



Catholic Schools Inspectorate inspection report for **St Nicholas of Tolentine**

URN: 139032

Carried out on behalf of the Right Rev. Declan Lang, Bishop of Clifton on:

Date: 17-18 May 2023

Overall effectiveness The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school.....	3
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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	Partially

Summary of key findings

What the school does well

- The pastoral care the school provides is clearly a strength, meeting the needs of the community and responding to changing situations. All leaders and staff are committed to supporting the most vulnerable.
- There is a strong team who are all fully committed to further developing the school.
- After a lengthy period of turbulence and disruption the school now has strong leadership which has led to stabilisation and a clear direction for the school within the community, supported by the Cardinal Newman Catholic Educational Trust which they have recently joined.
- Catholic life and mission is strong and clearly drives this inclusive and welcoming school.

What the school needs to improve:

To continue to embed Catholic Social Teaching within the wider curriculum.

To ensure consistent progress in religious education for all pupils by:

- Building religious literacy and oracy skills, leading to confidence in articulating their learning
- Representing learning in a variety of ways
- Using assessment accurately to ensure all pupil needs are met.

To give all pupils opportunities to be involved in planning, leading and evaluating prayer and 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:.....

2

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

2

Leadership

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

2



Pupils appreciate being part of St Nicholas's school. They understand that the school helps them to be kind and look after others. They are aware that the community around them is important, and that people deserve to be treated with respect. They are clear that this is due to the school virtues which they focus on each term. They feel valued and cared for, leading to them developing a strong sense of worth. They enjoy coming to school. Almost all pupils feel secure most of the time, and, where there is an issue, they feel confident to approach adults for help. They seek opportunities to help others locally, nationally, and globally, including supporting the Rags to Riches charity and Cafod. They are beginning to show an understanding of Catholic Social Teaching, and some are able to articulate this well. Pupils show respect for each other and for adults. Behaviour across the school is good. The chaplaincy team is valued by pupils however this is limited to upper Key Stage 2, with involvement in planning and leading prayers seen as their priority, rather than for all. Parents understand and support the school's mission.

The mission statement is rooted in gospel values and clearly drives the school. Staff are highly committed to the mission of the school and see the most vulnerable as their priority. The school has worked hard to build relationships with their families and as a result there is strong sense of community. The school seeks to respond to the changing and challenging needs of their families. The pupils are clear that all are welcome at the school no matter from which culture, language, faith or none. There are opportunities to be faithful to, and celebrate, the diversity within the school. The pupils are caring and supportive to those with additional needs. Parents understand that the school supports the pupils' spiritual and moral development. Staff support each other well and are good role models for pupils, leading to strong relationships. The pastoral care for all is a strength of the school, with

staff and pupils appreciating and valuing the diverse ways individuals are supported. Parents say that 'the staff are friendly and easy to talk to.' The physical environment is bright and provides an exciting learning environment for pupils. There are prayer spaces in each class and across the school. Relationships teaching is faithful to the teachings of the church.

The Catholic life and mission of the school is a clear priority for the leaders and governors of the school. The school has taken full advantage of the offer of support and training provided by the diocese. The school has recently moved into the Cardinal Newman Catholic Educational Trust and is, therefore, fully engaged in Bishop Declan Lang's vision for Catholic schools. There are growing parish links and the principal and parish priest work hard to ensure that this remains a priority. Communication with parents is good. Newsletters provide weekly reflections, Class Dojo provides up to the minute information of the daily life of the school, and face to face conversations between staff and pupils ensures that response to needs can be swift. Leaders have recognised the benefits of placing Catholic Social Teaching at the heart of the curriculum and work has begun on this. Staff feel cared for and valued and appreciate the commitment to their wellbeing by the principal. Whilst the governors and pupils are involved in the evaluation of the Catholic life and mission of the school, this is not yet structured and planned in advance. Monitoring by the trust has already taken place and effective feedback given. Appropriate induction procedures are in place for new staff.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade:.....

3

Pupil outcomes

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education.....

3

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.....

2



Some pupils are developing appropriate knowledge, skills and understanding of the religious education curriculum. Progress is limited for some, particularly for those in Key Stage 2. There are opportunities for pupils to reflect each week leading to some pupils' awareness of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life. Religious vocabulary is highlighted in most lessons and some pupils are able to use this to articulate their learning. However, too many pupils are reluctant to make contributions in lessons. Opportunities for recall enable pupils to show their knowledge and understanding. Where this is strong in the school, pupils are enthusiastic to explain what they know and to put it into other contexts. Some teachers show effective questioning skills to extend pupil understanding and knowledge. Although behaviour is good in class, not all pupils engage in lessons, and some are reluctant to work independently. This leads to the quality and standard of the work produced being inconsistent across the school. Tasks set are mainly around writing and this impedes those for whom English skills are not good. Some pupils enjoy their lessons and participate with enthusiasm and are fully engaged. Pupils are aware of how well they are doing and how to improve their learning through feedback during lessons and marking in books. End of unit assessment of pupils' work is in the early stages of development. Formal assessment information collection has recently been introduced. Teachers across the school show confidence in their subject knowledge. They appreciate the support the diocese and the religious education lead have given to enable this. They are committed to religious education as a core subject. Planning is informed by ongoing informal assessment of weekly learning. Where questioning skills by teachers and teaching assistants is most effective, pupils are able to deepen their understanding and extend their knowledge. Teachers and teaching assistants are swift to praise pupil effort and encourage pupils to extend their learning through the 3-star activities on offer. Where the 3-star activities are built up progressively, challenges are available to all during

lessons. However, this is inconsistent across the school. Teachers recognise the importance of religious education in supporting the spiritual and moral development of the pupils, for example, in lessons linked to stewardship. Resources used are generally age appropriate and add value to the lesson. Teaching assistants are highly respected and work well with individual pupils, they are particularly effective in recording pupil comments during class discussions. Leaders and governors are on track to meet the demands of the *Religious Education Directory* through the resources used by the school. Religious education is seen as a core subject and has parity in terms of timetable and resourcing. The school has engaged with the diocese for professional development, which has led to increased confidence in religious education teaching. The school is beginning to be involved with the trust through moderation and network groups. The staff appreciate the support and training offered by the religious education lead. The scheme used across the school and supplementary resources identified ensures that learners progress sequentially through the religious education curriculum. In some classes, differing pupils' needs are met in a variety of ways, for example, through the 3-star tasks set, differentiation of the curriculum and individual support to enable full access to the learning planned for the class. Whilst monitoring and evaluation of religious education takes place regularly, this is not planned out in a structured and focused manner. Targets for religious education are included in the school development plan. This is reviewed regularly. The religious education lead is aware of the next steps to take to ensure the consistency of religious education across the school.

Collective worship

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

Collective worship key judgement grade:.....

3

Pupil outcomes

How well pupils participate in and respond to the school's collective worship

3

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

Most pupils respond well to prayer and liturgy in whole school and class worship. Many pupils sing enthusiastically and respond to prayer. All behave with reverence and respect in all forms of worship. Pupils are aware of the liturgical year and how it guides the different celebrations. Some pupils are able to plan and lead prayer across the school. This is mainly the chaplaincy team. Pupils appreciate the framework that they have been introduced to which guides their worship and this has given them increased confidence. However, opportunities for silent, individual, and collective prayer within liturgy are limited. Some pupils are able to articulate how prayer is influenced by the wider life of the school and the chaplaincy team can explain how this leads to action, for example how the mission section of the framework leads to action. Prayer is a central part of the daily life of the school. Weekly whole school worship, weekly class reflections and regular chaplaincy team led prayer as well as prayer at the start of staff gatherings ensure that it is a meaningful part of school life. There is daily prayer across the school and this reflects the rhythm of the prayer life of the church. Pupils and staff are given opportunities to pray in different ways across the year e.g., stations of the cross, Mary as a focus in May, reconciliation services. Scripture is at the centre of whole school and class worship with staff and pupils participating in readings and prayers. However, responses and liturgical action is limited. The principal and religious education lead are good role models of effective worship and staff appreciate the guidance and support they have received from them. As a result of this input and the resources the school has provided, the staff are growing in confidence to plan and lead class prayer and worship. There is a dedicated communal prayer space where pupils and staff can sit quietly and reflect. This is a beautiful area that is well kept and appreciated by all. The school has recently set up class family prayer and liturgy times and these are valued by the parents that attend them. There is an up-to-date policy for prayer and liturgy, which outlines expectations for all staff. The principal is clear that the chaplaincy team have been trained to plan and lead worship so that they

can develop confidence to go to each class and train other pupils to do this. This is in the early stages. The chaplaincy team are proud to lead prayer and worship and train others. The principal models creative ways to enhance worship. There are regular opportunities to attend Mass in the church over the year including holy days of obligation. There are reconciliation services during Advent and Lent. Staff feel confident to lead worship in class and this has been down to the good role model that they have in the principal. They understand the importance of prayer in the daily life of the school. Leaders have ensured that there are plenty of resources to support the staff and pupils in leading worship. The religious education lead is beginning to develop pupil voice in evaluating collective worship, however this is not yet structured and planned over the year. The governors and the trust have attended different forms of worship across the school and are beginning to become involved in evaluating the prayer life of the school.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Nicholas of Tolentine RC Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	139032
Full postal address of the school	Pennywell Road, Bristol BS5 0TJ
School phone number	01173772260
Name of head teacher or principal	Mrs Rachael James
Chair of governing board	Mrs Colleen Collett
School Website	https://www.stnicholas.bristol.sch.uk/
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	Cardinal Newman Catholic Educational Trust
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age-range of pupils	4-11
Trustees	Clifton Diocese
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	December 2016
Previous denominational inspection grade	Good

The inspection team

Dawn Summers-Breeze	Lead inspector
Anne-Marie McKintosh	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

