

# Saint Benedict Catholic Voluntary Academy

URN: 138622

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Bishop of Nottingham

27–28 November 2024

## Summary of key findings

### Overall effectiveness

The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school

#### 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

#### Religious education (p.5)

The quality of curriculum religious education

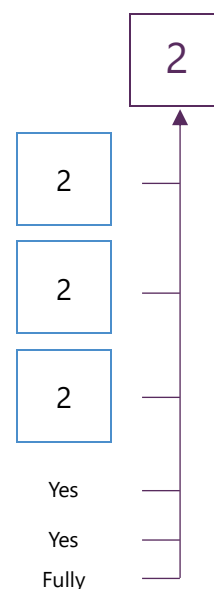
#### Collective worship (p.7)

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

The school is fully compliant with the general norms for religious education laid down by the Bishops' Conference

The school is fully compliant with any additional requirements of the diocesan bishop

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



## Compliance statement

- The school is fully compliant with the general norms for religious education laid down by the Bishops' conference.
- The school is fully compliant with any additional requirements of the diocesan bishop.
- The school has responded to the areas for improvement from the last inspection.

## What the school does well

- The Catholic life and mission of Saint Benedict Catholic Voluntary Academy is known and lived through the values of the school: Love, Knowledge, Integrity and Belief.
- Every student is made to feel valued and that they fully belong within the school through its truly inclusive nature. This forms the basis of the excellent pastoral care and dedication shown by leaders, teachers and support staff.
- Teachers and students articulate and celebrate the strong culture of diversity. Leaders have the importance of community at the heart of their decision making and inclusion is considered in all areas of school.
- Leadership in religious education is reflective and proactive in seeking interventions to help all students flourish.
- Governors are highly skilled and actively engaged in the whole life of the school.

## What the school needs to improve

- Ensure that students and staff can clearly articulate the theology that underpins their actions and values so that all can communicate this using a Catholic lens.
- Allow sufficient time for students to respond to daily form prayers which are liturgically sensitive and reflect the rhythm of the Church.
- Establish a clear and coherent plan for students' progression in prayer and spiritual development, including a robust system of quality assurance.

## 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

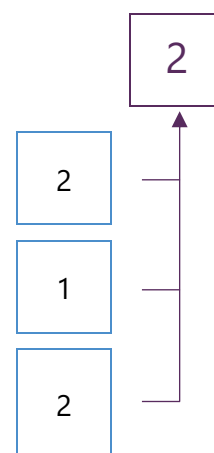
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

#### Provision

The quality of provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school

#### Leadership

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



Students at Saint Benedict thrive within a strong community ethos and actively embrace the school's identity in its everyday actions. The mission statement is taken from the teachings of Saint Catherine of Sienna: 'Be who God meant you to be, and you will set the world on fire'. The values of love, integrity and knowledge are embedded in school culture, shaping the character and development of every student and guiding daily interactions, which support the holistic growth of every student. The mission is lived by students; however, some students have an underdeveloped understanding of this ethos and struggle to articulate its meaning. Students demonstrate a profound respect for the school's rich diversity and foster a sense of unity and pride within the school community, reflecting its inclusive Catholic ethos. Students have a strong sense of justice and care for those in need in the wider community. They have a clear understanding that they are valued and loved, rooted within their positive experience within the school.

A profound sense of community is evident within this school, reflected in the quality of relationships throughout. This supportive and loving environment embodies an unwavering commitment to uplifting the most vulnerable members of the school community. Pastoral care at Saint Benedict's is exemplary and stands as a cornerstone of the school's identity. Staff at all levels demonstrate exceptional dedication, consistently going above and beyond to nurture and care for their students, with a particular focus on those who are most vulnerable. The school's inclusivity and celebration of diversity are hallmarks of its identity. The ethos of welcome is tangible, with leaders demonstrating extraordinary dedication to understanding and supporting students from a wide range of cultural and belief traditions. This commitment enables all students to live and learn alongside their peers in harmony and dignity. At the recent feast day

celebration for the school's patron saint, the theme of diversity was woven into the community activity and academic study: the enrichment curriculum has been designed in such a way that all students can see that they belong, regardless of their faith or background.

Leaders and governors demonstrate a genuine commitment to the pastoral care and well-being of staff, fostering an environment of mutual respect and support within the school community. Collaborative relationships with the Saint Ralph Sherwin Multi-Academy Trust and the Diocese of Nottingham ensure that the school remains aligned to its Catholic mission, benefiting from shared expertise and guidance. Saint Benedict's has a flourishing partnership with local primary schools, with a well-established transition program that embeds its ethos of welcome and inclusivity from an early stage. This ensures students and their families feel valued and supported as they join the secondary school community. Leaders, including governors, are powerful witnesses to Catholic social teaching, especially to the preferential option for the poor. Leaders ensure that every decision is crafted thoughtfully to prioritise the needs of the most vulnerable, both materially and educationally. Induction for staff in Catholic life and mission is comprehensive and effectively monitored by leaders: however, some staff have an underdeveloped understanding of this ethos and struggle to articulate its meaning. The school prioritises professional development, ensuring that all staff are well-versed in the personal development curriculum, the relationships, sex and health education program, and the Catholic identity of the school, enabling them to contribute meaningfully to its mission.

## Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

### Religious education key judgement grade

#### Pupil outcomes

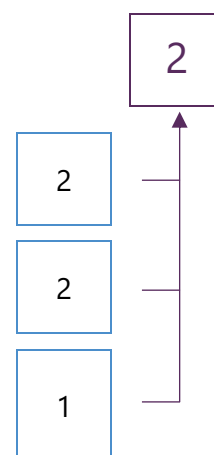
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

#### 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



Students develop secure subject knowledge, understanding and skills in religious education. This is through the carefully crafted curriculum linked to the new Religious Education Directory and the emphasis on retrieval tasks at the start of lessons to support students knowing, remembering and doing more. Good progress is evident for nearly all students and clear plans are in place to support all to flourish. Students can articulate clearly their learning and what they need to do to improve. Whole class feedback leads to students improving their work, and this is effective and consistent across all teaching sets. Religious education workbooks highlight that students are proud of their work and that students have opportunities to complete extended written tasks which capture their reflective and evaluative ideas. Students say that they enjoy 'sharing their ideas on ethical issues' and 'having opportunity to debate'. The core religious education programme in the sixth form is well-received by students and allows students time to reflect and critically engage with their faith and whole world issues. Behaviour in lessons is good and expectations are appropriate to students' age and capacity, reflecting overall positive attitudes to learning in religious education.

Students are taught by a committed team of teachers who have nurtured good relationships with all those they teach in religious education. Teachers are confident in their subject knowledge. High-quality teaching strategies that include questioning, recall and whole class feedback are consistent across the department. Students receive regular praise and the opportunity to improve their work. The new religious education curriculum is ambitious and built to support students' Catholic literacy, regardless of their varied starting points. Resources for students are comprehensive and accessible, with an emphasis on securing knowledge. Religious education supports the moral and spiritual development of students and opportunities are built in to reflect and consider moral implications. The religious education curriculum is well planned

and resourced to meet the needs of most students. Strategies to support vulnerable learners have been identified, though this is not fully embedded across the different phases of learning.

Leaders and governors ensure that religious education meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference in all key stages, providing 10% curriculum time in Key Stages 3 and 4 and 6% in Key Stage 5. The subject is valued by leaders and governors and has full parity with all other core subjects. Lessons are regularly monitored to quality assure students' learning and behaviour in religious education; this has included support from the Saint Ralph Sherwin Catholic Multi-Academy Trust. The subject leaders for religious education are strong practitioners. They have a secure understanding of the strengths of the department and have a clear plan of how to improve and support students. They are proactive, pragmatic and ambitious for the department and demonstrate forensic self-evaluation. There is a clear vision for development and a commitment to ensuring the consistency of all within the department. There is a dedicated team of subject specialists who create and plan resources for the department. Senior leaders also teach religious education and help foster a supportive atmosphere within the department. Leaders and governors' self-evaluation of religious education is informed by thorough monitoring, analysis and self-challenge. Leaders ensure that professional development opportunities are available for teachers in relation to both subject knowledge and pedagogical development. This is supported by a programme of 'pattern spotting' quality assurance processes by the senior leadership team. Furthermore, impactful whole school teaching and learning strategies have helped to improve the quality of religious education teaching since the last inspection.

## 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

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

2

Students are respectful but passive in their engagement with prayer and liturgy. Prayer is planned throughout the school day with students participating in prayers during form time and lessons. The school's emphasis on prayer affirms self-worth and human dignity. Students engage with the lay chaplain, tutors and heads of year to lead the creation of prayer and liturgy for year group celebrations of the word. There are few occasions for students to attend Mass regularly as a body of students, although there have been recent opportunities for some to attend a voluntary lunchtime Mass or opt to celebrate Mass at their local parish church. A consistent use of traditional prayers and a unified prayer, such as the Prayer of Saint Benedict, are not in place, missing important chances to reinforce the sense of community and share spirituality. The variable response to prayer, particularly the lack of engagement in some instances, suggests a need for further exploration of how to foster a deeper level of participation and reflection.

Prayer reflects the rhythm of the school day, such as the prayer before lunch serving as a grace. The provision of prayer spaces, such as the chapel, prayer room, and pilgrim station, further enhance the spiritual atmosphere. The school's chaplaincy program demonstrates a commendable commitment to fostering a spiritually rich environment. The chaplaincy team is enthusiastic, knowledgeable, and actively engaged in a variety of initiatives. Their creative approach, including the development of form and chapel ambassadors, and pilgrimage stations, offers students opportunities for meaningful reflection and participation: some respond well to these occasions. The pilgrimage stations are linked to the core values of the school and students get to pray and reflect on how actions can make an impact on the wider community. Each station is designed to be experienced individually or as a form group, led by their tutor. A call to action is thoughtfully designed linked to preferential option for the poor, caring for our common home, solidarity and dignity.

The leadership of the school has put in place a policy which identifies the expectations for prayer and liturgy. There is a whole school calendar for prayer and liturgy, which includes a 'word of the week'. Although leaders ensure that the school day is shaped by prayer and liturgy, a coherent approach to form prayer is not in place, nor does this time consistently reflect liturgical seasons, which results in a lack of consistency and depth in the spiritual formation of all students. While the chaplaincy team is well-prepared and knowledgeable, leaders do not provide specific training and support for readers in order to further elevate the quality of liturgical celebrations. All staff meetings begin with prayer and a moment of reflection. Professional development is well-planned and appreciated by staff, who recognise this as helpful and effective in supporting them in their roles; also, there has been collaboration with the diocese, which has supported staff training sessions. Staff say that they can ask the lay chaplain or members of the senior leadership team for support and clarification. Training around prayer and liturgy is also a core part of induction for new teachers. There is strong support from governors, as evidenced by their regular visits; they are proactive in seeking to support improvements.



## Information about the school

Full name of school	Saint Benedict Catholic Voluntary Academy
School unique reference number (URN)	138622
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	8314607
Full postal address of the school	Saint Benedict Catholic Voluntary Academy, Duffield Road, Darley Abbey, Derby, DE22 1JD
School phone number	01332 557032
Headteacher	Hazel Boyce
Chair of local governing body	Molly Allen and Joe Connelly
School Website	<a href="https://www.stbenedictderby.srscmat.co.uk/">https://www.stbenedictderby.srscmat.co.uk/</a>
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	Saint Ralph Sherwin Catholic Multi Academy Trust
Phase	Secondary
Type of school	Academy
Admissions policy	Non-selective
Age-range of pupils	11-19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	March 2018
Previous denominational inspection grade	2 - Good

## The inspection team

Helen Pepper	Lead
Hannah Coe	Team
Catherine Danaher	Team
Ryan Hibbard	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