



St Bernard's Catholic High School

URN: 138329

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Bishop of Hallam

07–08 February 2024

Summary of key findings

Overall effectiveness

The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school

1

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

1

Collective worship (p.7)

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

1

The school is fully compliant with the curriculum requirements laid down by the Bishops' Conference

Yes

The school is fully compliant with all requirements of the diocesan bishop

Yes

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

Fully

What the school does well

- The commitment of leaders, staff and governors provides an outstanding Catholic education for all pupils at St Bernard's Catholic High School.
- There is a strong sense of community, that is distinctively Catholic in the way that all pupils are cared for at St Bernard's. This sense of a Catholic community goes beyond the school into the wider community demonstrated by the school's charity work.
- The lay Chaplain is an inspirational faith leader, who walks with the St Bernard's community through its journey of faith. Staff voice demonstrated that they overwhelmingly understand this faith journey and enjoy working at the school.
- The leadership of religious education is outstanding: there is a clear vision and commitment to strive for excellence.

- The personal development program that is underpinned by Catholic values is excellent: the school has developed its own outstanding resources for the Relationships and Sex Education programme.

What the school needs to improve

- Leaders and governors need to re-evaluate the mission statement of the school and provide greater clarity on its core meaning, so that all pupils and staff can clearly articulate it.
- Leaders and governors need to expand on the range and frequency of explicit opportunities for prayer and liturgy.
- Leaders need to develop a Key Stage 3 religious education curriculum that inspires and challenges pupils.

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

Pupils at St Bernard's benefit from the mission of the school: Staff and pupils fully embrace the Catholic identity of the school, although some pupils and staff struggle to fully articulate it. The whole community shows a deep respect for their own personal dignity and that of others. They have a deep respect for other faiths and the diverse nature of the school which is regularly celebrated. Pupils speak confidently about how they have had opportunities to learn and celebrate other faiths. Pupils explained that St Bernard's 'is more like a family than a school, every child is loved and valued, there is lots of care around you.' This care and support for their faith development is demonstrated through the example of the outstanding lay chaplain. All pupils benefit from her support, for example, Tammy's tearoom for disadvantaged pupils. She is central to the mission of the school and the spiritual and moral development of all pupils.

The school is outstanding in its mission to serve the wider community and students talk confidently about Catholic social teachings through the curriculum. Curriculum leaders promote Catholic social teachings throughout their curriculum planning. This is demonstrated further by the money raised by the school during Advent: presenting gifts to children in hospital, supporting the Lighthouse project and visiting Kenya to work with a school on community projects. The environment reflects the school's Catholic character, there is a lot of care given to the quality of displays, there is a clear sense of Catholic identity, and the pupils have a lot of respect for the new Chapel which they named 'The Rock.' The provision for Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) is outstanding. It is carefully planned, central to the personal development curriculum and it celebrates the development of pupils at St Bernard's. The school uses the Ten Ten RSE programme but has developed this further by writing its own textbooks. The leadership of RSE

and personal development is excellent. The approach to personal development is distinctively Catholic, and as a result of this pupils benefit greatly from it.

Leaders and governors are able to clearly articulate the mission of the school, which is underpinned by scripture (John 10v10), but also has two additional areas: 'Christ is our teacher and we care at St Bernard's.' Staff and students have yet to benefit from a re-evaluation of the mission statement so that the three different aspects have a greater sense of clarity and unity to them. There is a strong partnership between the school and parishes. Leaders and governors support the pastoral care of staff and they care about their well-being. Leaders and governors work closely with the St Francis Catholic multi academy trust. St Bernard's has a strong partnership with its partner primary schools and has an excellent transition programme. Induction for staff in all aspects of Catholic Life and mission is exceptional and it is monitored by leaders. The development of staff through training is given a high priority in the school so that they understand the personal development curriculum, RSE programme and Catholic identity of the school. There is a clear plan for the monitoring of Catholic life and mission: governors are extremely enthusiastic about the Catholic identity of the school and work to ensure that the provision and leadership continues to strengthen and ensure that an outstanding Catholic education is provided to all pupils at the school.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

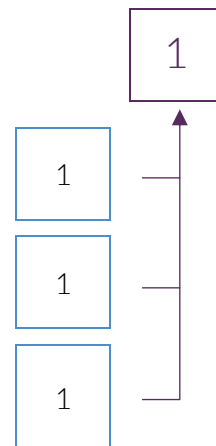
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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 excellent knowledge, understanding and skills and as a result they are making consistently good progress. Retrieval is well embedded in the curriculum through the 'Brain in Gear' activities, and this is supporting pupils' ability to know more and remember more. All pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs or disabilities, achieve well. Pupils speak confidently and fluently about what they have learned in religious education, using their knowledge, understanding and skills effectively. As a result, they are aware of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life. Pupils are able to work independently and as a result they generally concentrate well and respond to the challenge of learning. Pupils take a pride in their work, as is evidenced in the quality of work within their books, they enjoy learning and, as a result, behaviour is good in lessons and pupils are usually engaged. Key Stage 4 pupils have a clear understanding of how well they are doing in religious education and what they need to do to improve. This is not as consistent with Key Stage 3 pupils.

Teachers have a high level of confidence based on secure subject knowledge and teaching expertise. They use this to challenge pupils to develop their own knowledge and understanding. They have high expectations of pupils which is demonstrated in their feedback to pupils and in the skilful questioning that is evidenced in lessons. Planning allows pupils to consolidate and extend their knowledge and understanding, so that they learn extremely well. Feedback is used to motivate and engage students and as a result most pupils are clear about what they need to do to make progress in their learning. Teachers have a profound understanding of the impact religious education has on the moral and spiritual development of pupils and their ability to make sense of their experience of the world. They give pupils space and time for purposeful reflection in lessons. Pupils are given extensive opportunities to present their learning using a wide variety of forms of expression and they highly value these opportunities. They spoke

positively about several activities that had helped them to develop their knowledge and understanding including practical activities such as building a church, as well as the opportunity to ask questions of a panel of experts from a variety of religious traditions. However, the Key Stage 3 curriculum does not always sufficiently challenge or inspire pupils.

Religious education is highly valued in the school and the leaders and governors recognise it as a strong area within the curriculum, it is given parity with other core subjects. The subject leader is passionate, committed and motivated to ensure that the team work well together to deliver quality first teaching. The subject leader has a clear vision to provide the best for all pupils and works with others across the diocese to develop the practice at St Bernard's so that this vision can be realised. Leaders encourage all members of the department to be committed to their own professional development and encourage them to look for opportunities to learn from each other for the benefit of their pupils. Staff work collaboratively to plan the curriculum and as a result they have a clear understanding of its development and how pupils will progress through it. There are strong links with the parishes and wider community to provide enrichment activities. Pupils highly value these opportunities and describe these as one of the reasons for their enjoyment and engagement in religious education. Through an effective model of self-evaluation leaders have a clear understanding of the strengths in the department and the ways in which they can develop further. They are well equipped to achieve these developments.

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

1

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

1

The experiences of prayer and liturgy at St Bernard's provide opportunities to engage pupils deeply. This is demonstrated through prayerful silence, attentiveness and response to prayer. The experiences reflect the liturgical seasons of the Church and pupils are able to talk, with confidence, about the seasonality of the Church describing how the school community responds to these. Pupils are willingly able to work towards preparing and delivering prayer and liturgy, and they are expertly supported by the lay Chaplain to do so. Pupils in the JX10 Chaplaincy Team were able to demonstrate understanding of setting up a prayer focus, choosing appropriate scripture and delivering prayers to reflect the upcoming season of Lent with confidence. All pupils demonstrated excellent behaviour, respect and reverence during all observed opportunities for prayer and liturgy. Pupils can reflect on how their experience of prayer and liturgy have shaped how they think and act. Fundraising initiatives which feature as part of collective worship are well responded to by all members of the school community.

Prayer and liturgy are planned into the whole school calendar to reflect the seasonality of the Church. Liturgies are planned and delivered skilfully by the lay chaplain who is an inspirational faith leader. There are opportunities for pupils to experience popular Catholic devotion such as the Rosary and Stations of the Cross. Extending the range and frequency of routine gathering of pupils for prayer and liturgy to enable more pupils to use their gifts to enhance the prayer and liturgical life of the school is at an early stage of development. Opportunities to celebrate the Sacrament of the Eucharist are extensive and are testament to the commitment of leaders and the parish priest. Pupils can recall, with great fondness, their experiences of mass. They particularly enjoy the opportunity to sing. Pupils are offered the opportunity to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation during Advent and Lent. Pupils can recognise how their day is punctuated with prayer. They particularly enjoy the 'Bible Bites' programme which provides pupils with the opportunity to hear and reflect on the Word of God and enthuses all with interform competition. Outside of the Bible Bites programme, the daily pattern of prayer doesn't always reflect the rhythm and prayer life of the Church. 'The Rock' is an inspirational, prayerful

environment and the lay chaplain and the JX10 group have created a space cherished and celebrated by pupils and staff. It is well used and loved during lunchtime and form group Masses. The school encourages parents and carers to attend Masses and liturgical events. The lay chaplain has forged excellent relationships with the local parishes and pupils are given opportunities to experience prayer and liturgy beyond the school building.

St Bernard's collective worship policy and annual plan of provision is clearly articulated by all staff, and they confidently understand what is required of them. Liturgical formation for staff is inspirational and of exceptional quality. The lay chaplain works tirelessly to upskill and support staff. Governors and school leaders understand the importance of prayer and liturgy and governors regularly attend and participate in prayer and liturgy sessions. Leaders are yet to consider how to extend opportunities to support the lay chaplain in leading collective worship by extending the range of liturgical experiences for pupils. The lay chaplain, in collaboration with leaders regularly reviews the quality of provision for collective worship by conducting staff and pupil voice to inform future planning. Leaders and the lay chaplain ensure all staff fulfil their duty in providing opportunities for daily prayer.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Bernard's Catholic High School
School unique reference number (URN)	138329
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	3724800
Full postal address of the school	St Bernard's Catholic High School, Herringthorpe Valley Road, Rotherham, S65 3BE
School phone number	01709828183
Headteacher	Kate Crawford
Chair of Governors/Trustees	Austin Senior
School Website	www.sbch.org.uk
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	St Francis Catholic Multi Academy Trust
Phase	Secondary
Type of school	Academy
Admissions policy	Non-selective
Age-range of pupils	11-16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	8 November 2016
Previous denominational inspection grade	Good

The inspection team

Chris Maher	Lead
Hannah Coe	Team
Jo Love	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