



SS John & Monica Catholic Primary School

URN: 103478

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Archbishop of Birmingham

03–04 October 2024

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

- The school fully complies with the general norms for religious education laid down by the Bishops' Conference.
- The school fully complies with the diocesan archbishop's additional requirements.
- The school is fully compliant concerning previous areas for improvement.

What the school does well

- Serving a diverse, multi-faith community, the school has a welcoming, inclusive, and supportive ethos, which ensures that everyone is valued and respected for who they are.
- As a strong faith community, the school shines out as a beacon of Catholic life and mission to pupils, parents, staff, the parish, and the wider community.
- A fundamental concern for the well-being of all members of the school and wider community lies at the heart of school life, policies, and procedures.
- The school makes the support of the most vulnerable a priority.
- The dedication and drive of all leaders, particularly the senior leadership team and the governing body, are exemplary.

What the school needs to improve

- Building upon their excellent understanding of Catholic social teaching, enable the pupils to choose and engage with specific projects for the benefit of the wider local, national and international community.
- Consistently promote depth of response in religious education by all pupils, particularly the most able, through appropriate challenge.
- Provide frequent opportunities for pupils to plan, lead, monitor, and evaluate a wide variety of prayer and liturgy confidently.

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

1

Provision

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

1

Leadership

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

1

1



Because the mission statement, 'At SS John and Monica's, we learn through the example of Jesus, to love, respect, understand and value each other' is prominently displayed throughout the school and regularly explored with pupils and staff, they have a deep and joyful understanding of the school's Catholic identity, life, and mission. Pupils live this out in the welcome and respect they show to all, with exemplary behaviour towards one another and staff. In addition to a well-planned Catholic curriculum, initiatives such as a social action plan provided by Aston Villa football club and the *LiveSimply* and *School of Sanctuary* awards mean that pupils have a profound understanding of the importance of Catholic social teaching; while they are not routinely involved in choosing the causes to support, they willingly participate in supporting the less fortunate; one example is the regular collections of food for the Anawim Women's Centre. All pupils deeply value the school's chaplaincy provision, including the work of the pupil chaplaincy team and the familiar presence of the parish priest, and feel safe and valued. The achievements of the chaplaincy team are also recognised within the *Tolkien Awards* from a Catholic secondary school.

Exemplified by the awe-inspiring Forest School building and its surroundings, the school is an oasis of peace and encouragement in a diverse, multi-cultural, multi-faith community. The school funds a Forest School teacher two days each week, resulting in greater environmental awareness and pupil confidence. School uniform is recycled and available for parents as one example of the staff's support for the whole community, particularly the most vulnerable, which is exemplary. The school adapts policies to enable initiatives such as the *School of Sanctuary Award*, educating staff, pupils, and parents in a culture of welcome to refugees and asylum seekers. The highest levels of pastoral care are provided for staff and pupils, and the well-being of all members of the

community is a priority. One example of this is allowing staff to spend their weekly preparation time at home. A parent confirms that 'School staff are always accessible and responsive,' and staff comment, 'Being here has let me explore my own spiritual journey alongside the children I work with.' The attractive school environment, both within and in its outward face, witness proudly to its Catholic identity and ethos. Pupils speak with clarity and enthusiasm about the lessons in relationships, sex, and health education (RSHE) and clearly understand the impact it has on their lives.

Leaders and governors have a profound understanding of the Church's mission in education and are exemplary guardians of the school's Catholic life and mission. Governors monitor and evaluate the school's Catholic life and mission through regular visits and appropriate challenge of each report written by the headteacher. Their support of the local church, particularly the parish priest, is highly valued, and parents and staff appreciate all that is done to promote the school's Catholic life and mission, especially in the encouragement offered to all to participate. Staff well-being features prominently in all policies and discussions, and engagement with a wide range of training is habitually encouraged; subsequently, staff feel valued and empowered, describing themselves as '...supported and encouraged to develop both professionally and spiritually on a daily basis.' Through the headteacher's generous support of the diocesan education service, and partnership with other local Catholic schools, the school contributes significantly to the educational and social work of the archdiocese. Wide-ranging records evidence a consistent and thorough approach to monitoring and evaluation by pupils, staff and governors, and the Catholic self-evaluation document is focussed on development, demonstrating judgments commensurate with national standards.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

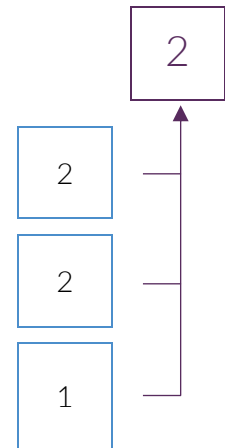
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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 have enthusiasm for the subject and enjoy their lessons, producing work of a good standard. They are engaged, with a clear sense of how to improve. Pupils are encouraged to voice their own opinions, affirming, ‘...there are no wrong answers.’ They ask good questions and respond well to the ‘I wonder?’ tasks, although their level of response is not always deep. Work in class and books shows good progress by all pupils in knowledge, recall, and skills, and they can apply this to their own lives. For example, when exploring the difference between miracles and magic, a pupil explained, ‘A magic trick is fake: a miracle is for life.’ Thorough and clearly presented data demonstrate that over the past three years achievement in religious education is always at least as good and often better than in other core subjects for almost all pupils. Written work is well presented, and pupils respond to feedback readily, demonstrating their engagement and their understanding of what they could do to improve. They can work well independently when given the opportunity and speak with confidence about their learning, enjoying the opportunity to reflect on issues raised and apply the learning to their own lives.

Lessons follow a consistent structure, with a recollection of previous learning followed by clear lesson objectives and a focus on key vocabulary and areas for learning; links are often made to prayer and liturgy. Teachers make enthusiastic reference to their own faith, engaging classes and adding to the relevance of the material. They have good subject knowledge, and there are examples of effective open questions in lessons, although the use of questions to promote deeper learning through challenge, particularly of the most able, is not consistent in all classes. Pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) are very well supported and additional adults make a considerable contribution to their progress. Lessons incorporate a range of tasks and resources, including role play and focus on religious art; there is consistent celebration of pupil effort and pupils enjoy the opportunity to answer additional, independent

questions once work is completed. Feedback is focussed and offers some challenge, to which the pupils respond readily. A parent comments, '...our child's spiritual and social development is supported alongside their academic progression,' and a member of staff adds, 'Religious education...is key in helping pupils build strong values as they explore Christ's teachings and apply them in everyday life.'

Religious education is given the highest priority and leaders and governors are committed in their provision of excellent training for all staff. The *Sycamore* programme is also offered to help staff explore their own faith, which subsequently helps promote pupils' spiritual and moral development. Leaders and governors have a comprehensive and robust knowledge of the strengths and areas for development in religious education. All staff are encouraged to monitor each other, and the impact of monitoring and evaluation is identified in the staff's practice. The subject leader is inspirational to staff, who value her work very highly; she is very well supported by senior leaders. She provides regular memos as updates to staff, which are clear and supportive. There is thorough monitoring and evaluation, resulting in strategic development and planned improvements. The action plan for religious education identifies areas for improvement with clear success criteria; each headteacher's report to governors begins with actions towards improvement points from the previous inspections. The chair of governors has an annual meeting with the subject leader for religious education, and the school's Catholic self-evaluation document, regularly interrogated by leaders and governors, accurately identifies strengths and areas for development.

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 are fully engaged in the weekly school Mass, behaving with reverence and respect throughout and singing with enthusiasm. They write prayers for the Mass and readily participate in ministries. Their suggested actions in response to the question 'How can you contribute to the Common Good this half term?' show understanding and application to their own lives. In discussion and during class prayer and liturgy, they are familiar with a variety of approaches to prayer, and value the opportunity to pray, with a genuine understanding of how it affects their lives. They do, however, have limited knowledge of traditional prayers of the Church. They work well with others to plan and deliver prayer and liturgy, with a consistent approach to its structure, although their delivery sometimes lacks confidence and not all pupils have yet had the opportunity so to do.

Prayer is central to the school and is integral to all aspects of school life, with a routine daily pattern of prayer; staff meetings and religious education lessons begin with a prayer, and a range of ways of praying are experienced by all. A member of staff comments, 'Through prayer at our school, children grow closer to God, finding comfort and inspiration, which strengthens the school community,' and a parent adds that their child, '...tells me that we must pray to God all the time because He keeps us safe and watches over us.' Senior leaders provide excellent examples to others in leading prayer and liturgy, and staff are subsequently skilled in helping those pupils they choose to plan, with careful attention to mood and atmosphere. Pupils chosen by staff are helped to plan class prayer and liturgy, using the *Wednesday Word*, although all pupils are not given the opportunity to do so as frequently as they might be. As pupil confidence grows, they choose the readings, prayers and music used in prayer. Teachers routinely review class prayer and liturgy with the pupils. Music is a great strength, adding to the celebration of Mass and providing a focus for reflection; staff of all faiths contribute to the celebration, directing the

choir and operating displays. There is the opportunity to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation at least once a year and staff prepare candidates for other Sacraments, supported by the parish priest, who also blesses each classroom at the beginning of the year. However, opportunities for imaginative and creative use of space for prayer are not currently used to the full.

The school has a very thorough policy for prayer and liturgy, with a clear sense of progression of skills and knowledge. Staff surveys are used to gain insight; leaders respond to their findings with training for staff in the leading of prayer and liturgy, including opportunities for faith formation. There is thorough monitoring of the quality and impact of prayer and liturgy by all. Teachers new to the profession feel very well supported by the school, who utilise support from the Diocesan Education Service. Participation in prayer and liturgy, including the celebration of Mass, by pupils and parents of all denominations, faiths and no faith, is encouraged by leaders and governors, resulting in a sense of welcome and inclusion; governors attend as a matter of course. A Muslim member of staff comments, 'I'm never excluded from anything; I feel as if I am a disciple,' and a parent adds, 'It is wonderful that in such a multi-faith community, all pupils are...actively encouraged to participate in Mass and other faith-based activities.' The school's Catholic self-evaluation document precisely identifies areas for development, is under regular review, and presents clear strategies to move prayer and liturgy forward.

Information about the school

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| Full name of school | SS John & Monica Catholic Primary School |
| School unique reference number (URN) | 103478 |
| School DfE Number (LAESTAB) | 330 3410 |
| Full postal address of the school | Chantry Road, Moseley, Birmingham, B13 8DW |
| School phone number | 0121 464 5868 |
| Headteacher | Melanie Elliott |
| Chair of governing board | Bridget Rooney |
| School Website | www.stjonmon.bham.sch.uk |
| Trusteeship | Diocesan |
| Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable) | N/A |
| Phase | Primary |
| Type of school | Voluntary Aided School |
| Admissions policy | Non-selective |
| Age-range of pupils | 4 to 11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Date of last denominational inspection | November 2018 |
| Previous denominational inspection grade | 1 |

The inspection team

Andrew Maund
Joe Bridgewater

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 |