



Archdiocese of Birmingham

Section 48 Inspection Report

St Benedict's Catholic School

part of the Holy Family Multi Academy Company
Kinwarton Road, Alcester, Warwickshire B49 6PX

Inspection dates:
Lead Inspector:

22nd & 23rd March 2018
Rachel Waugh

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS:

Requires Improvement

Catholic Life:

Good

Religious Education:

Requires Improvement

Collective Worship:

Good

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection:

Outstanding

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

This is a requires improvement Catholic school because:

- The school has a clear mission statement, which encapsulates its Catholic ethos. This mission is lived out by the staff and pupils associated with the school. The impact of the chaplaincy provision is excellent and permeates all areas of school life. Pupils benefit from positive relationships, which are based on the dignity and development of the whole person. The house system enables and encourages all pupils to actively participate in the mission of the school and of the Church.
- Religious Education is given an appropriate profile in school and staff are keen to ensure it is appropriately taught in an engaging manner. Pupils enjoy Religious Education and are enthusiastic in their enquiry. Pupils are engaged in lessons and, as a result, progress and attainment are improving.
- Collective Worship shapes each and every day. Pupils have the opportunity to plan and lead Collective Worship and to experience different styles of worship, including both contemporary and traditional prayer. As a result of meaningful Collective Worship, pupils have a good understanding of the liturgical year and what it means to worship in a Catholic community.

It is not yet good because:

- Religious Education attainment and progress at key stage 4, especially for more able pupils and pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds, is not yet high enough.
- The effective use of assessment is not used consistently by teachers to improve teaching and learning in Religious Education.

- 10% of the taught curriculum is not dedicated to the teaching of Religious Education.

FULL REPORT

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Embed Gospel values across the school in all subject areas and aspects of school life in order to exemplify and make more explicit the mission of the school.
- Raise attainment and progress of all groups of learners, especially pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds and more able pupils. This should be addressed through teaching that routinely challenges pupils and extends their learning, and through the consistent use of assessment to inform all aspects of teaching and learning.
- Provide 10% of taught curriculum time for Religious Education.
- Ensure that monitoring and evaluation of Collective Worship promotes pupils not only leading but also taking ownership and developing Collective Worship.

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

The quality of the Catholic Life of the school.	Good
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school.	Good
The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school.	Outstanding
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision of the Catholic Life of the school.	Good

The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school.

The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school.

- Pupils value the Catholic Life of the school and how it cares for the whole person.
- The Catholic mission permeates all aspects of the school community. New staff explicitly refer to the family dimension of St Benedict's. As a result, pupils willingly participate in the life and mission of the school.
- Positive relationships exist throughout the school. There is an expectation that every school member can trust and support each other.
- Pupils value Catholic Life and want to be actively involved in it. The house system and links with charity and outreach projects enable pupils to engage with Catholic Life in a practical way.
- The active Catholic Life of the school was very evident in the response of pupils to an appeal for victims of the Grenfell Tower fire. This followed a request from a past student, who now works at a primary school close to the tower.
- Chaplaincy provision has a clear and positive impact on the school community. Even with amendments to accommodate staffing needs, the school's chaplaincy provision retains the highest priority. The youth minister is highly valued by staff and pupils. Pupils across the multi academy company (MAC) are gaining insight into the uniqueness of St Benedict's through the work of the youth minister.
- The pilgrimage and retreat experiences provided by the school are highly popular with both pupils and staff.

- The provision and impact of pastoral care is very strong and epitomises the Catholic mission of the school. The scholastica centre, which serves those with additional learning needs, has a profound impact on the most vulnerable pupils.
- Throughout the school there is a particular focus on the development of the whole person. Pupils enthusiastically take on leadership roles through Duke of Edinburgh Awards, mentoring and as prefects.
- Pupils have a strong understanding and appreciation of vocation and have been given the opportunity to explore their personal calling from God on a regular basis.
- Pupil involvement in the parish is evident, especially prominent is the confirmation programme dominated by St Benedict's pupils in St Gregory's parish. The school is planning to extend this involvement further.
- The mission of the school is centred on the development of the whole person and is widely known by pupils and staff. "We are a Catholic School inspired in our mission by the vision of life that is found in the teaching of the Gospel, the Church, sacramental life and in Jesus Christ, who came that we 'may have life and have it to the full.' In striving to fulfil this mission we reflect the spirit of our patron St Benedict."
- The school has a clear sense of community and mutual support. Staff pray together and meet regularly to enable the school to meet its Catholic aims.
- Staff prayer, staff training and the school environment reflects the mission and identity of St Benedict's. The display of crosses at the entrance of the school, which have been provided by staff and parents, ensure the identity of St Benedict's as a Catholic school is immediately shared with visitors.
- The chapel is situated at the pupils' entrance to the school, as are the safeguarding and pastoral staff. Pupils have open access to the youth minister at break times and lunchtimes and she is an integral part of the pastoral team in the school.
- A prayer focus in classrooms would further enhance the Catholic identity of all departmental areas.
- Expectations for pupils' behaviour are known by all and recognise the dignity of the human person, as made in the image and likeness of God. Any actions contrary to these expectations are dealt with swiftly and appropriately. Throughout the whole school there is a strong respect for the dignity of each person.
- Chaplaincy provision is outstanding through the work of the youth minister. The impact of this team is clearly demonstrated in the school's mission to support the wider community in times of need e.g. bereavement. The youth minister and St Benedict's team responded to the voice and needs of the pupils and staff in a highly appropriate and fitting manner.
- Policies and practices are in place to promote the well-being of staff and pupils, especially the most vulnerable. Members of the pastoral team have specific expertise in youth mental health first aid.
- The pastoral programme is closely entwined with the work of chaplaincy. As a result, the pastoral programmes support the Catholic Life of the school and address the needs of the pupils. Sex and relationship education is rooted in the teachings of the Catholic Church and enshrined in the belief that all human beings deserve the upmost respect and dignity.
- Staff have received training about promoting the Gospel values throughout the school. Different departments have considered how they are best able to live out the Gospel values. The history department, for example, consider the suffragette movement as an example of service and sacrifice and the maths department promote the dignity and worth of individuals through the school behaviour policy. This focus on Gospel values now needs to be embedded in all areas of school life.

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision of the Catholic Life of the school.

- Leaders and governors are committed to Catholic education. This is evident in their enthusiastic move to academy status recognising the benefits for the pupils and Catholic education. It is also seen in the desire to build a highly skilled and committed governing body for St Benedict's.
- Governors are able and willing to challenge and address difficult decisions.
- The governors have recently begun to use an audit tool to evaluate the Catholic Life of the school. Plans are in place to complete the process, once a full cohort of governors have been appointed.
- Catholic Life is given a high priority in the school. There is clear direction for further improvement, as evident in the school's self-evaluation documents and improvement plan.
- The ethos committee (consisting of the headteacher, pastoral staff and chaplaincy staff) meet regularly with the governing body in order to ensure the on-going self-evaluation of Catholic Life.
- Training for staff about the Catholic Life of the school is regular and it is given the highest profile. Careful consideration is given to the induction of new staff, who receive individual training as well as taking part in whole school programmes.
- Since the last inspection significant changes have been made to the monitoring and evaluation of Catholic Life. There are now weekly and fortnightly meetings which provide on-going evaluation and subsequent development of Catholic Life.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The quality of Religious Education.	Requires Improvement
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education.	Requires Improvement
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education.	Requires Improvement
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education.	Good

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education. The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education.

- Most pupils are actively engaged in lessons. They are interested, enthusiastic and work well in response to the activities set for them to complete. Consequently, behaviour for learning is good.
- Most pupils are religiously literate and willing to develop ethically and spiritually.
- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well catered for and supported in lessons. As a result, outcomes for pupils with SEND are good.
- There has been improvement in the achievement of pupils in Religious Education over the last three years at key stage 4. However, they do not yet meet diocesan averages. The achievement of pupils, especially from disadvantaged backgrounds and the more able, requires improvement.
- Pupil interest in Religious Education has increased to an extent whereby Philosophy of Religion can be genuinely considered as an element of the International Baccalaureate in the sixth form.

- There is some inconsistency in the quality of pupils' written work in terms of presentation.
- Subject knowledge by all staff is highly appropriate. Most staff employ a range of strategies to engage and develop learners. All make effective use of collaborative learning.
- Lessons have good pace and questioning can be very effective.
- Teachers use good quality resources to support pupils' learning. These resources are appropriate for the schemes of learning and exam specifications which are taught.
- Non-specialist staff are well supported in their teaching through the schemes of learning and the sharing of resources.
- General Religious Education in the sixth form is appropriate and effective and engages learners. It is intertwined with the expectations of the International Baccalaureate studied by the majority of pupils.
- Teaching and learning needs to consistently provide opportunities for increased challenge and student response.
- There is a need to develop more consistent standards in teaching and learning. Some teaching and learning is too teacher led and pupils need greater opportunity to respond as competent learners.
- Some planning of lessons needs to more appropriately meet the needs of the learners and to provide greater challenge to pupils, so that all groups of pupils make good progress.
- The effective use of summative and formative assessment by staff to improve teaching and learning is variable. There are endeavours to improve the quality of assessment to impact on learning, through the use of assessment folders and DIRT (dedicated improvement and reflection time) sheets. These methods are currently in their infancy. Effective monitoring and evaluation of their use is crucial in order to develop a clear and consistent approach to assessment.

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education.

- Religious Education meets the requirements of the Bishop's Conference in terms of content. Curriculum time at present is below the requirement of the Bishops' Conference. However, the planned move to a two-week timetable should ensure that 10% of curriculum time can be dedicated to Religious Education.
- Monitoring and evaluation of Religious Education follows the school cycle and reveals clear areas for development. However, response to findings of monitoring and evaluation needs to be rigorous and swift.
- The head of Religious Education has a clear and appropriate vision about developing the department. Since being appointed, she has made key changes to the choice of exam specification and scheme of learning to respond to the challenges of the curriculum and progress measures.
- The use of assessment data has developed significantly and has contributed to a more robust and effective self-evaluation cycle.
- The current head of department in Religious Education has ensured that there is parity with other core subjects. This focus on Religious Education is crucial in order to continue to improve standards in teaching and learning.
- Governors are aware of the current performance of the department and the key areas for development. In the newly formed governing body there is a clear and honest understanding of the priorities for Religious Education.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

The quality of Collective Worship.	Good
How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship.	Good
The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school.	Good
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship.	Good

How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship.**The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school.**

- All pupils act with reverence and respect in Collective Worship. This was particularly evident, during the inspection, when pupils met together on the Friday afternoon to worship and take the Gospel message into the weekend.
- Pupils regularly prepare and lead Collective Worship during form time and form assemblies. Pupils also voluntarily attend the '15 minutes for Jesus' prayer time during Friday lunchtimes.
- A variety of styles and traditions are used during prayer and liturgy and pupils have a clear understanding and appreciation of the liturgical year.
- Pupils have a strong respect for people of all faiths and none. This is most noticeable in the sixth form.
- Collective Worship is a planned part of school life and it is given the highest priority.
- Pupils pray at the beginning and end of the school day; some pupils pray before lunchtime. Pupils end each week with Collective Worship in order that they can reflect on key Gospel messages as they move into the weekend.
- The chaplaincy team drives direction for Collective Worship. The team provides support and guidance for all staff. For example, the lay chaplain provided resources for staff to guide pupils in their preparation for Holy Week.
- Staff willingly support pupils in planning and leading Collective Worship.
- The life of St Benedict features highly in Collective Worship and there is regular celebration of the Mass, the Sacrament of Reconciliation and an active prayer group.
- Collective Worship in the sixth form is equally as effective as the rest of the school and it is an expectation that all students participate.
- The use of liturgical music is an area of worship that needs to be developed and this is being addressed with support from the music department.

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship.

- Skilled staff know how to plan and deliver Collective Worship. The chaplaincy team and the person in charge of the Catholic Life of the school (PICCLS) are effective in their understanding of how to promote and deliver Collective Worship. As a result, they have worked effectively with staff and pupils to ensure their vision is realised.
- Collective Worship is made accessible to pupils through the use of both contemporary and traditional approaches to prayer.
- Collective Worship is reviewed regularly by the chaplain, PICCLS and senior staff who are able to clearly identify how to develop it further. There are key priorities for improvement that are known and shared with staff.

SCHOOL DETAILS

Unique reference number	143634
Local authority	Warwickshire
<i>This inspection was carried out under canon 806 of Canon Law and under Section 48 of the 2005 Education Act.</i>	
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Multi Academy Company
Age range	11-19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on roll	746
Appropriate authority	Board of Directors
Chair	Board of Directors – Kayleigh Sterland-Smith Governors – Ann Delany
Headteacher	Nick Gibson
Telephone number	01789 762888
Website address	www.st-benedicts.org
Email address	admin@st-benedicts.org
Date of previous inspection	28 th February 2013

INFORMATION ABOUT THIS SCHOOL

- St Benedict's is a much smaller than average Catholic secondary school serving the parishes in South Warwickshire and South-East Worcestershire. The school draws pupils from six major Catholic feeder primary schools and twelve other primary schools across Warwickshire and Worcestershire.
- St Benedict's serves the parishes of Wootton Wawen, Studley, Evesham, Broadway, Alcester, Stratford-Upon-Avon and Henley.
- The percentage of baptised Catholic pupils is 74%.
- The percentage of disadvantaged pupils is well below the national average.
- The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above the national average.
- The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic origins is below the national average.
- The percentage of pupils with English as an additional language is below the national average.
- Attainment on entry is slightly above national averages.
- Since the last inspection St Benedict's has converted to an academy (April 2017) and is part of the Holy Family Catholic MAC.
- Governors have appointed a permanent Catholic headteacher for September 2018.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION

- The inspection was carried out by two Diocesan Inspectors - Mrs Rachel Waugh and Mr Stephen Burns.
- The focus of the inspection was on the impact, quality and leadership of the school's provision of Catholic Life, Religious Education and Collective Worship.
- The inspectors observed teaching across 12 RE lessons to evaluate the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Some of these lesson observations were conducted jointly with senior leaders.
- The inspectors completed a work scrutiny and held discussions with pupils to evaluate their understanding of Catholic Life, the impact of Religious Education teaching on their learning over time and their experience of Collective Worship.
- Meetings were held with the chair of governors, an ethos committee governor, the headteacher, the head of the Religious Education department and the PICCLS, lay chaplain and a telephone conversation took place with the parish priest.
- The inspectors attended form Collective Worship and key stage assemblies, undertook a tour of the school and completed a learning walk to look at aspects of the presentation of the Catholic Life of the school and pupils' behaviour.
- The inspector reviewed a range of documents including the school's self-evaluation, data about pupils' attainment and progress, Inspection data summary report (IDSR) data, the school development plan, the Religious Education action plan, teachers' planning and pupils' work.