CATHOLIC SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

THE NATIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE INSPECTION OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS, COLLEGES AND ACADEMIES

Catholic Schools Inspectorate inspection report for

St Columba's Catholic Primary School

URN: 107326

Carried out on behalf of the Right Rev. Marcus Stock, Bishop of Leeds on:

Date: 25-26 January 2023

Overall effectiveness The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school	2
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Religious education (p.3) The quality of curriculum religious education	2
Collective worship (p.4) The quality and range of liturgy and prayer provided by the school.	2
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

- All staff members, especially the head teacher and religious education subject leader are exemplary role models for their colleagues and the pupils. They have a determined and clear vision for the school.
- The school provides the highest level of pastoral care for the pupils and parents, especially those whose circumstances have made them more vulnerable.
- The welcoming, calm, and attractive atmosphere created by the school is impressive. This is the result of outstanding relationships among all staff members and the pupils in their care.
- The behaviour and attitude of almost all pupils at St Columba's is outstanding.

This Catholic Schools Inspectorate inspection was carried out under canons 804 & 806 of the code of canon law. For maintained schools and academies in England it fulfils the statutory requirements of s.48 of the Education Act 2005. For maintained schools and academies in Wales it fulfils the statutory requirements of s.50 of the Education Act 2005.

- Pupils respond to worship opportunities with enthusiasm and confidence because they have a variety of experiences offered to them.

What the school needs to improve:

- Enhance the existing chaplaincy and mini-vinnies teams so that pupils not only participate in, but actively plan, lead and evaluate opportunities that build the Catholic life and mission of the school.
- Ensure that teachers' questioning in religious education lessons maintains a focus on the learning intention and that pupils' answers are challenged or tested, where misconceptions arise.
- Review pupil led worship, within the collective worship policy, so that teachers and pupils know what is expected of them at the end of each phase of learning, and that by the end of Key Stage 2 pupils can confidently plan, lead, and evaluate simple liturgies with minimal adult support.

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:..... 1

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 1

Leadership
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school 1

Catholic life and mission at St Columba's Catholic Primary is outstanding. The school proudly professes its Catholic identity as a community where the teachings and example of Jesus Christ mean everything. From the child-friendly message on the school answerphone, to the welcoming entrance proclaiming the virtues of justice, attentiveness, love, wisdom, and courage, the prime mission of the school is to ensure pupils learn that 'Everybody is precious to God'. Pupils know they are cared for. As one older child put it, 'We know we are safe because there are lots of kind adults all around us'. A large proportion of children enter the school with little home experience of the Catholic faith. As they move through the school they develop an ease and confidence which allows them to learn more about it, live it, and enjoy sharing it with others. As one very young child observed, 'I've come to talk to God'. The strong ethos of welcome within the school provides a firm foundation for pupils to learn about and celebrate the cultures and beliefs of others. This includes visits to places of worship such as a Mosque. Links between the parish and school are good, especially since Covid restrictions have eased.

Staff embrace the mission of the school with wholehearted commitment. As a consequence, pupils understand that being a Christian brings with it the expectation of service to those less fortunate than themselves. The school supports numerous charitable and outreach activities. It has food, toy, and uniform banks that are very much appreciated by those that use them. The pastoral support provided by the school for children and families is outstanding. This support is provided by a team of highly skilled staff and is well resourced. The nurture, care, emotional, and practical assistance given to more vulnerable pupils or those with special educational needs, and their families, is a demonstration of Catholic values in practice. The

relatively new chaplaincy group, and the mini-vinnies team have made a good start in their role to support the life and mission of the school. Evaluation of how this role can be enhanced further has yet to take place. They take an active part in a variety of liturgies within school and the parish church. Their efforts have raised money for Cafod and the Good Shepherd Fund in addition to others, and collection of Christmas shoe boxes with presents in, was a great success. The caretaker and his staff ensure the building and grounds are clean, comfortable, and safe. As a result, adults and pupils can focus on the teaching and learning. The high standard of display, and the art work created with the help of a resident artist, are highly effective witnesses to the school's identity and mission.

The determined vision of the head teacher and religious education subject leader, has resulted in rapid improvements in recent years. As a member of the Blessed Christopher Wharton Catholic Trust (BCWCAT) senior leaders are able to draw on and share expertise and knowledge with colleagues in other trust schools. The Local Academy Council (LAC) and BCWCAT officers are very proud of the school. They know the school well and are ambitious for the school to be even more successful. The parish priest is enthusiastically involved in the liturgical experiences the children enjoy throughout the year. He and the senior leaders plan events and activities a year in advance. They are constantly exploring ways to engage parents and the wider community in the Catholic life of the 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..... 1

The quality of religious education provided by the school is good. Pupils relative to their age and capacity are religiously literate and engaged in their learning activities. They listen to their teachers and actively cooperate with their classmates. They apply themselves to their work in a committed manner so that they can become competent learners. Teachers and support staff demonstrate a deep commitment to the teaching of RE. Their expectations are high and consequently pupils' books are a consistently good quality, demonstrating good presentation and creativity. In most instances children understand what they need to do to improve and are supported in doing this by effective marking and feedback. Teaching is consistently good and is occasionally outstanding. There are clear and consistent teaching strategies used across the school. These include the use of talk threads, learning lenses, talk partners, purple-pen marking, and assessments carried out before and after units of work, as well as impressive resourcing. Consequently, almost all children, including the disadvantaged, those with special educational needs and pupils who come to the school with English as an additional language, make good progress. The achievement of pupils is good, given their relative starting points and compares favourably with other core subjects.

Pupils use religious language and artifacts frequently in lessons. Lower Key Stage 2 classes enjoyed a lesson on the furniture of a church and discussed the difference between a cross and a crucifix, as well as the function of a tabernacle. In Upper Key Stage 2 pupils can tackle quite challenging subjects such as whether it is always easy to talk to God. One pupil told his teacher that, 'If you are having a bad time in your life you can open your heart to God and He will listen'. Another pupil showed great maturity and insight by saying that, 'If someone you love dies you might be quite mad with God, but He would listen to you and help you get

through it'. There is a whole school emphasis on the development of pupils' oracy skills, and this is evident in most lessons. Teachers' questioning and the leading of conversations in class is good. However, inspectors observed some missed opportunities to correct pronunciations, address misconceptions or challenge less-focused answers from pupils. Technology in the form of quick response (QR) coding in books allows a reader to observe pupils discussing a topic with their friends or taking part in a role play.

The leadership of religious education is outstanding. The vision and expertise of the relatively new subject leader, as well as a sharp focus on consistency and improvement, means that teaching is always at least good. The school's head teacher and RE subject leader share their practice with colleagues in other schools. There is a well-planned RE curriculum which builds on prior learning and knowledge in an organised way. Links have been made to other subjects where this is sensible and appropriate, so that pupils can consolidate and extend their knowledge. The resources available to teachers are of a good quality because senior leaders have consistently committed significant funds to the subject. Teachers and support staff access high quality professional development from the subject leader and the sharing of quality practice takes place with other schools, delivered by the Diocese of Leeds. Leaders monitor the planning, provision, and impact of RE. In addition, termly Trust reviews take place, which include RE audits. The local academy committee receives termly reports from the subject leader. They evaluate progress and challenge where appropriate and this leads to ongoing improvement. To improve further, the school should ensure that teachers' questioning is consistently more focused and challenging.

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 1

The opportunities for prayer and liturgy provided by the school are good. Pupils respond to worship opportunities with enthusiasm and confidence because they have a variety of experiences offered to them which include music, singing, scripture, symbolism, silence, and reflection. These experiences take place in a variety of spaces such as the parish church, school hall, and classrooms. A group of children who spoke to the inspector said that they especially enjoy collective worship when it makes them, 'feel loved by God'. During worship pupils gradually learn liturgical responses for the start and end of readings. By the end of Key Stage 2 they know how to make the sign of the cross, and acclaim the Gospel with the sung alleluia. As they progress through the school they learn traditional prayers of the Church. Pupils in the newly commissioned chaplaincy team, the mini-vinnies group and the school choir participate in liturgies at St Anne's Cathedral and various Trust liturgies and events. A variety of adult and pupil-led worship takes place through the week. Even in the youngest classes pupils help to establish a focus point and read simple prayers. Pupils work with their peers and their teachers to plan, lead, and evaluate collective prayer. Inspectors observed several pupil-led worships in both younger and older classes that looked very similar in terms of the role expectations asked of the pupils and the amount of planning support given by adults. The school has not adequately defined the expectations for each year group, what skills they should be taught, or how much support pupils should be given as they get older. Consequently, the school cannot yet map and assess progress accurately in this area.

Key Stage 2 classes buddy-up with younger classes to attend the weekly parish Mass. A well-planned calendar of school and community Masses for the major feasts of the Church's year are supported by the chaplaincy team and mini-vinnies, who read, serve, take the offertory to

the altar, welcome the congregation, and hand out hymn books. Prayer takes place as a matter of routine at all key times in the day. When given the opportunity, some children choose to attend voluntary worship during morning break times. Pupils love to take it turns to take a travelling crib home during Advent or Rosary bag home in May and October. During Lent pupils can attend voluntary prayers. The Sacrament of Reconciliation is offered to older pupils in Advent and Lent. The school works with the parish priest to ensure that children receive appropriate catechesis for the sacraments.

Scripture used in prayer is usually informed by the liturgical season or by the school virtue applying at the time. Occasionally the teacher or pupils will choose a theme that they feel is relevant to their lives at the time. Prayer spaces are provided in every classroom allowing children to pray on their own or in small groups if they want to. Resources for the celebration of Mass are appropriately stored and respected. All prayer areas and displays are treated with respect. Opportunities to worship outside in the school's grounds, for example in a Prayer Garden are not fully developed. The school works hard to involve families more in the prayer life of the school and has seen some success recently. A Mass on Gaudete Sunday, followed by a Christmas fayre and a carol concert led by Year 5 and Year 6 were great steps towards achieving this goal. All adults and especially the leaders of the school demonstrate respectful and reverent practice to colleagues and pupils when participating in, or leading worship.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Columba's Catholic Primary School. A Voluntary Academy
School unique reference number (URN)	107326
Full postal address of the school	Tong Street, Dudley Hill. Bradford. BD49PY. West Yorkshire.
School phone number	01274 681961
Name of head teacher or principal	Anna Gautrey
Chair of governing board	Helen Halewood
School Website	www.stcolumbas.bradford.sch.uk
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	Blessed Christopher Wharton Catholic Academy Trust
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy
Age-range of pupils	3-11
Trustees	Diocese of Leeds
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	2-3 December 2015
Previous denominational inspection grade	Good

The inspection team

Mark Brennan	Lead inspector
Christopher Power	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