



# Archdiocese of Birmingham

## Canonical Inspection Report

### CRACKLEY HALL SCHOOL

St Joseph's Park, Kenilworth, Warwickshire, CV8 2FT

Inspection dates:

25-26 November 2019

Lead Inspector:

Ben McArdle

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#### OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS:

**Good**

Catholic Life:

Outstanding

Religious Education:

Good

Collective Worship:

Outstanding

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### SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

This is a Good Catholic school because:

- Leaders and governors know areas of strength and areas for development well; they ensure improvement planning is impactful.
- The headteacher's fervent and clear vision for the school is deeply committed to the Church's mission in education. This is effectively promoted by governors, staff and pupils, and supported by parents, to create a distinctively Catholic school.
- Chaplaincy makes a significant contribution to the spiritual development of pupils. It enables pupils to become diligent witnesses to the school's values.
- Most pupils make good progress in Religious Education, and some make outstanding progress.
- Teachers use a wide variety of teaching strategies, which harness pupils' enjoyment of Religious Education.
- Collective Worship is securely planned around the Liturgical Year and meets the needs of the community. Prayer is cherished by all and there is a constant strive to ensure prayer is inclusive of all.

It is not yet Outstanding because:

- Additional requirements of the diocesan Bishop regarding the Religious Education curriculum are not fully implemented.
- The teaching of Religious Education does not consistently challenge more able pupils.
- Pupils are not routinely told how they can improve the quality of their Religious Education learning.
- Questioning does not maximise learning for every pupil in Religious Education.

## FULL REPORT

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

- Ensure that Religious Education lessons are never blocked into a single session or day.
- Consistently teach Religious Education lessons that enable more pupils to attain the higher-level learning outcomes that are identified on the scheme of work.
- Develop feedback strategies that enable pupils to develop their knowledge and skills in Religious Education.
- Engage all pupils in questioning during Religious Education lessons.

## 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	Outstanding

### 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

- The whole school community is energised by the personal witness of the headteacher to his faith. It is the catalyst behind the school's mission and impacts every area of school life.
- The school's mission statement is made known to all pupils through the issue of a 'Weekly Mission'. As a result, pupils speak with confidence about the aims of the school and know how they can be lived out on a day to day basis.
- The school council plays a central role in evaluating and improving the Catholic Life of the school so that pupils become even stronger witnesses to the mission statement. For example, the installation of a friendship bench, for those who feel lonely during free time sessions, means pupils can easily identify peers who they can "share a smile" with and talk to, thus fostering a culture of inclusivity amongst themselves.
- All pupils have a profound understanding of what it means to be created in the image & likeness of God and so treat one another with compassion and respect. Consequently, pupils are polite, and the standard of behaviour throughout the school is exemplary.
- There are many opportunities for pupils to lead Catholic Life. For example, pupils choose which charities the school supports; different year groups lead meditations and activities at certain times in the Liturgical Year; each class has a prayer leader and there is a growing number of highly trained altar servers.
- A thriving Mini Vinnies group organises numerous projects each year, which respond to the needs of others within the school and in the wider community, including writing to elderly and housebound parishioners at Christmas and organising annual skipathons to raise money for those in need. They co-ordinate collections on behalf of Tools With A Mission, so that unwanted household tools can be refurbished and

sent across the world for livelihood creation. Because of these projects, pupils have a profound sense of responsibility to the common good.

- The dedicated and skilled Religious Education subject leader and chaplaincy assistant play a key role in promoting the school's Catholic Life. In addition to running the Mini Vinnies, they involve the whole community in developing links with the parish, organises the May procession, trains the school's altar servers and assists with the catechesis of those preparing to make their First Holy Communion.
- Staff are committed to ensuring all pupils benefit from a diverse programme of spiritual development through retreats and visits. Pupils enthusiastically take part in a walk of faith before a day of meditative prayer at The Common, attend a residential retreat at Alton Castle and, in Year 6, go on pilgrimage to Lisieux. Pupils speak confidently about the positive impact these opportunities have on them.
- Pupils have an acute awareness of right and wrong and understand the reasons why Christians adopt certain behaviours and attitudes.
- The standard of pastoral care is very high; staff ensure they know each pupil individually. Consequently, pupils feel exceptionally safe and happy at school and know what to do if they wish to discuss their wellbeing.
- There is a strong awareness of vocation amongst pupils. Because of the focus placed on vocations throughout the year, including during a dedicated vocations week, pupils appreciate that everyone is called by God and can speak about the different ways people respond to His call by using their talents.
- Strong links with the parish enable pupils to become profound witnesses to the Catholic faith. Pupils act upon the values the school has adopted from the Catholic School Pupil Profile (CSPP). They recall with great joy how they demonstrate compassion and love by entertaining parishioners with a strawberry tea and helping at the regular coffee mornings in the parish centre. The school continues to work hard to embed the CSPP into the daily routine of school life. Each class has a learning journal which documents the many ways pupils develop.
- Staff model the highest standards of behaviour. Consequently, relationships between staff and pupils are very strong and pupils trust their teachers.
- Because of the incredibly strong witness to the faith of the headteacher, Catholic social teaching permeates the whole curriculum. There is a depth of understanding amongst staff as to what makes Crackley Hall a Catholic school. For example, staff are confident in making links between the corporal works of mercy and biblical teachings that inspire them. Teachers incorporate this into their lessons whenever it is appropriate.
- The school's physical environment is a clear expression of its Catholic identity. Religious artwork, statues, a prayer garden and vibrant displays help to create opportunities for the community to reflect and pray. Every classroom houses a sacred space, which is liturgically relevant and well looked after.
- The sacramental preparation of pupils is highly effective and is very well supported by the Religious Education subject leader, chaplaincy assistant and parish priest.
- The school is reviewing its provision of Relationships & Sex Education. Leaders must ensure that the scheme they choose to implement is Catholic in nature and fully complies with the requirements of the Bishop.

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

- The school is fully compliant with the Bishops' decisions surrounding the Catholic Life of the School.

- Catholic Life is given the highest possible priority by leaders. The headteacher meets regularly with the subject leader for Religious Education and parish priest to review their provision and establish priority areas for development.
- Monitoring and evaluation are planned on a termly basis and focus on areas that the school has recently identified as a priority. As a result, leaders and governors have a very good understanding of the impact of their work.
- Evaluation is shared with leaders and governors, so they are able to assure its accuracy.
- Governors have formed an intricate knowledge of the school and so offer appropriate support and robust challenge to its leaders. Routine communication between them and senior leaders ensures that improvement planning is accurately based upon the school's needs and impacts on pupils. For example, the governors ensured a diocesan recommendation to introduce 'house saints' was swiftly actioned, and they continue to plan for the development of this initiative.
- Opportunities for the professional development of staff relating to the Catholic Life of the school are highly valued by staff. Because the school engages well with the Diocesan Education Service, leaders swiftly train staff about diocesan expectations, so that pupils benefit from initiatives that enrich Catholic Life, such as the CSPP.
- Upon arrival to the school, a thoughtfully planned, comprehensive induction package is delivered to staff. This ensures they have a clear understanding of the school's mission from the day they join and of their responsibility to actively contribute to it.
- Systems are in place to regularly collate the views of parents; however, they do not always explicitly focus on Catholic Life. More regular feedback from parents on this could further aid the school in its evaluation and improvement planning.

## 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	Good

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

- Pupils enter the school with little or no knowledge of the Catholic faith. Teachers in Early Years and Key Stage 1 do an excellent job in building a foundation for learning in Religious Education. Through high expectations for attitudes towards learning, teachers enable pupils to rapidly learn to concentrate and enjoy their Religious Education and to become religiously literate.
- The progress made by the end of Key Stage 1 is increasing over time. Most pupils make at least good progress, and some make outstanding progress. There is a significant difference between the attainment of pupils when they enter the school and their attainment by the end of the key stage. As pupils progress into Key Stage

2, progress continues to be good so that, by the end of the key stage, the majority of pupils are working at or above diocesan expectations.

- As a result of effective teaching strategies, pupils with special educational needs make good progress in Religious Education. Teaching assistants adapt tasks well and support pupils to learn through effective questioning.
- The school has accurately identified that boys do not achieve as well as girls by the end of Key Stage 2. To remedy this, the subject leader for Religious Education has introduced question stickers to ensure that all pupils are encouraged to think more deeply about their work. However, their use across the school is inconsistent and it is too early to determine whether they are having an impact.
- Teachers plan lessons following the diocesan scheme of work, Learning and Growing as the People of God, and the new age-related standards. Teachers plan lessons linked to age-related standards, which enable pupils to develop their knowledge and understanding of Religious Education, as well as their skills to reflect and think both theologically and ethically.
- Pupils particularly enjoy their Religious Education lessons. They are keen to share their prior knowledge and teachers provide a wide variety of tasks which pupils respond to positively. Drama, drawing, artwork, multimedia, competition and some opportunities for extended writing ensure the interest of all pupils is captivated, making for lessons that are fun and inspiring.
- Due to the high expectations of class teachers, behaviour in almost all lessons is excellent.
- The standard of written work produced by pupils in Religious Education is comparable to that for other core subjects.
- The vast majority of teaching in Religious Education is good. Teachers have a secure subject knowledge, meaning they are able to competently handle pupils' questions and satisfy their desire for knowledge.
- Because most teachers rely on a 'hands up' questioning strategy, not all pupils are actively engaged in whole class discussions, allowing some pupils to coast through this part of Religious Education lessons.
- Questioning is very often directed towards consolidating pupils' knowledge of the topics covered in lessons. It must extend their thinking more often. Subsequently, pupils are not routinely pushed towards attaining the more challenging learning outcomes identified in the scheme of work.
- Teachers of all classes are consistent in their use of written feedback to praise pupils' efforts and affirm what they have learnt. Written comments are also used to encourage personal reflection on what has been learnt. However, at times, written feedback offers advice about literacy and does not offer pupils advice on how to move their Religious Education forwards.
- The school is developing strategies to include more verbal feedback into its marking of Religious Education, so that pupils of all abilities can better understand teachers' advice and questions.
- Where teaching is better than good, pupils of all abilities are challenged in their work and know exactly what they must do in order to achieve the more challenging learning outcomes identified in the scheme of work.

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

- Religious Education meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference.
- Leaders and governors ensure that funding for Religious Education is given priority above all other subjects, although this budget allocation is also used for Catholic Life and Collective Worship.

- Religious Education meets the additional requirements of the diocesan Bishop in terms of the curriculum that is taught, however, some lessons are blocked within a single session or day in some classes. Senior leaders are aware of this and plan to rectify this on future timetables.
- Religious Education benefits from incredibly strong leadership. The subject leader has a clear vision for the school; her expert ability to lead and mentor staff ensures that this vision is secured. A regular, formalised cycle of monitoring, evaluation and improvement planning ensures that the subject continues to develop. Staff also appreciate the informal monitoring and coaching that is available to them from the subject leader, with several class teachers requesting informal support to further improve their practice.
- Procedures for monitoring and evaluation are effective as they enable the subject leader to identify rare occasions when teaching is less than good. In such cases, a support plan is designed and implemented swiftly, which involves close monitoring and support.
- Governors ensure that the subject leader can regularly access diocesan support and training. This has led to senior leaders adopting new assessment practise, which enables the subject leader to moderate standards in Religious Education at Crackley Hall externally with other schools.
- Senior leaders and governors ensure that Religious Education is planned to meet the needs of most pupils. They must now monitor the level of challenge being pitched to more able pupils.

## 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	Outstanding

### How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship The quality of Collective Worship provided by the School

- Pupils are highly engaged in acts of Collective Worship and show a deep sense of reverence and respect when praying.
- The use of music to enhance the quality of Collective Worship is a major strength of the school. The teacher responsible for music is highly skilled in instilling worshipful joy into all pupils; subsequently, the quality of communal singing always enhances the spirituality of liturgies and para-liturgies.
- There are many opportunities for pupils to lead and prepare prayer, particularly in Key Stage 2. Every class in the school has a prayer leader and the school has adopted the diocesan liturgy planner to raise the profile of pupil leadership. A wider sphere of age-appropriate opportunities for pupils in Key Stage 1 to lead and prepare Collective Worship would further strengthen this aspect of the school's work.

- Pupils experience a variety of approaches to prayer, they enjoy a combination of traditional and contemporary prayers and have particularly benefitted from a recent focus on learning the prayer traditions of the Church. Teachers in Early Years use a mixture of scripture and gesture to great success to teach the traditional prayers of the Church to pupils, who often start school with little or no knowledge of them.
- Although the school has focussed on traditional prayers, pupils do benefit from daily opportunities for spontaneous prayers and know that they can pray for their intentions whenever they choose to do so.
- A good number of pupils participate in voluntary acts of Collective Worship. The chaplaincy assistant does great work in generating interest and enthusiasm amongst pupils, who are keen to develop their prayer lives and skills. For example, in October there were opportunities for pupils to lead rosary sessions in the school's oratory.
- Pupils have a good understanding of the Liturgical Year because it is regularly discussed both in class, during assemblies and at Mass. Consequently, pupils can explain in some detail the use of liturgical colours in their sacred spaces and understand why they pray in certain ways and for certain things at different times of the year.
- At special times of the year, such as for Reconciliation, First Holy Communion and Stations of the Cross, pupils travel to the local church, where the parish priest leads pupils in worship. Keen to contribute to pupils' skill development, he asks the pupils to write the intercessions for these liturgies.
- As a result of high-quality Collective Worship, pupils' spiritual development is a real success of the school. Regardless of their faith or background, all pupils benefit from stillness and quiet reflection on how to become witnesses to the school's values.
- Prayer is universally cherished by every member of the community and the school is keen to share this beyond the immediate school community. For example, the Mini Vinnies support the parish's Healing Mass, which takes place on a Saturday each spring. Parishioners value the school's contribution to their worship and activities.
- The centrality of prayer to school life is highlighted by senior leaders' expectations that all acts of Collective Worship are timetabled in a way that enables all staff to attend. School staff always respond well to opportunities to pray; attendance at masses is almost always universal.
- Parents are positive about the impact the school has on their children. They value the individual care and attention given to their children by school staff, which they say makes for a welcoming atmosphere. Initiatives such as the 'prayer bear' enable parents to support their children to pray at home; parents say that their children are excited to bring the bear home and lead a family prayer service.

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

- The school fully meets the requirements of the diocesan Bishop regarding Collective Worship.
- Collective Worship is planned conscientiously each term by the headteacher, subject leader for Religious Education and the parish priest. Consequently, all acts of Collective Worship have a clear purpose, message and direction. The themes chosen for prayer reflect the school's weekly mission, which are carefully selected to reflect the liturgical seasons. This directly ensures that all pupils enjoy a structured approach to their spiritual and moral development.
- Leaders ensure that all pupils lead an assembly for the whole school each year. During the inspection, Reception pupils led an assembly based on Jesus' parable of

the minas. This entertaining and thought-provoking assembly enabled pupils to reflect on why it is important for them to use their talents for the common good. Points for reflection posed to upper Key Stage 2 pupils could increase in challenge and demand.

- All staff, including those who are new to the school, receive training on how to best plan and deliver prayer. Staff appreciate, and call upon, the support offered to them.
- Governors contribute well to the monitoring and evaluation of prayer. Their regular attendance at acts of Collective Worship enable them to test senior leaders' self-evaluation and offer effective support and challenge.

## SCHOOL DETAILS

Unique reference number	125772
Local authority	Warwickshire
<i>This inspection was carried out under canon 806 of Canon Law.</i>	
Type of school	Primary
School category	Independent
Age range	4-11 years, plus two nursery classes
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on roll	231 + 40 in Nursery
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Elizabeth Griffin
Headteacher	Robert Duigan
Telephone number	01926 514444
Website address	<a href="http://www.crackleyhall.co.uk">www.crackleyhall.co.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:post@crackleyhall.co.uk">post@crackleyhall.co.uk</a>

## INFORMATION ABOUT THIS SCHOOL

- Crackley Hall School is a smaller than average independent primary school in Kenilworth, Warwickshire, based within the parish of St Augustine's.
- The percentage of Catholic pupils is currently 25.5%.
- The percentage of disadvantaged pupils is significantly below against the national average.
- The percentage of SEND pupils is slightly below 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 broadly in line with age-related expectations.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION

- The inspection was carried out by two Diocesan Inspectors – Ben McArdle & Maureen O'Leary.
- 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 inspector/s observed teaching across eleven Religious Education lessons to evaluate the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Some of these lesson observations were conducted jointly with senior leaders.
- The inspector/s 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 chair of governors, the Catholic Life link governor, the headteacher, the Religious Education subject leader, parish priest, chaplaincy assistant and a group of classroom teachers. A pupil conference was held, and the inspectors spoke to parents who attended the assembly and in the playground at the start of the day.
- The inspectors attended a whole school Mass, an assembly, class Collective Worship and undertook a learning walk to look at the presentation of the Catholic Life of the school and pupils' behaviour.
- The inspectors reviewed a range of documents including the school's self-evaluation, data about pupils' attainment and progress, the school development plan, the Religious Education action plan, teachers' planning, pupils' exercise books and learning journals.