



# Archdiocese of Birmingham

## Section 48 Inspection Report

### St Francis of Assisi Catholic College

Erdington Road, Aldridge, West Midlands, WS9 0RN

Inspection dates:

2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2018

Lead Inspector:

Rachel Waugh

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#### OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS:

**Good**

Catholic Life:

Outstanding

Religious Education:

Good

Collective Worship:

Outstanding

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*Overall effectiveness at previous inspection:*

*Outstanding*

#### SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

- The Catholic Life of the school is outstanding. The Catholic Life and mission of the school is at the heart of everything it does and its impact on pupils is profound. It inspires them to be living witnesses of the Faith.
- Religious Education is good. Staff are key witnesses to a life of faith and inspire and motivate pupils in their learning. Lessons are engaging and challenging and assessment clearly informs pupils of their progress.
- Collective Worship at the school is outstanding. Provision is vast and varied, enabling pupils to lead and be led. It engages them and inspires them to take the messages of Collective Worship into their daily life and interactions with others.
- Leaders and managers have an accurate knowledge of the school and its self-evaluation is accurate. There is a clear vision for the future development of the life and mission of the school.

It is not yet outstanding because:

- Progress in Religious Education is not above diocesan and national averages. There are groups of learners who have not yet achieved outstanding attainment or progress.

## FULL REPORT

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Finalise the review of its mission statement with all stakeholders and embed the core values of St Francis of Assisi in the life and practices of the school.
- Monitor and evaluate the outcomes of the new GCSE and A-level courses and use the findings to inform improvements to teaching and learning in key stages 3, 4 and 5.
- To develop the role of the newly appointed lay chaplain, to further enhance the liturgical and chaplaincy provision of the school.
- To ensure the centrality of Collective Worship in all Catholic Citizenship sessions, to ensure spiritual opportunities are not missed.

### THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

The quality of the Catholic Life of the school.	<b>Outstanding</b>
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school.	Outstanding
The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school.	Outstanding
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision of the Catholic Life of the school.	Good

#### The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school.

#### The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school.

- Pupils appreciate and value the Catholic Life of the school. They are proud to attend St Francis of Assisi. Pupils described the Catholic Life of the school as being, "weaved into the life of the school".
- Pupils actively participate in the evaluation of the Catholic Life of the school through wholeheartedly engaging in a wide range of opportunities, student voice and through leadership roles. These activities enable them to mould and change future development.
- Pupils have a deep respect for themselves and others, which is evident in the behaviour and positive relationships around the school site and in public. Whilst pupils walked to St Mary and the Angel's parish for Mass, during the inspection, it was evident that pupils listen to each other and engage politely with members of the community and beyond.
- Pupils celebrate the opportunities to promote the school in the community, especially through Catholic social teaching. The Sixth Form, in particular, offers vibrant opportunities to engage at a local, national and international level.
- Pupils engage in a huge amount of work for charity organisations. They see this as living out the example of Christ and following in the footsteps of St Francis of Assisi to, "preach the Gospel at all times use words if necessary".
- There is a culture of active participation in liturgy, retreats and pilgrimage experiences. Pilgrimage to Lourdes is a long-standing tradition at the school and a pinnacle of its Catholic Life. Pupils are enthusiastic about their involvement at parish and diocesan level. They speak highly of the synod they attended and their voice in the wider Church.

- Catholic citizenship, taught at the school, helps pupils develop as a whole person. It enables them to have a Christian understanding of spiritual, moral and vocational learning.
- Pupils recognise and value the holistic education they are offered through the curriculum choices they have.
- Pupils understanding of vocation is seen in their service to others. A third of all current diocesan seminarians are past students of St Francis of Assisi. It is clear that the Catholic Life of St Francis of Assisi College leaves a lasting impression on its pupils.
- The mission statement of the school is currently under review. However, the Catholic mission of the school is clear for all staff and pupils, as is the motto "only the best is good enough". The school encapsulates the essence of St Francis of Assisi in the smart appearance and the actions of the pupils to go out and spread the Gospel.
- Staff are committed to the beliefs and practices of the school. Under the new leadership there has been significant training about Catholic Life, mission and ethos in order to secure the Catholic mission of the school for all stakeholders. This has built on previous excellent practice.
- Staff naturally and willingly engage with the Catholic Life of the school. The site supervisor facilitates the work of the student liturgy group, who plan and lead retreats for the parish community. Staff prayer is led by a range of staff. During the inspection, the history teacher, leading staff prayer in briefing, seamlessly linked his passion for his curriculum area to the Catholic beliefs of the school. Staff willingly lead prayer and all engage with facilitating the prayer areas and rotas in their form groups. Many serve as Eucharistic ministers at the celebration of school Masses.
- All teaching and support staff embrace Catholic Life as the most important aspect and feature of the school, everything else revolves around it. This is evident in the structure of the whole school calendar of events.
- There are positive relationships throughout the school community, which are based on mutual respect. Pastoral care is of the highest quality. Consequently, pupils would appreciate even greater contact with their heads of achievement and learning (HALS) as they value this support so highly.
- Catholic values underpin PSHE and Citizenship. The programme is planned monitored and evaluated in light of the Catholic Life of the school.
- The school environment fully reflects its Catholic mission and includes student representations of Catholic beliefs and practices. The grotto, placed in the heart of the school, is not merely for display but is a central focus for liturgy and worship.
- Behaviour is based on mutual respect and forgiveness. This is seen in the rebranding of the Emmaus centre and the work connected to the Catholic Schools' Pupil Profile (CSPP), which is being embedded in the rewards and sanctions policy.
- Catholic social teaching is evident in, and between, the work of many department areas. The school is planning to formalise this teaching into schemes of learning.
- Moral and spiritual development is obvious in all aspects of school life. Provision for relationships and sex education is highly appropriate and embedded in the Religious Education, Science and Catholic Citizenship curriculum.
- The school benefits from a committed priest chaplain, who has been a long-standing member of the school community. In light of changes to the priest chaplain and the introduction of a part-time lay chaplain, chaplaincy opportunities should continue to develop.
- Care for the most vulnerable pupils is given the highest priority and is highly effective.

- The increase in the number of support staff, for the new academic year, demonstrates the commitment of leaders to the highest quality of pastoral care for pupils.

### **How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision of the Catholic Life of the school.**

- Governors are passionate about the Catholic mission of the school and are committed to improving pupils' school and adult life.
- Monitoring, analysing and evaluation of the Catholic Life of the school is clearly evident and effective. The newly appointed headteacher is committed to high standards of Catholic Life in the school and an ongoing cycle of improvement.
- The leadership of the school is deeply committed to the Catholic Life of the school and Catholic Life is given the highest priority. This is evident in succession planning and strategic development.
- Frequent Catholic Life staff training sustains staff in their strong commitment to the mission of the school. To support this commitment, all staff have the promotion of Catholic Life as their first performance management target.
- The school is actively engaged with the diocesan academisation agenda and is seeking involvement in a systematic and timely fashion.
- Development planning for Catholic Life has become more focused since the previous inspection and responds to the findings of monitoring and evaluation.
- School leaders are creative in the way they promote the Catholic Life of the school. For example, the school has traditionally held a Red Day for those persecuted for their faith and Blue Day in preparation for the school pilgrimage to Lourdes.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

The quality of Religious Education.	<b>Good</b>
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education.	Good
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education.	Good
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education.	Outstanding

### **How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education. The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education.**

- Progress in Religious Education is good in comparison with other core departments in the school. Progress is in line with national averages, although slightly below diocesan averages for 2017. Attainment is in line with diocesan averages and has been sustained for three years, with a performance above averages in 2016.
- The progress of specific groups of learners is currently a key area of focus, including pupil premium and male pupils.
- Strategies have been implemented to enhance the progress of different groups of learners. The school's focus on high attaining pupils in 2017 involved specific interventions that resulted in improved pupil performance. The impact of any interventions are regularly monitored and evaluated.
- At key stage 5 attainment and progress is in line with diocesan and national benchmarks, based on relatively low cohorts of learners. The department has identified higher attaining pupils as a key area for development.

- Religious literacy of pupils is high and the exceptional witness of staff inspires learners. Pupils are very aware of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life.
- Pupils think ethically and spiritually and relate their learning to scripture and contemporary society with ease. Every lesson is a prayerful experience and prayer is central to learning. Pupils describe the debate in Religious Education as giving them a “better outlook” on their purpose in the world.
- Additional adults are used highly effectively by teachers to support pupils’ learning. As a result, attainment and progress of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is comparable with other groups of learners.
- Pupils are actively engaged in learning and behaviour for learning is good. Independent and collaborative learning is entwined in the learning experience. For example, during the inspection, pupils were often set the task of gathering information from a range of sources inside and beyond the classroom and imparting their knowledge to others in the group.
- Pupils’ interest and enthusiasm is evident in Religious Education lessons and most pupils enjoy their learning. Disruption in lessons is unusual.
- Pupils are very confident in sharing their faith and expressing their personal beliefs.
- Pupils value highly the commitment and dedication of the staff and their willingness to intervene in their learning, to support and improve their progress and attainment.
- As a result of teachers’ good use of assessment for learning, pupils have a secure understanding of their own performance and what they need to do to improve further.
- The quality of current work produced by pupils meets the demands of the new GCSE and there is appropriate religious vocabulary embedded in the learning.
- The development of teaching and learning at key stage 3 needs to be as rigorous as other key stages, so that pupils are best prepared for the new GCSE.
- A core, extension and mastery focus for learning in every lesson ensures that work is matched to pupils’ abilities. This is consistent and embedded across all lessons.
- Teachers are skilled and confident. They adapt learning to the needs of the pupils but maintain high expectations for all.
- Teaching is mainly good, due to effective and appropriate planning.
- Pupils assess their own progress and achievements, this is especially developed at at key stage 4 and 5.
- Lesson time is well used and teaching styles engage learners. However, inspectors observed a very small number of lessons where core learning was not reached quickly enough. The precise time management of lessons is vital as lessons are relatively short.
- Teachers’ questioning ensures a deeper understanding of what is being taught in lessons.
- Teacher feedback to pupils is effective. In the best cases, it prompts a progressive response from pupils. Letters to pupils following assessment points and key stage 5 assessment books allow for formative assessment and, as a result, most pupils are involved in evaluating their achievements.
- In all cases, assessment is focused on how pupils can progress. However, there is some inconsistency in the quality of pupil response to teacher comments.
- Teacher praise of pupils is readily used within Religious Education lessons. Consequently, engagement in lessons is good and pupils feel well supported and motivated to learn.
- Teachers make use of good quality resources in lessons. The department has worked collaboratively to ensure a high quality of provision, which meets all diocesan expectations and ensures a consistent but creative and engaging experience for pupils.

- The number of students taking A-level Religious Studies has been lower over the last few years. However, the current Year 12 and future predictions demonstrate an increase in students continuing their academic studies in this area.
- Students greatly value the Catholic social teaching course in the Sixth Form. Students believe the unique design of the course enhances their learning and skill development and enables them to live out their vocation as members of St Francis of Assisi College. Pupils are challenged effectively to move out of their comfort zone and teenage world and to take up their place in society.

### **How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education.**

- Governors and leaders ensure that the required minimum curriculum time for Religious Education is provided. Course content complies with all diocesan expectations.
- There is a planned programme of monitoring and evaluation in Religious Education including lesson observations, work scrutiny, line management by the headteacher and work with external partners. The considered findings from this self-evaluation becomes part of the Religious Education development plan.
- The evaluation of any monitoring has a clear impact on improving teaching and learning. For example, during a learning walk by external partners, it was identified that there should be greater scholarly input at A-level. As a result, a reading library was created and there is now greater scholarly content in lessons. In addition, teachers willingly give up their time to work with individual students to secure their understanding and application of their work.
- Governors are well informed about standards in Religious Education. The link director conducts learning walks across the department and acts as a critical friend. In addition, the head of department has reported back to governors regularly to showcase the work of the department and provide clear insight into current standards in attainment and practice.
- Religious Education receives parity with other subjects.
- The Religious Education department is wholeheartedly supported by the leadership and management of the school. The members of the department are self-reflective in all areas of practice.
- The curriculum leader inspires a clear vision for Religious Education, which is shared with the second in department and all department members. This ensures that teaching is at least consistently good.

### **COLLECTIVE WORSHIP**

The quality of Collective Worship.	<b>Outstanding</b>
How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship.	Outstanding
The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school.	Outstanding
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship.	Good

### **How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship.**

#### **The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school.**

- Pupils demonstrate reverence and respect in all forms of Collective Worship.

- Pupils are keen to participate in worship and are at ease when praying together. This was evident in the sheer volume of response to collective prayer observed by the inspectors.
- The pupils' participation in weekly Mass, at the parish church with parishioners, is a powerful witness to the impact of Collective Worship on all those attending.
- Pupils regularly prepare and lead Collective Worship. For example, the liturgy group plan a retreat for local parishioners. This is clearly an embedded practice, which the pupils carry out in a creative and resourceful manner. In addition, pupils readily lead assemblies and prayer, taking ownership of prayer rotas.
- There are extensive opportunities for pupils to write meaningful prayers, which influence the community and beyond. For example, the Sixth Form Catholic social teaching course provides prayer for the entire school in Catholic Citizenship. Several prayers have also been used by agencies outside the school. For example, Cafod have posted pupil prayers on their website.
- There is a variety of traditional and contemporary prayer embedded into Collective Worship, including praying the rosary at the grotto, exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, Lent Stations of the Cross and contemporary liturgical music.
- Pupils have a range of opportunities to engage with the world wide Catholic community by engaging in activities including Aid to the Church in Need and the 50<sup>th</sup> World Day of Peace.
- In response to the Grenfell tragedy, pupils were moved to create prayers for St Francis of Assisi Primary School in Notting Hill, to demonstrate their support for that community.
- Moments of prayer take place throughout the day. During the inspection, the reciting of the Nicene Creed in a Religious Education lesson became a moment of prayer, through the skilful insight of the teacher.
- Assemblies engage all through the clarity of their message, they promote interest and are relevant to pupils' lives. For example, pupils created Christmas baubles after reflecting on the Christmas story presented in Collective Worship. This helped them to send the true message of Christmas back into the homes of all pupils.
- Pupils greatly value the significant contribution of the school's music ministry to Collective Worship. Pupils are routinely asked to contribute to the liturgical music in the school.
- Collective Worship inspires pupils to be beacons of faith in contemporary society.
- There is a rich tapestry of Collective Worship opportunities at the school. These include prayer in Catholic Citizenship, pupil prepared and led assemblies, prayerful moments embedded throughout the school day, weekly Mass in the parish church and school, Mass on numerous occasions throughout the year for all pupils, Rosary during October, Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament for all pupils, retreat experiences for all pupils and themed days focused on the life and mission of the Church. The celebration of the feast day of St Francis of Assisi is seen as the highpoint of the school's year.
- Collective Worship is central to the life of the school and is embedded at the heart of all celebrations. All staff identify prayer, Mass and Collective Worship as central to the life of St Francis of Assisi College.
- Collective Worship has a clear purpose and its message is clear. It is firmly rooted in the teaching of Christ, the example of St Francis of Assisi and contemporary society.
- Collective Worship is highly engaging. Pupils value its significance in their lives and faith. It is embedded as an essential part of the daily life and mission of St Francis of Assisi College.
- Relevant staff have a very good understanding of the liturgical year and seasons. This was seen by inspectors when the history teacher led prayer and the site supervisor led the liturgy group.

- Whilst Catholic Citizenship provides opportunity for Collective Worship, it should be reviewed regularly to ensure all learning is related to Catholic teaching and all staff can fully include worship during this time.
- Pupils demonstrate the skills and capacity to plan and lead Collective Worship. The introduction of a lay chaplain will hopefully support pupil leadership of Collective Worship even further.

### **How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship.**

- Leaders and managers are visible leaders of Collective Worship and they naturally see this role as part of their vocation.
- Senior leaders are present at all Collective Worship and are therefore very able to monitor, evaluate and influence further development. Middle leaders also have a role in monitoring and evaluating.
- The priest Chaplain is highly supportive and influential in Collective Worship. He has had a long and lasting positive effect on the pupils of St Francis of Assisi.
- Leaders plan Collective Worship so that it has a contemporary context and is accessible to pupils. The Mass for the feast of St Francis spoke directly to the pupils on their faith journey.
- Staff enable pupils to readily engage in planning and leading Collective Worship. For example, the Catholic Social teaching group planned a Remembrance Day service shared by the entire community.
- The school is keen, however, to develop pupil led Collective Worship even further. Training for staff, about supporting pupils to plan and lead a variety of Collective Worship, has been identified as the next step in improvement.
- The planned development of the school's annual calendar will enable more holistic and systematic monitoring and evaluation of Collective Worship. This will include all stakeholders and promote a more consistent approach.



**SCHOOL DETAILS**

Unique reference number	104255
Local authority	Walsall
<i>This inspection was carried out under canon 806 of Canon Law and under Section 48 of the 2005 Education Act.</i>	
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Voluntary Aided
Age range	11-18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on roll	1048
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Duncan Whitehouse (Acting)
Headteacher	Ms Pauline Hanrahan
Telephone number	01922740300
Website address	Stfrancis.cc
Email address	postbox@stfrancis.cc
Date of previous inspection	May 2013

## INFORMATION ABOUT THIS SCHOOL

- St Francis is an oversubscribed Catholic College serving the parishes of Walsall, North Birmingham and Staffordshire.
- The percentage of Catholic pupils is currently 94%.
- The percentage of pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds is below the national average.
- The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average, although the percentage of pupils with statements or a Education, Health and Care Plan is above the national average.
- The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic origins is below the national average.
- The percentage of pupils with English as an additional language is below the national average.
- Attainment on entry is slightly above the national average.
- Since the last inspection there have been significant staff changes including a new headteacher, deputy headteacher, head of Religious Education, second in Religious Education, part time Lay chaplain and acting chair of governors.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION

- The inspection was carried out by two Diocesan Inspectors – Rachel Waugh and Chris Martin.
- The focus of the inspection was on the impact, quality and leadership of the school's provision of Catholic Life, Religious Education and Collective Worship.
- The inspectors observed teaching across fifteen Religious Education lessons to evaluate the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. All of these lesson observations were conducted jointly with senior leaders.
- The inspectors completed a work scrutiny and held discussions with pupils to evaluate their understanding of Catholic Life, the impact of Religious Education teaching on their learning over time and their experience of Collective Worship.
- Meetings were held with the acting chair of governors, the Catholic Life link governor, the headteacher, the second in Religious Education and deputy headteacher, the person in charge of the Catholic Life of the School (PICCLS) and the priest chaplain.
- The inspectors attended tutor group Mass, Catholic Citizenship, Year 12 Assembly and a liturgy group meeting. They undertook a tour of the school to look at aspects of learning and teaching in Religious Education, the presentation of the Catholic Life of the school and pupils' behaviour.
- The inspector reviewed a range of documents including the school's self-evaluation, data about pupils' attainment and progress, Analyse School Performance (ASP) data, the school development plan, the Religious Education action plan, teachers' planning and evidence files.