

Notre Dame Preparatory School (Norwich) Ltd

URN: 121239

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Most Rev. Peter Collins the Bishop of East Anglia

16–17 November 2023

Summary of key findings

Overall effectiveness

The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school

2

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

2

Religious education (p.5)

The quality of curriculum religious education

2

Collective worship (p.7)

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

2

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

N/A

What the school does well

- Pupils at Notre Dame have a strong sense of worth, they know they are loved and valued, as a result they are articulate, happy, and confident.
- All staff are committed, bearing the commandment of 'Love one another as I have loved you', and can articulate the impact this has on the school community.
- Staff design opportunities for pupils to demonstrate their religious knowledge and understanding creatively through art and drama.
- The Catholic identity of the school is important to leaders and governors, as a result it permeates through the school day for all members of the community.
- The school mission extends locally, nationally, and internationally with staff and pupils supporting a range of charities to 'make the world a better place for everyone'.

What the school needs to improve

- Give all pupils regular opportunities to respond meaningfully to feedback, to enhance progress and development.
- Implement the new prayer and liturgy policy so that pupils' knowledge of prayer develops in line with their age and stage.
- Help all pupils understand the connection between their acts of good works and the principles of Catholic Social Teaching.

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

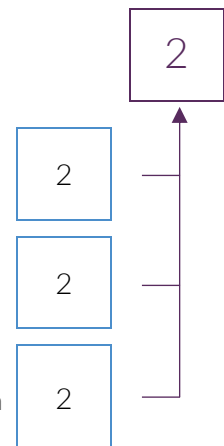
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

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



Pupils understand what it means to be part of the Catholic community of Notre Dame. They recognise that the school is a special place, and they are active participants in the Catholic life and mission of the community, carrying out charitable works for those less fortunate than themselves, locally, Norwich foodbank, nationally Macmillan and internationally, Cafod and Street Child. Pupils recognise the basis of their calling to 'Love one another as I have loved you' and demonstrate this daily, working towards becoming prefects who are mature, caring leaders of the school. Pupils apply for positions to become helpers in various aspects of school life from playground monitors to library, computing, and nursery monitors, who help at breaks and lunchtimes. They are proud ambassadors for their school and recognise the diversity of faith within the community, all bound by the Catholic identity of the school. Pupils' self-portraits in classrooms demonstrate that pupils recognise their value and show respect for themselves. The holistic approach to developing learners is paramount at Notre Dame, as a result pupils are articulate, happy, and confident. All pupils are courteous and welcoming. Pupils look to the lives of the saints as inspiration for acts of kindness, for example, 'St Dunstan says' notices, designed by pupils reminds everyone to hold doors open for one another. These small acts of kindness typify Notre Dame. Catholic Social Teaching principles are evident around the school, through displays and activities and staff are committed to upholding them. Pupils however are unable to make links between the many projects that they lead on and engage in with Catholic Social Teaching principles.

Staff are committed to supporting the mission and charism of the school; one staff member remarks that 'every decision made is done so with the school's Catholic identity in mind.' Staff speak highly of the care and the quality of relationships in the school community. They are

supportive of one another and valued for their contributions to ensure warm relationships permeate the school. The school environment including display, signage and religious artefacts are evident across the school in particular devotion to Mary in line with the charism of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur. Relationship sex health education meets the statutory requirement and is faithful to the teaching of the church.

Governors have a good understanding of the purpose of the school and are proud of the culture and tradition of the Catholic life and mission. They are committed to ensuring that Jesus is at the centre of all decision making and that strengthens governance in the school. They support the leadership of the school by being a visible presence promoting and monitoring the school's ambitious vision. They are role models of Catholic leadership for all staff and parents and protect the Catholic identity of the school through policies and procedures. Staff feel valued by the governing body who ensure that the rights and dignity of all staff members are maintained, by visiting the school on a regular basis and seeking opinions, through surveys and they ensure that induction for new staff is in place. Governors are proud of the achievements of staff and pupils and recognise that Notre Dame is a school where people 'do not walk away, you take a little bit with you.' Leaders involve governors in the self-evaluation cycle to ensure that outcomes are at least good for Catholic life and mission. The vast majority of parents are very supportive of the Catholic ethos of the school with one respondent identifying the school as 'a loving, spiritually supporting and nurturing environment.'

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

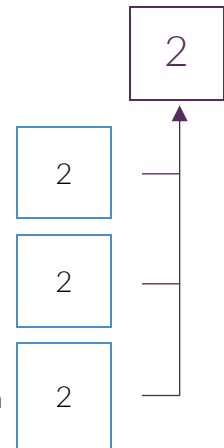
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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



Pupils at Notre Dame enjoy religious education lessons with one comment being, 'I love RE, and I love learning about God.' Pupils have accepted the challenge of religious education lessons planned using the *Religious Education Directory*. Pupils including those with special educational needs and disabilities, achieve well in most classes. In the classes where discussions prompted deeper thought, pupils translated this work into longer more thoughtful pieces of writing. However, some pupils make less progress because of the lack of consistency in approach to religious education. Pupils in the earliest years are enthusiastic and like to share their new knowledge, especially through story, song, and drama. Most pupils' work shows the effort that is made in religious education tasks. They make progress over time with accelerated progress identified in some classes, so that by the time they leave Notre Dame, pupils can confidently apply their learning to everyday life. In classes where pupils self-assess progress, more progress is made because they are challenged within lessons. In turn staff have a clear indication of the confidence and progress of pupils over short periods of time. Where this is used consistently pupils make at least good progress and recognise the value of the religious education lessons, on par with other core subjects. Pupils speak knowledgeably about what they are learning in religious education lessons, often using key vocabulary. Furthermore, they are inquisitive, keen to know more and share their knowledge. They not only answer questions articulately, but they also ask them, demonstrating a deeper engagement.

Most teachers adapt teaching to the age and stage of the pupils in their classes so that all can participate at their own level, on occasion some opportunities are missed for further challenge in some year groups. Support staff are deployed well to ensure that all pupils are supported to access the religious education curriculum. In most lessons, adaptations are made to ensure progress of the learners within lessons and over time. School leaders and staff are fully

committed to ensuring that the delivery of the *Religious Education Directory* challenges pupils to think more deeply and live out Gospel messages. Pupils are provided with opportunities to express their learning in a variety of ways, prayer, song, poetry, letter writing, art, and drama, this engages learners and adds to their enjoyment and enthusiasm for religious education lessons.

Leaders ensure the statutory requirement for 10% curriculum time for religious education lessons so that it is in full parity with other core subjects. The subject lead delivers professional development for staff and so they are gaining confidence to deliver the curriculum. Leaders have not yet engaged with other diocesan schools to share best practice, but plans are in place to do this. Staff appreciate the open-door policy for support and the culture that all questions will be respected and answered. Senior leaders and the subject lead have a clear vision for teaching and learning and are ambitious for the pupils, having identified appropriate areas for further development within self-evaluation processes. They have a good level of subject knowledge to secure the vision, they are supported by staff who are eager to fulfil the requirements. Leaders have identified areas of development in the school and have a programme in place to address over the coming academic year. Governors have conducted questionnaires with pupils which in turn has fed into the self-evaluation and improvement plans for the subject.

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

2

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

Pupils respond well to the prayer and liturgy experience of the school. They enjoy using the newly purchased Catholic bibles, to identify scripture that supports their prayer life and using text from both old and new testaments to support their thinking. They are enthusiastic during school worship and can demonstrate periods of silence, traditional prayer and singing. Several parents commented on their pupils extending the school prayer life to their prayer life at home and sharing. Some pupils take a lead role in the planning and delivery of whole school liturgy which is enjoyed by the whole school community. Pupils can articulate how prayer, as a communication with God, enhances their lives. Their collaboratively written class prayer is important to them; they are meaningful for each class and displayed. Pupils are being given more opportunities to enhance prayer through their lessons and are encouraged to use the focal areas within their classrooms. During daily prayer, pupils have time to reflect on their own experiences, pupils of all faith backgrounds appreciate these times in the school day. The Mini-Vinnies engage with staff to prepare liturgies that are meaningful for all pupils across the school. Their mission 'We want to make the world a better place' is influential across the pupil body. Pupils reflect on their experience of prayer and liturgy, this determines their faith in action, such as the kindness tree, a project designed by the pupils to promote God's love during Advent.

Planning for prayer and liturgy is centred around the liturgical year and all staff are given the opportunity to lead prayer and liturgy appropriately, supported by senior staff for those less confident. The recently developed prayer and liturgy policy provides strategic thought to ensure the purpose of prayer is clear 'giving glory, honouring and thanking God.' Mass is a community celebration in school twice a term and the chaplain uses this opportunity to engage and develop the pupils understanding of Mass, further deepened on Holy Days of Obligation at the St John the Baptist Cathedral. Music for the sung Mass is led by a pupil group *Schola Cantorium* who sing

in a traditional and prayerful manner. Parents are invited by leaders to the Mass, offered at the school and Cathedral, to annual nativity plays and Easter liturgy. These invitations are warmly welcomed, and some parents commented they would like to get even more involved in this aspect of school life. The headteacher and subject leader model good practice for other staff and pupils, their knowledge and understanding of prayer makes a highly positive contribution to the prayer life of the school. There are places for prayer across the school, the prayer garden is used most often in warmer months, focal corners are used by pupils. There are traditional and pupil prayers displayed in classrooms and communal areas.

Leaders and the chaplain ensure that opportunities for prayer are frequent. They are of a high quality whilst maintaining the accessibility for all pupils in the community, including those of other faiths. They ensure that pupils are engaged in and participate as much as possible and this helps pupils to develop a good relationship with God through prayer and liturgy. Evaluation is a feature of prayer and liturgy with leaders and governors keen that pupils will leave Notre Dame to go onto the next stage of education having firm foundation in their spiritual development.

Information about the school

Full name of school	Notre Dame Preparatory School (Norwich) Ltd
School unique reference number (URN)	121239
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	9266114
Full postal address of the school	Notre Dame Preparatory School, 147 Dereham Road, Norwich, NR2 3TA
School phone number	01603625593
Headteacher	Robert Thornton
Chair of Governors/Trustees	Kevin Long
School Website	www.notredameprepschool.co.uk
Trusteeship	Independent
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	N/A
Phase	Primary
Type of school	Catholic Independent School
Admissions policy	Non-selective
Age-range of pupils	2-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	NA
Previous denominational inspection grade	First Catholic School Inspection

The inspection team

Colette Doran-Hannon
Anne-Marie Price

Lead
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