CATHOLIC SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

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

St Walburga's Catholic Primary School

URN: 142947

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Bishop of Leeds

22–23 May 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 head teacher and leader of Catholic life are exemplary in their pursuit of excellence and in their dedication to the Church's mission in education. They are an inspiration for the whole community through their witness to the gospel.
- High levels of pastoral care and the warmth of welcome to all are providing pupils, their families and staff at St Walburga's school with a place where they can all become 'a witness of Christ'.
- Opportunities for pupil leadership related to the Catholic life and mission of the school are extensive and pupils fulfil these responsibilities with increasing independence and pride.
- Skilful planning and teaching, following the principles of early years education, provides the youngest pupils in Early Years with very secure foundations in religious knowledge and spiritual development.
- Prayer and liturgy are strengths of the school. Pupils are very skilled in their planning, leadership and evaluation of worship in the school.

What the school needs to improve

- Embed the knowledge and understanding of the theology which underpins Catholic social teaching, for all pupils, at an age-appropriate level.
- Provide more consistent and progressive opportunities across the school to allow all pupils to demonstrate and record a true reflection of their levels of knowledge and understanding in religious education.

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 extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school is outstanding. Pupils live and bear witness to the school's mission statement: 'putting others first'. From their earliest years they have a secure understanding of the mission and can clearly articulate how this is translated into the daily lives of all at St Walburga's School. They are happy, confident and feel secure at school. They describe the school as being a place where everyone 'helps each other and is kind'. Pupils show a deep respect for all in their school and wider parish community. This is particularly evident in the many interactions that take place around the school. Pupils respond readily to the demands of Catholic Social Teaching through their support of local, national and global charities. Their understanding of the theology underpinning their actions is not yet secure. Chaplaincy roles, including Mini-Vinnies and Faith Leaders, are well established. A significant number of pupils take up these roles enthusiastically. These pupils have a secure understanding of their roles and state that they help to bring the school community 'closer to God'. They regularly identify and celebrate 'Wednesday Witnesses' within the school community and help their peers to use and understand the language of the virtues.

The school mission statement, 'putting others first', has a significant impact on the life of the school. It is deeply rooted in the word of God and provides clear direction for all members of the school community. All staff embrace the mission of the school: they are exemplary in the

way they participate and contribute to the life and mission of the school. There is a strong sense of community and everyone is welcomed in a spirit of generous hospitality. Adults and pupils talk proudly about being part of 'one big family' and the vision that they aspire to. The school environment provides the community with areas to reflect and pray, with pupils' work and achievements celebrated through displays. Chaplaincy provision is strong in the school; there are well-planned and effective opportunities provided for staff and pupils. These are regularly supported by the parish priest. The school's spiritual, moral, social and cultural curriculum is providing staff and pupils with effective tools for growth in these areas. The provision for relationship and health education meets statutory and diocesan requirements. The school has adopted the 'Journey in Love' scheme of work and staff receive relevant support and training.

The dedication of the head teacher and acting deputy head bear witness to the Church's mission in education. They pursue this mission with energy and determination and are a source of inspiration to their school community. The mission of the school is viewed by leaders and all governors as a core responsibility. They have a thorough insight into this aspect of the life of the school and are active participants. Governors are committed to their role and, as a result, the school works in partnership with the diocesan bishop. The school is valued by most parents. It has developed effective strategies for engaging parents and carers to the benefit of all pupils. Families and pupils benefit from bespoke support from the learning mentor and Catholic Care worker. Staff feel very highly valued; their views are considered when areas of school life are being reviewed. The school's self-evaluation is based on accurate monitoring, analysis and self-challenge. Well planned and effective professional development and coaching is enabling all new staff to develop and secure their knowledge and understanding of Catholic life and mission when they join the school.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade	1

Pupil outcomes How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education	1
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

Overall pupils demonstrate excellent knowledge, understanding and skills in religious education lessons, appropriate to their age. Behaviour is always exemplary. Almost all pupils, including those with additional needs, make good progress and achieve well, relative to their age and starting points. Inspectors found high levels of religious literacy across the school with the older pupils being particularly skilled in explaining how religious commitment impacts on their daily lives. However, this oral knowledge is not always reflected in the quality of the work produced in books. Throughout the school pupils are comfortable recalling previous learning and referring to this in lessons. They state that they enjoy their lessons due to the increasingly creative, varied, and interesting activities teachers plan for them. The study of religious art, use of debate and role play and animated Bible stories are resulting in high levels of engagement in most lessons.

Teachers are committed to the value of religious education and celebrate pupils' successes within lessons. When teaching is at its best, pupils are fully engaged in their learning due to the high expectations set and carefully considered use of resources by their teachers. Those with additional needs are well supported by experienced support staff and, therefore, their developing knowledge and understanding is captured accurately. Children in the Early Years can talk about Mary as the 'Mother of Jesus' and as the 'Queen of Heaven'. Across Key Stage 1, pupils can retell the events of the Ascension and Pentecost in detail. In Key Stage 2 pupils are developing their skills in finding and exploring biblical quotes well. They are using a variety of

sources to support their interpretations particularly effectively in upper Key Stage 2. As they move through the school pupils show increasing abilities to collaborate, debate and discuss. They understand and benefit from the feedback and marking strategies used by teachers, enabling them to understand how well they are doing. However, pupils across the school cannot consistently explain what they need to do to improve their work.

All leaders, including governors, ensure that the school curriculum for religious education is a faithful expression of the *Religious Education Curriculum Directory (2012)*. It is comparable to other core subjects in terms of professional development, resourcing, timetabling and staffing. Senior leaders and the religious education governor regularly scrutinise work samples and report their findings to governors. Well targeted professional development is provided for all staff and, as a result, teaching is good across all year groups. Curriculum planning is monitored regularly by the subject leader for religious education. Consequently, it ensures clear progression of knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith and other religious traditions. The school ensures that world faith focus weeks provide pupils from other faith backgrounds with creative opportunities to celebrate and share their religious practices and knowledge with their peers. The subject leader for religious education has an inspiring vision for high quality teaching and learning and her rigorous, forensic approach to securing this vision is being shared as a beacon of good practice within the Blessed Christopher Wharton Catholic Academy Trust and the wider diocese. Leaders' self-evaluation of religious education is informed by regular monitoring, analysis and self-challenge. The strategic action being taken by leaders as a result of these activities is strengthening outcomes.

Collective worship

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

Collective worship key judgement grade

1

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

1

Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for collective worship

1

As a result of leaders' passion for and devotion to the enhancement of prayer and liturgy throughout the school, liturgy is a very prayerful and relevant experience for all pupils. Pupils are active participants, joyfully joining in communal singing and prayerfully saying responses. They know and appreciate the many traditions of the Church and the very youngest pupils can make the sign of the cross and know how to greet the gospel. Pupils become increasingly confident and independent in their planning and delivery of creative and well-constructed class-based worship as they move through the school. They demonstrate a detailed understanding of the variety of ways of praying in the Catholic tradition including extended periods of silent reflection and liturgical singing. They always include litanies to the individual class saints and school saints within their worship. Pupils can articulate how prayer and liturgy influence their day-to day actions. They will routinely go to prayer areas throughout the day to write their own prayers for others locally and in the wider world. Pupils regularly evaluate the quality of prayer and liturgy and this embedded practice is ensuring that standards are maintained at a high level across the school.

Prayer and liturgy are central to the daily life of St Walburga's. The school's embedded liturgical calendar ensures that pupils are given regular and varied opportunities to pray in their classrooms and with the wider school community. Parents and staff are actively encouraged to share requests for personal intentions to be prayed for in times of joy and

sorrow. The school has very strong links with the parish through the sacramental programme and the pupils' leadership roles in Sunday masses throughout the year. The parish priest actively supports the school's leadership in their mission to develop the prayer life of all its community. The pupils recognise the important role of the parish priest in their faith journeys. Staff are highly skilled in helping pupils develop their liturgical planning and leadership skills at an age-appropriate level. The uplifting liturgical singing, led by the head teacher, enhances every liturgy and is recognised across the Trust as a strength of the school's provision. Parents acknowledge that St Walburga's School is a prayerful and supportive community that provides many opportunities for the pupils 'to spend time with Jesus'.

A clear policy on prayer and liturgy has been developed and this is used consistently by staff. There is a clear progression of expectations as pupils move through school. This has resulted in high quality participation of pupils and staff. Leaders and the experienced governor responsible for religious education are pro-active in promoting and supporting the prayer life of the school. The academy council has an ambitious vision for prayer and liturgy in the school and provides supportive challenge to the senior leaders to make this vision a reality. The liturgical year has been clearly mapped out to ensure that the school community can gather to celebrate significant days and events in the Church's calendar. Leaders and governors regularly review the quality of prayer and liturgy, observing collective worship and seeking the views of pupils. Leaders prioritise training for staff in how to plan, lead and support pupils in their leadership of prayer and liturgy. This training has empowered all staff and resulted in the high-quality prayer and liturgy experienced by the school community on a day-to-day basis.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Walburga's Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	142947
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	3803371
Full postal address of the school	St Walburga's Catholic Primary School, Victoria Park, Shipley, BD18 4RL
School phone number	01274531102
Headteacher	Elizabeth Fearnley
Chair of Local Governing Body	Nick Connor
School Website	www.stwalburgas.co.uk
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	Blessed Christopher Wharton Catholic Academy Trust
Phase	Primary
Type of school	Academy
Admissions policy	N/A
Age-range of pupils	3-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	25-26 May 2017
Previous denominational inspection grade	Outstanding

The inspection team

Alixena Lubomski	Lead Inspector
John Hutchinson	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