference.
- This school is fully compliant with the additional requirements of His Grace.
- This school has fully addressed all previous areas for improvement.

What the school does well

- Pastoral care for both pupils and staff is central to the life of the school. St Bernadette's is a welcoming, family-centred community where every individual is known, valued and cared for.
- Leadership is strong and highly effective. Leaders provide clear challenge and hold staff to account, driving rapid and sustained improvement. Their ambitious vision is shared by all stakeholders and is firmly focused on securing the very best outcomes for pupils.
- Inclusion is a key strength of the school. Provision for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) is highly effective; work is well adapted and carefully scaffolded so that pupils are supported to achieve more, do more and remember more.
- Training is integral to staff growth and school improvement. A wide range of high-quality training opportunities, including coaching and mentoring, are available to all staff, which have a clear, positive impacts on provision at St Bernadette's.
- Self-evaluation is rigorous and reflective. Leaders are forensic in their analysis of the school's effectiveness and are committed to learning from others in order to continually raise standards for all pupils.

What the school needs to improve

- Employ strategies which enable pupils to articulate consistently the theological beliefs that underpin their charitable works, actions, and commitment to service.
- Routinely provide opportunities for pupils to prepare and minister a wide range of traditional Catholic, and spontaneous, reflective prayers.
- Develop a culture of theological enquiry in which pupils ask questions, engage in meaningful dialogue and reflect critically, deepening understanding in religious education lessons.

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

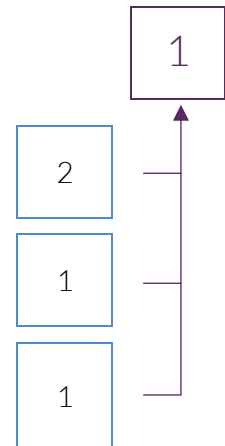
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

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



St Bernadette's is a welcoming and inclusive Catholic school in which Christ is at the centre of its life and mission. The school's mission, 'We follow Jesus', has been recently reviewed and is embedded effectively across the school. Pupils can articulate how the mission shapes their daily lives by living out the values of loving one another, sharing His light, serving with humility, trusting in His plan and spreading His word. Pupils know they are valued and cared for as unique individuals, created in the image and likeness of God. They are nurtured and supported by staff who enable them to flourish and achieve their God-given potential. Many pupils demonstrate a secure understanding of Catholic social teaching and provide relevant examples of how this is put into action, particularly through care for our common home. Activities such as litter picking, gardening and recycling support pupils in developing a strong sense of stewardship and responsibility. Pupils speak confidently about charitable works at local, national, and global levels and recognise the importance of service as an expression of faith in action. Some pupils are less confident in articulating the theological foundations which underpin their actions. Relationships within the school are rooted in Gospel values and characterised by dignity and respect. Pupils show respect for themselves and others, including those from other faiths and religions, and behaviour is typically exemplary in lessons and around the school.

The school's mission statement is a clear expression of the mission of the Church and is central to all aspects of school life. It is regularly revisited and reviewed, and members of the school community understand its meaning and impact. Staff are fully committed to the mission and participate actively in service to the wider community, including visiting the local care home and supporting parish ministries. There is a strong sense of community and a family atmosphere. The school is welcoming and supportive, helping pupils and families to flourish. Staff are exemplary role models, demonstrating love, care and compassion for pupils, colleagues and families. They listen attentively, offer comfort to those in distress, and ensure that every

individual feels valued. The school environment reflects its Catholic character. Displays, prayer areas, and resources bear witness to the life of the school as a Catholic community. The provision for relationships, sex, and health education (RSHE) is well planned, and pupils speak confidently about their learning and understanding within this subject area.

Leaders and governors are exemplary guardians of the school's Catholic life and mission, ensuring that Christ is at the centre of their work. Leaders and governors actively promote the archbishop's vision for the diocese, putting the school at service of the wider diocesan community by supporting other schools to achieve within the multi-academy company (MAC). The headteacher has strengthened links with the parish, fostering a flourishing partnership that benefits the whole community. Parents are supported to be the first educators of their children, and leaders consistently seek ways to build strong, collaborative relationships with families, such as through stay and pray, parish Masses, sacramental preparation, encouraging the parish to come into school for Mass, and various charity events in school. Leaders and governors are inspirational role models, and policies and structures provide the highest levels of pastoral care for staff; as a result, staff feel valued and supported, and report that their views are listened to. The senior leadership team is passionate, ambitious, and highly effective, in driving improvement and securing strong outcomes for pupils.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

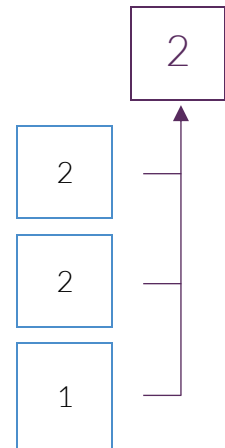
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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 are developing secure knowledge, understanding and skills in religious education, as seen in pupils’ work and in lessons. Regular revisiting of prior learning at the start of each lesson helps pupils to know more, remember more, and do more; as a result, pupils, including those with SEND, achieve well alongside their peers. Pupils apply their knowledge and understanding to reflect on religious concepts, but links to the demands of religious commitment in everyday life are not always made clearly. Pupils work independently on tasks that challenge their thinking, and their work is carefully presented, with religious education exercise books reflecting pride and attention to detail. Strong examples of pupils’ work are regularly shared in class and used to model good practice. Art is used more frequently as a medium in lessons, enabling pupils to encounter a range of religious artworks, although opportunities for discussion and analysis are not yet consistently established. Behaviour in lessons is consistently good because pupils are engaged and enjoy their learning. Most pupils know how well they are doing and value the challenge of deeper questioning, which strengthens their knowledge, understanding, and skills.

Teachers demonstrate strong subject knowledge and hold high expectations for all pupils in religious education. Lessons are carefully planned in a sequential way, with prior learning revisited regularly to consolidate knowledge and build on understanding. Planning is clearly informed by assessment, and teachers use questioning during lessons to check understanding and adapt learning; however, opportunities for pupils to ask their own questions are not yet consistently provided, which limits engagement for some. Pupils’ work is regularly celebrated, with strong examples shared in class and with senior leaders to model high standards. Reflection is a consistent feature of lessons and is now being further developed to include more meaningful, thought-provoking questions with a view to consistently deepen pupils’ thinking. A variety of recording methods, including art and drama, are used effectively to ensure all pupils, including those with SEND, can accurately demonstrate their learning. Teachers recognise the impact religious education has on pupils’ moral and spiritual development but it is yet to be

provided in a way that enables pupils to articulate confidently how their learning links to the choices they make in how to live their lives.

The headteacher and subject leader are dynamic and highly effective in driving improvement in religious education. The school's religious education curriculum is enriched with a wide range of creative resources, including art and drama, which enhance teaching and learning. Governors provide strong challenge and support, and they review religious education provision to sustain high standards. The subject leader has been inspirational in developing staff through a well-planned programme of training, including coaching and mentoring, which has had a measurable impact on classroom practice. Both the headteacher and subject leader share a clear and ambitious vision for outstanding teaching and learning, supporting staff to achieve high standards, as evidenced in pupils' work. Work for pupils with SEND is carefully adapted to meet individual needs, building on prior learning and enabling pupils to achieve well. Pupils' exercise books demonstrate parity with other core subjects, reflecting consistent expectations for learning. Leaders are beginning to actively support other schools and staff to strengthen their religious education provision. Leaders and governors rigorously monitor and evaluate pupils' progress in religious education, using a detailed and systematic approach to sustain high standards and continual improvement.

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

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

1

2

Pupils have daily opportunities to engage in prayer and liturgy, including time for reflection, meditation, scripture and praying with music. Pupils behave respectfully and reverently during these moments and take part in creative experiences, such as physically symbolising the washing away of sins during a celebration of the word. Most pupils identify different types of prayer and recall the liturgical seasons and colours with confidence. Pupils work well with adults and peers and support them effectively to evaluate the quality of prayer and liturgy at St Bernadette's. Pupils also recognise fundraising activities, such as support for Father Hudson Caritas, as an expression of prayer in action. Opportunities for pupils to prepare and minister prayer and liturgy independently are not yet frequent enough, which limits their understanding of different forms of prayer. Some pupils are less confident in knowing a wider range of traditional prayers by heart, which limits their fluency in prayer and liturgy.

Prayer is central to the life at St Bernadette's. Governors and leaders speak positively about liturgical services, describing them as 'uplifting moments of joyful focus', and rightfully commend pupils' beautiful singing. School leaders provide a range of creative experiences that enrich pupils' prayer life and deepen their understanding, including the Year of Hope Jubilee Day. Leaders support teachers and other adults to select and use Scripture passages effectively, which enhances the quality of prayer and liturgy. As a result, staff and senior leaders are models of good practice in leading worship. Staff are skilled in supporting pupils to prepare prayer, but opportunities for pupils to construct and lead their own prayer sessions with increasing independence are not yet consistently established. Music and art enhance prayer and liturgy, and leaders are now encouraging staff to focus these elements more intentionally within sessions to deepen participation and engagement, but this is yet to be provided consistently throughout the school. Prayer spaces are well maintained, and pupils are guided to prepare these areas in advance. Parents report that the prayer life of the school, closely linked with parish activities, is a strength.

The school's policy on prayer and liturgy is well formulated, regularly reviewed, and provides clear guidance to staff. Leaders and governors have a secure understanding of pupils' levels of participation and the progression of skills in prayer and liturgy. The school provides opportunities that are linked to the liturgical seasons, and leaders are proactive in planning creative and meaningful experiences as opportunities arise. The Sacrament of Reconciliation is offered at least twice yearly, with additional provision for pupils preparing to receive a sacrament. Training is highly valued by leaders, governors, and staff, and it enhances the quality of prayer and liturgy across the school. Leaders articulate effectively the links between participation in prayer and liturgy and the development of ministry. Pupils benefit from engaging, well-prepared prayer and liturgy experiences, and the provision is well resourced throughout the school. Self-evaluation of prayer and liturgy is firmly embedded in the school's monitoring cycle, and leaders use this to identify areas for improvement. Opportunities for pupils to take the lead and make choices in preparing and ministering prayer and liturgy are not yet consistently established. The leadership team and governors are committed to providing high-quality prayer and liturgy. They demonstrate humility and respect, listening to and valuing contributions, and they evaluate their provision to refine it further.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Bernadette's Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	147163
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	335 2046
Full postal address of the school	Narrow Lane, Brownhills, Walsall, WS8 6HX
School phone number	01543 452921
Headteacher	Alex Turner
Chair of governing board	Julia Bridgewater
School Website	www.stbernadette.walsall.sch.uk
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	St Gabriel the Archangel Catholic Multi-Academy Trust
Phase	Primary
Type of school	Academy
Admissions policy	Non-selective
Age-range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	June 2019
Previous denominational inspection grade	2

The inspection team

Veronica Gosling
Claire O'Hara

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