



Catholic Schools Inspectorate inspection report for St Francis Xavier Catholic Primary School

URN: 106762

Carried out on behalf of the Right Rev. Ralph Heskett, Bishop of Hallam on:

Date: 01-02 March 2023

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 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

- The behaviour and attitudes of pupils are exemplary.
- The quality of relationships, at all levels, is outstanding, with pastoral care for all maintained as a high priority within the Catholic life and mission of the school.
- There has been significant improvement in the quality of both religious education and collective worship since the last inspection.
- There is a clarity of focus in professional development plans, with strong programmes devised for committed staff.
- Leaders, including governors, show a steadfast drive and are unrelenting in their quest for improvement. Partnership working is strong.

What the school needs to improve:

- Further embed the agreed teaching strategies across the school so that:
 - teachers are more explicit about what pupils need to do next in order to make greater progress in religious education
 - pupils can more easily and independently make links with and to a wider range of sources, taking greater ownership of their learning, relative to their age and development
- Further develop the range and opportunities for pupil-led worship

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

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

The Catholic life and mission of St Francis Xavier Catholic Primary School is outstanding in all aspects. Pupils can clearly express an understanding of their own sense of worth and that of others: they show deep respect for those around them and those in the wider community. When describing the impact of the school's Catholicity on themselves, they explain: 'it tells me about myself – and it tells me that I am a special person'. Pupils embrace the virtues, rooted in gospel values, to which they are exposed: this is evident when both talking to pupils and witnessing them in prayer. Pupils can fully explain the relevance of these virtues in the life of the school and in their daily lives, as they say, 'We respect each other; you apologise if you hurt someone's feelings'. The Eco Warriors, in particular, are deeply committed to leading work on caring for God's world and creation and they take a leading role in living out their faith: for example, by devising a lenten walk, writing community cards for those in need and collecting for the *Christmas Angels* project. They articulate maturely, 'We are Gods stewards: we try and help the planet and help people to be aware of how to care'. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary: pupils talk with warmth about the diverse community in which they learn and recognise that this positively contributes to the unique and special nature of their school.

There is a lived sense of community, rooted in the Catholic faith, which permeates all that happens at St Francis Xavier. The strong culture of welcome and the quality of relationships reinforce the shared commitment of all to the identity and mission of this school. The great emphasis on celebrating the diversity of the community maximises opportunities to bear witness to the Catholic principles which underpin the school's mission. As a consequence, inclusivity is a strength. Extensive support for families by leaders and key members of staff

demonstrates that this is a school which 'goes the extra mile'. The highest levels of pastoral care are in place, with staff showing a concrete commitment to those most in need. Relationships and sex education (RSE) is a subject carefully planned to meet all diocesan and statutory requirements. As a result, pupils can confidently articulate what they have learned and how important this knowledge will be to them in their lives.

Leaders and governors are determined and relentless in their pursuit of 'achieving excellence together with God's love' for all members of the community. There is a dynamic and flourishing partnership within and between the school's leaders and governors, parents, parish and the local cluster group of schools. Hard work is undertaken to sustain these partnerships, leading to outstanding outcomes and a deep, mutual appreciation of all. Parents, in particular, recognise the lengths to which the current leadership team go in order to do the very best to support pupils and their families. This means that ambition is consistently high. Leaders, including governors, undertake accurate evaluation of the Catholic life and mission of the school; this has been enhanced and further developed since the last inspection.

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



Pupils at St Francis Xavier concentrate and focus well in religious education lessons. They show interest and pride in their work and are keen to learn, talking happily about tasks and activities: 'We learn about Jesus and we can go more in depth about God's plan for us.' Due to the positive behaviour and attitudes of pupils in lessons, no learning time is lost. Though they are not consistently clear about what they need to do to continually improve their work and raise its quality (such as include multiple links to hymns, prayer and scripture, according to expectations for their age), pupils respond well to comments and advice from teachers' marking in relation to individual pieces of work. This means that outcomes for religious education remain good. Pupils enjoy a range of activities; they speak with confidence about their learning, and, as a consequence, remember well what they have studied. Pupils show some independence when working in religious education and are beginning to show more initiative in their work. The quality of presentation and content of work is good, with key vocabulary used to good effect.

The quality of provision for religious education is good. Religious education lessons are calm and purposeful: class teachers have a good subject knowledge which helps pupils across the school to learn well. The learning environment is positively conducive to good learning habits, drawing on agreed school policies and practices. This reflects the commitment of teachers and teaching assistants to the value of this important subject, which, in turn, is communicated effectively to pupils. Staff acknowledge that they purposefully 'make religious education lessons special' in accordance with the school's aims. A consistent, tight approach to the structure for teaching and learning in religious education is evident: for example, pupils gather in prayer at the start of lessons; they rehearse their verbal contributions with a partner; they

use whiteboards to practice written responses and recall learning; they reflect on their learning and record thoughts in their books, sometimes 'going deeper' in their thinking. Pupils do not routinely make a wide range of links in their writing to evidence the knowledge they are able to share when talking aloud about scripture and prayer.

The extent to which leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for religious education is outstanding. All leaders are committed to the professional development of themselves and others: they are tireless in striving for the best outcomes for pupils. All procedures are carefully thought out and show aspiration towards continued school improvement. Partnership working is highly effective, within and beyond the school. Monitoring and evaluation systems have significantly improved since the last inspection and are a high priority for senior leaders. There is particularly strong support for early career teachers, and staff who are new to the school, as a consequence of the thorough, thoughtfully planned induction process and extensive professional development offer. Leaders, including governors, have rightly identified that a larger number of pupils have the capacity to work at greater depth in religious education: they have set out plans to realise this ambition for pupils, pointing out that 'there is no glass ceiling' or limit on expectations for pupils' retention of knowledge.

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

2

Pupils respond well to all the opportunities offered for prayer and worship. They show reverence in their demeanour; they reflect in silence; they read from scripture; they know and use a range of traditional prayers throughout the day. Pupils are well informed about the liturgical calendar and can identify the relevant colours and themes used at key times of the Church's year. They talk clearly about how they support the school community during Advent, knowing this as 'a time of waiting and the time leading up to Christmas'. Pupils enjoy evaluating the quality of prayer and liturgy. They know the structure of worship used within the Catholic tradition: gathering together, sharing the Word of God, responding to scripture and finishing with a mission to carry out. The chaplaincy team take their particular responsibilities seriously and can articulate the impact of prayer and liturgy on the wider school community. They are immensely proud of their important role in school life, referring to the creative activities they organise to encourage pupils to reflect and pray, such as the use of paper hearts and pencils, 'to write down how God has shown love to them' and place these into a postbox.

The quality and range of liturgy and prayer provided by the school is good: it is a central pillar of school life, so that the daily pattern and style of prayer is well established. Good features of provision include a designated prayer room, created and managed by the chaplaincy team; beautifully maintained focal points for prayer throughout the building; creative use of space within and beyond classrooms. These all contribute to the prayerful atmosphere at St Francis Xavier – and reiterate the Catholicity of the school, elevated by well chosen artefacts and displays. Following prayer with younger pupils, classroom activities support further exploration of faith through drawing, making and imaginative play. Prayer with older pupils provides opportunities for silence, whole class recitation of prayers and reflection. Pupil-led

prayer and liturgy has improved since the last inspection: adults model the preparation for liturgical prayer well but heavily direct this, which can limit creativity and the range of experiences for pupils.

Leaders plan a timetable to take account of the liturgical year and the spiritual needs of everyone in the school community; they regularly ensure that opportunities are taken to celebrate the Eucharist, drawing on the committed and high quality support of parish clergy. Leaders, including governors, understand the different levels of skills required and work hard to support staff and pupils to grow in this area: the *Progression of Knowledge and Skills* document, for planning and leading worship, clearly sets out the expectations for the youngest to the oldest pupils. This forms the basis for leaders' development plans in this area, where areas for improvement have been accurately outlined. Support is in place for staff to develop their skills when leading prayer: this leads to a growth in confidence for staff. Governors are frequent visitors to the school, joining the community for prayer and liturgy. They set budgets and priorities which reflect the importance placed on prayer and liturgy; they take time to review the quality of the opportunities offered for prayer and worship, seeking the views of pupils regularly.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Francis Xavier Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	106762
Full postal address of the school	Roberts Road, Doncaster, DN4 0JN
School phone number	01302 344678
Name of head teacher or principal	Bernadette Nesbit
Chair of governing board	Andrew Searson
School Website	www.xavier.doncaster.sch.uk
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	Click or tap here to enter text.
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age-range of pupils	3-11
Trustees	Click or tap here to enter text.
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	February 2016
Previous denominational inspection grade	Good

The inspection team

Fionuala Boucher

Lead inspector

Bernadette Twomey

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