



Catholic Schools Inspectorate inspection report for
Bishop Milner Catholic College

URN: 140126

Carried out on behalf of the Most Rev. Bernard Longley, Archbishop of Birmingham on:

Date: 14-15 December 2023

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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	Fully

Summary of key findings

What the school does well

- College leaders have an explicit, ambitious, and unreservedly Catholic vision for its Catholic life and lived mission.
- Students at Bishop Milner know that they are loved and cared for. There are multiple examples of flourishing pastoral care, which staff, students, and parents appreciate.
- In Religious Education, there is a focus on knowing more and remembering more, which is reinforced through knowledge retrieval and supported by a committed and dedicated teaching team.
- The strategic vision and direction for prayer and liturgy, supported by highly skilled staff, is coming to fruition.

What the school needs to improve:

- Increase knowledge and understanding of the theology underpinning Catholic social teaching so that staff and students can confidently articulate why they undertake certain acts.
- Ensure teaching in religious education meets the needs of individual students, including challenging all to progress and attain relevant outcomes.
- Ensure all students' full, active, and conscious participation in the wide variety of prayer and liturgical experiences.

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:.....

1

Pupil outcomes

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

1

Provision

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

1

Leadership

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

1



Catholic Life and mission are crucial to the life and work of Bishop Milner Catholic College, with a Christ-centred mission statement, 'Inspiring hearts and minds with Christ at the centre of all we say and do', which is actively lived out. Catholic social teaching is evident in the college's work. For example, the stewardship group is focused on cultivating a peace garden and taking responsibility for the overall care of God's creation in college. Pope Francis' *Laudato Si'* inspires them, the basis of students' commitment to Cafod's 'LiveSimply' campaign. There is complete respect and appreciation of difference, most notably through the extensive work and celebrations around Black History Month. Chaplaincy is at the heart of the college's work and is highly valued and appreciated by a growing number of students.

The mission statement inspires work throughout the college, and staff readily participate enthusiastically in all the college offers. There is a lived sense of family at Bishop Milner, where all are valued. Indeed, this is evident in the 'Milner Values' displayed across the college in word and action. The culture of welcome is embedded, and staff are excellent role models, especially in the pastoral care of the most vulnerable. Chaplaincy is central to the provision for Catholic life and mission in its support of staff, who, in turn, translate it to impact students positively. An extensive retreat programme includes opportunities for all students to engage in their spiritual and moral development enthusiastically. The relationships, sex, and health education (RSHE) programme is appropriate and led by the person in charge of Catholic life and mission, thus protecting its identity as proper to the college's Catholic setting. Staff, students, and parents are cared for as God's creations and with dignity and compassion. The Aquinas Centre is a testament to the compassion with which individuals are cared for holistically.

College leaders clearly articulate the Church's educational mission as a core leadership responsibility and successfully translate this into the college's daily life. They actively promote the

archbishop's vision and are at the service to the local Church, supporting the parish through weekly ministries and the associated events and activities. The college has a well-documented 'Journey in Faith', which maps the development of Catholic life and mission and demonstrates clear progression towards securing leaders' vision for the community's Catholic identity. There is a range of opportunities to support parents as the first educators in faith, including an annual rewards celebration as part of a carol service and numerous parental workshops. Preferential option for the poor is at the college's core, with multiple opportunities for providing transport, food, and uniform items to those who need them, and a distinct commitment to raising the attainment of disadvantaged youngsters (RADY) programme. Employee dignity is maintained at a high profile through leaders' extensive training programmes and the personal and pastoral care provided to them. The curriculum is taught through a Catholic lens. The next step, to ensure the theology behind Catholic social teaching is known and understood by all, is a natural progression. Governance is now well structured, and self-evaluation at all levels leads to well-targeted improvements. For example, the review of the mission statement and the incorporation of the 'Milner Values' into the behaviour system originated from staff and student voice exercises and data analysis and trends. Training is embedded, most notably in the regular Catholic life briefing, which is a celebration of the work of staff and students and an opportunity to explore the theology underpinning the college's Catholic life and mission.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade:.....

2

Pupil outcomes

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

2

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

Religious education is focused on students knowing more and remembering more, reinforced through ample opportunities for knowledge retrieval. Consequently, students can do more and have an understanding of their achievement in religious education. Reading is a significant feature of religious education lessons, supporting the accurate use of the vocabulary taught. This enables students to be religiously literate and relate their learning to their lives. Students can work independently when encouraged to do so. Modelling and displaying their work demonstrate their strive for improvement; students are guided in their next steps. Students are engaged in lessons, and there is very little off-task behaviour. Students generally enjoy their religious education. Exercise books demonstrate the care and pride students take in their studies. However, in some books, there are inconsistencies in students' responses to the next step tasks set by their teachers and an over-reliance on worksheet tasks, which limit students' responses at the expense of extended writing. Most students understand their target grades, how they are doing, and what they need to do to improve. Consequently, the majority of students demonstrate at least average attainment.

Teachers are confident in their subject knowledge and are skilled practitioners committed to their vocation. Praise and encouragement are evident in lessons, positive relationships support trust between students and staff, and engagement in learning. Teachers' planning is linked to curriculum expectations. The quality of teachers' questioning is variable. In the best examples, it leads to progression in learning; however, too often, it is disjointed and does not allow students' ideas to be articulated fully, developed, or challenged. Owing to teachers' feedback, both formative and summative, most students have a sense of where and how they need to make progress and are aware of how religious education impacts their moral and spiritual development, in addition to their academic outcomes. Indeed, appropriate opportunities for spiritual reflection have been identified

within learning sequences. Learning takes place in various forms; however, care should be taken not to stifle students' independence in learning.

The subject leader has adapted the curriculum to respond to the requirements of the *Religious Education Directory* and ensure appropriate curriculum provision for all key stages. Significant efforts are in place to increase the uptake of A-Level Religious Studies, alongside an appropriate core religious education provision for all sixth formers. Religious education has parity with other core subjects regarding staffing, resourcing, and status. Staff training within the MAC focuses on subject knowledge and developing teaching and is informed by appropriate educational research. However, the impact of these opportunities is not yet evident in all lessons. The college has taken steps to enable teachers to moderate students' outcomes. However, teachers' judgements are not always secure and work to further support them with this is ongoing. The curriculum has been sequenced to respond to the needs of different learners, although this is not always evident in practice. Self-evaluation does lead to appropriate actions and targets. Governors are acutely aware of the outcomes for religious education and support the measures in place to secure positive outcomes for all. Still, they do not always challenge leaders robustly in this area.

Collective worship

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

Collective worship key judgement grade:.....

1

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

1

Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for collective worship

1

Students generally respond well to opportunities for prayer and liturgy, although participation is not yet full, active, and conscious from all students. Prayer and liturgy take on a variety of formats and include using scripture, symbols, silence, and music. Selected students work well with others to prepare prayer, resulting in worship that is becoming more student-led. Prayer and liturgy permeate the wider life and curriculum of the college and, where appropriate, lead to social action. For example, throughout Advent, students were involved in a variety of prayer opportunities, and this led to the creation of hampers, which were distributed to those in need within the community. Regular support is offered to a food bank, a women's refuge, and other charitable organisations and, indeed, social actions inspired by the college's prayer life. Consequently, students can articulate the ways prayer has led to action.

Prayer is central to college life, and its pattern and rhythm are embedded into daily life; this starts with the praying of the college prayer first thing each morning to prayer, and continues into the 'SAINT' programme and department prayers, which are said every lesson throughout the day. There are inspiring models of exemplary practice amongst the staff, who are highly skilled in helping their colleagues and students alike to lead prayer competently. The 'SAINT' programme, initially created by the senior leader responsible for prayer, is now further developed by the pastoral staff for each year group. This ensures that prayer meets students' needs. Prayer contains elements of gathering, listening, responding, and going forth, guaranteeing consistency of provision throughout the college. Prayer and liturgy are artistic and creative. For example, the choir takes a central role in prayer and liturgy, and sixth form involvement encourages a greater sense of student participation and leadership in Key Stage 5. Prayer and liturgy are both traditional and contemporary, with ample opportunities for adoration, stations of the cross, and the Sacrament of Reconciliation at appropriate times of the liturgical year. Space and time are dedicated to prayer, including appropriate prayer spaces in all rooms and the chapel at the forefront of the college building.

Invitations being extended to families for them to join in with prayer are increasingly becoming the norm at Bishop Milner Catholic College.

The policy on prayer and liturgy has been reviewed and is an appropriate guide for prayer and liturgy. There is an increasing level of students' skilled participation in prayer and liturgy, although this currently sits with the few rather than the majority. The college calendar is shaped around opportunities to celebrate together through prayer and liturgy, including holy days of obligation, the Sacrament of Reconciliation, and the key seasons of the liturgical year. Staff training is inspirational, with all senior leaders engaged in programmes of formation through the multi-academy company (MAC) people strategy, meaning all staff are provided with high-quality and ongoing professional development. This is led by a mixture of appropriately trained leaders and stimulating external speakers. Leaders effectively facilitate their colleagues in their leadership of prayer and liturgy, although this leadership is not yet consistently the highest quality. Governors prioritise prayer and liturgy in terms of budgets, resourcing, and staffing. Most notably, the college has appointed a highly skilled lay chaplain and senior leader responsible for Catholic life and personal development, whose responsibilities include prayer and liturgy. There is a flourishing relationship between the parish priest and parish community, which encourages joint opportunities for prayer between the college and parish. Self-evaluation is robust and effectively leads to ongoing improvement and development.

Information about the school

Full name of school	Bishop Milner Catholic College
School unique reference number (URN)	140126
Full postal address of the school	Burton Road, Dudley. DY13BY
School phone number	01384 889442
Name of head teacher or principal	Richard May (Executive principal) and Siobhan Foster
Chair of governing board	Philip Hancox
School Website	www.bmilner.dudley.sch.uk
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	St John Bosco Catholic Academy
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy
Age-range of pupils	11 to 18
Trustees	Archdiocese of Birmingham
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	June 2017
Previous denominational inspection grade	2

The inspection team

Rachel Waugh	Lead inspector
David Bayliss	Team inspector
Geraldine McCauley	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