



DIOCESAN CANONICAL INSPECTION REPORT

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL, RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AND COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

Blessed Robert Widmerpool Catholic Voluntary Academy

Listowel Crescent, Nottingham, NG11 9BH

School URN:	137425
Inspection Date:	27 November 2019
Inspectors:	Mr Gregory Hughes and Mrs Kate Mann

Overall Effectiveness	Previous Inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This Inspection:	Outstanding	1
Catholic Life:		Outstanding	1
Religious Education:		Outstanding	1
Collective Worship:		Outstanding	1

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

Blessed Robert Widmerpool Catholic Voluntary Academy is an outstanding Catholic school.

- Blessed Robert Widmerpool is an outstanding Catholic school in all respects. Leadership is forward thinking, creative and has a clear vision that all pupils achieve their potential in a safe and nurturing environment. Parents state that, 'teachers always have time for the children and care deeply about the wider family'. Monitoring and evaluation procedures for all areas are well embedded, robust and incisive which leads to continual improvement.
- Teaching and learning of Religious Education at Blessed Robert Widmerpool are outstanding. Lessons are innovative and the school works closely with the diocese ensuring that all initiatives are followed. Teachers know what their pupils need to learn next. Over time, pupils make outstanding progress in excess of diocesan averages at both key stages. The curriculum for Religious Education is skilfully adapted to suit the needs of pupils.
- The Catholic Life of Blessed Robert Widmerpool is outstanding. The school is a Christ-centred, welcoming and inclusive community. The mission statement, 'We walk kindly in the footsteps of Jesus Christ as we live and learn' is clearly in evidence and reflects the school's Catholic ethos. Leaders are passionate about the Church's mission in education.
- Collective Worship is outstanding. Blessed Robert Widmerpool is a deeply prayerful and spiritual community. Worship is central to the life of pupils and the staff within the school. Staff are skilled in encouraging and supporting pupils with this, both in the planning and delivery of their Acts of Worship. All pupils taking part in prayer and religious worship; they are respectful and reverent at all times.

FULL REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

- Blessed Robert Widmerpool is an average primary school situated in Clifton, south west of the city of Nottingham. It is part of the Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Multi-Academy Trust. The school serves the parish of Corpus Christi, Clifton. Most pupils transfer to The Becket Catholic School, which is also part of the same trust.
- Blessed Robert Widmerpool has been accredited as a teaching school and is the lead school in the Nottingham Catholic Teaching School Alliance.
- 89% of pupils on roll are baptised Catholic, 4% are from other Christian denominations and 7% of pupils have no religious affiliation.
- 55% of pupils are from ethnic groups other than White British and the proportion of pupils who enter the school with English as an additional language is well above the national average; the current proportion of pupils in the foundation stage who are at the earliest stage of language acquisition is 48%.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is broadly in line with that seen nationally.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is 9% which is below the national average. This funding relates to pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority.

WHAT DOES THE SCHOOL NEED TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- Catholic Life:
 - Continue to be innovative and supportive of diocesan initiatives. Maintain support for schools within the Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Multi-Academy Trust and the wider diocese.
- Religious Education:
 - Embed the new trust assessment systems in order to maintain the high standards in Religious Education at the end of both key stages.
 - Continue to provide support for other diocesan schools on the use of creative and innovative approaches to the teaching of Religious Education.
- Collective Worship:
 - Maintain the high standards in evidence, ensuring that all pupils continue to be central to the preparation and evaluation of whole-school and class worship.

CATHOLIC LIFE

THE QUALITY OF THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL	1
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school. 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school. 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school. 	1

The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school – outstanding

- Pupils appreciate, value and actively participate in the Catholic Life and mission of the school. The chaplaincy team works together with school chaplains monitoring prayer areas and ensuring that aspects such as ‘The word of the week’ blog is regularly updated.
- Faith ambassadors actively support other pupils ensuring that they feel safe, happy and included in the school environment. Pupils show a deep respect and tolerance for themselves and others.
- Pupils take an active role in the school’s Catholic Life and mission both in their local community – including support for the Nottingham Clifton Food project, Emmanuel House and at a national and global level by supporting charities such as: Building Hope in Bunkpurugu and CAFOD. They demonstrate an excellent understanding of what missionary discipleship means and recognise the importance of supporting vulnerable and less fortunate groups.
- Links to the parish and the diocese, enhance the faith development of all members of the school community. The parish priest is a regular visitor to the school. Pupils regularly prepare readings and participate in liturgies at the church.
- Pupils value the opportunities provided by the school to share their faith at home. Travelling cribs, Advent packs and prayer bears strengthen home school links as well as the school’s own initiatives such as ‘the kindness kit’ which is linked to the ‘Year to Shine’.

The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school – outstanding

- Blessed Robert Widmerpool school prioritises the provision of Catholic Life by investing heavily in the welcoming learning environment. Artefacts and resources are replenished and renewed regularly thereby promoting the school's Catholic character.
- The mission statement 'We walk in the footsteps of Jesus Christ as we live and learn' greets all visitors and stakeholders on entry to the school. The school blog, house meetings and regular newsletters ensure that the ethos of the school is at the centre of day to day life.
- Displays are a strength of the school. Pupils' work is celebrated and places to reflect and pray are evident throughout the school exemplifying the importance of faith. Together with a cross, pictures of the Pope and the Bishop are prominent features in the school entrance.
- Diocesan initiatives such as encounter, discipleship and missionary discipleship are all visible. 'The God who Speaks' has already been introduced and is a clear reminder of listening and responding to the Word of God.
- The school follows the '5R' values which are underpinned by the need to be responsible. It is clear that the school's behaviour policy is adhered to closely. The written policy reflects the core Catholic values of forgiveness and reconciliation. The school tackles and raises awareness of issues around racism and pupils are encouraged to take a lead role in ensuring that they 'walk kindly with each other'.

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school – outstanding

- Blessed Robert Widmerpool is a school with a welcoming learning environment – clearly promoting the school's Catholic character. Leaders across the school are deeply committed to the Church's mission in education and are passionate about developing and sustaining the school's Catholic ethos. The liturgical year is followed closely and is understood by all stakeholders.
- The school has an active and supportive parish priest who is a regular visitor to the school. Pupils are very much encouraged to be part of the parish. Chaplains from the local hub make a valuable contribution to the promotion of the Catholic ethos working closely with pupils and guiding them in liturgy preparation and school monitoring.
- The school is promoted by active and knowledgeable local governors who are keen to ensure the quality of Catholic Life. They are knowledgeable about their role in monitoring and evaluating the Catholic Life of the school. Local governors actively involve themselves in learning walks around the school and are ready to challenge as well as support leaders where necessary.
- Leaders and local governors benefit from high-quality training and effectively monitor the continuous professional development of staff. Staff well-being days and liturgies ensure that prayer and reflection are part of the weekly routine. All are fully committed to the Catholic Life of the school.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

THE QUALITY OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION	1
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- How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education.
- How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education.

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How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education – outstanding

- Pupils at Blessed Robert Widmerpool make outstanding progress in Religious Education. On entry, the vast majority of pupils are Catholic although not necessarily religiously literate. In spite of this, pupils make good progress from the Foundation Stage through to the end of Key Stage 1. The existence of a Foundation Stage 1 (nursery) class has a very positive effect on giving the pupils a strong baseline of understanding ready for primary school.
- Assessment information shows that pupils in all year groups are making at least expected progress from relative starting points. The progress of higher attaining pupils is maintained over time and there are no examples of the progress of this group of pupils slowing through Key Stage 2. Lower attaining pupils demonstrate a positive progress path with at least expected progress being made, if not accelerated progress. At times, pupils with more complex needs demonstrate slower progress but leaders are able to demonstrate medical factors which are a barrier to progress.
- Pupils thoroughly enjoy their lessons in Religious Education. Behaviour for learning is outstanding. They participate with keen interest and are settled and ready to work, showing good listening skills. Pupils listen to each other with respect and are focused when working individually, with partners or in small groups. Pupils are increasingly articulate and workbooks are well presented. 100% of parents surveyed agreed or strongly agreed that their children enjoyed Religious Education.
- The quality of pupils' work in terms of output and coverage is outstanding. Presentation and attention to detail is an expectation that pupils understand and follow with a great sense of pride. There is evidence of extended pieces of writing captured in Religious Education books. Diocesan expectations are met fully.
- Diocesan initiatives such as the use of *driver words*, key lesson words and the use of the big question are evident. Pupils understand fully the symbols of the head, heart and cloud and use them effectively to develop their critical thinking and answers.
- Pupils enjoy learning about other faiths and are respectful of other beliefs. The diocesan prescribed RSE (Relationships and Sex Education) curriculum, 'Journey in Love' is followed, this ensures that teaching is in accordance with the norms of the Catholic Church.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education – outstanding

- The quality of teaching is outstanding. The strong Foundation Stage 1 teaching means that pupils begin primary school with a solid foundation of understanding in Religious Education. Teachers have a sound theological knowledge and are religiously literate. As a result, the knowledge imparted is rich and clear guidance is given to pupils on how to improve their work.
- The *Come and See* programme is used innovatively. It is firmly embedded in the Religious Education and wider curriculum. Interactive white board slides are carefully prepared to assist understanding. A spiritual atmosphere is at the heart of lessons with art, music and drama creating a rich environment for learning. Opportunities for independent learning are well crafted and age appropriate. Differentiated tasks make learning interesting, exciting and appropriate to the needs of all pupils.
- Teachers prepare lessons carefully. There are many examples of supportive resourcing and preparation. Lessons using 'I can statements' and sharing of the learning intention along with the use of *driver words* to improve writing ensure that pupils are fully engaged. Teachers use skillful questioning to draw out quality answers from pupils, which in turn, are captured in writing books.
- Marking is thorough and follows a whole school policy. Constructive feedback is personalised and linked to the *driver words*. Teaching assistants are well deployed and support pupils to access their learning.
- Assessment is used effectively and efficiently. Teachers are clear on what pupils know and do not know. They use this information to plan challenging but carefully sequenced work, which allows pupils to reach end of topic or year end points.

The extent to which leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education – outstanding

- The headteacher and her deputy make a very significant impact on the quality of provision throughout the school day. The headteacher is a respected leader who ensures that all stakeholders are prepared to embed Religious Education firmly at the heart of the school's mission. Monitoring and evaluation are thorough and planned carefully throughout the academic year. Regular scrutiny of work and pupil progress meetings take place each term. Outcomes are discussed in detail and acted upon accordingly.
- The subject leader for Religious Education works closely with the diocese and always attends Religious Education training days. She is keen to quality assure assessed pieces and trial new diocesan initiatives. Already 'The God who Speaks' is becoming embedded ahead of its official launch. Tracking and moderated work have been verified as accurate and illustrate the high quality of provision at Blessed Robert Widmerpool.
- The school has embraced the new trust tracking system and it is now becoming embedded. Through its use, leaders are able to analyse rates of progress, including for groups of pupils and intervention is immediate when any pupil is at risk of falling behind.
- Local governors have regular contact with the headteacher and ensure that there is critical support. They understand assessment information and have participated in diocesan training allowing them to ask the right questions and to challenge leaders effectively. They are well-trained and are up to speed with latest developments. As a result, they are able to challenge leaders and verify both the quality of teaching and learning and the validity of pupil outcomes.

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- The Religious Education curriculum meets pupils' needs and fulfils the requirements of the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales. Leaders have supported staff to embed the *Come and See* scheme of work and this has been developed in an innovative way focusing on the needs and interests of all ability levels of pupils. The curriculum provides opportunities for pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development. Leaders and local governors ensure that the episcopal requirement to provide 10% of curriculum time to Religious Education is followed.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

THE QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP	1
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- How well pupils respond to and participate in the school’s Collective Worship.
- The quality of provision for the Collective Worship.
- How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship.

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How well pupils respond to and participate in the school’s Collective Worship – outstanding

- Pupils are imaginative, creative and resourceful in their planning of liturgy and are diligent in ensuring that it is always of the highest quality. They take the initiative and use the knowledge and skills learnt both within and beyond the classroom as well as from the outstanding examples offered by their teachers and the lay chaplains from the local hub.
- Pupils see prayer as a fundamental part of their lives and their daily experience. Each pupil, following on from an Act of Worship is given time to reflect and document their thoughts in a prayer journal. For the youngest pupils, this was observed as pictures and for the older pupils - heart-felt responses, often in the form of prayer.
- Knowledge of the Church’s liturgical year is clearly understood and celebrated by pupils with displays and focus tables that highlight these times. Staff, pupils, local governors and the parish priest plan together the liturgical calendar for the year ensuring it is comprehensive, inclusive and engaging.
- The experience of living and working in a faithful, praying community has a positive impact on the spiritual and moral development of all pupils, irrespective of ability or faith background. All pupils show a deep respect for those of different faiths demonstrated in their enthusiastic discussions with inspectors in which they imparted a wealth of knowledge and understanding of other faiths, drawing upon experience in lessons and wider opportunities for learning provided by their class teachers.
- Pupils are rightly proud of the extent to which they contribute to the prayerful community where they live and work. They are intensely aware of the effect this has on their lives and those around them. As such, Collective Worship has an outstanding impact on the spiritual and moral development of each pupil.
- The liturgy team is held in high esteem by peers with many younger pupils commenting that they aspire to the role ‘when they are in Year 6’. Leaders have recently developed a Year 2 liturgy team to address this desire and further develop pupil-led worship across the school. Pupil chaplains feel honoured to represent the school in many whole-school and trust wide events, most recently the Our Lady of Lourdes pupil Mass. Pupils would now like further opportunities for liturgies, led by pupils, to be experienced by a wider variety of classes.

The quality of provision for Collective Worship – outstanding

- Collective Worship is central to the life of Blessed Robert Widmerpool and is an intrinsic part of every school day for staff and pupils.
- The quality of provision is outstanding. It is well planned and given high priority in the development of the school as a prayerful Catholic community. Resources are used effectively to create meaningful and thought-provoking liturgies that are appreciated and treasured by the whole community. The themes chosen by staff and pupils demonstrate a deep understanding of the Church's mission and response to the initiatives given by the Bishop.
- Staff equip pupils well so that they are able to take ownership of the focus areas for prayer; these are regularly updated with different pictures, icons, symbols, cloths and artefacts. The faith ambassadors ensure these areas are well looked after and transitional. They ensure that every item, artefact, scripture or image has a role and purpose.
- The views of parents, parishioners and local governors are sought on a regular basis and attendance at Masses and Acts of Worship has increased. Evaluations and responses to their experience of Collective Worship are extremely supportive and positive commenting that 'pupils are peaceful and respectful' and that the school 'has created a warm, family feel where you feel welcomed at liturgies'. Parents acknowledge the outstanding impact that this aspect of the school has on their child's life.

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship – outstanding

- Blessed Robert Widmerpool is a deeply prayerful and spiritual community; pupils' response to and participation in Collective Worship is outstanding as a result of school leaders' deep commitment to this aspect of school life.
- The headteacher and senior leadership team have the knowledge and understanding of what constitutes a high-quality liturgical experience. They offer other staff and pupils outstanding models of good practice. Diocesan personnel and resources are used very effectively to enhance the provision and develop the liturgical skills of the staff. Often, Blessed Robert Widmerpool is used as a beacon for other schools, sharing their strong practice both trust and diocese wide.
- Monitoring and evaluation procedures for Collective Worship are robust. Views of stakeholders are sought regularly and are acted upon. They are quick to respond to findings in a systematic and thorough way, leading to a continued development of outstanding practice.
- The headteacher, along with the Religious Education subject leader, value the work of the parish priest in the school; there is a close and effective working relationship. He recognises the talents and gifts the leaders bring to enrich the prayer and liturgical life of the school family. His support and work linking the school and the parish, enriches pupils' experience of what it means to be a member of a worshipping community.

SCHOOL DETAILS

School Name	Blessed Robert Widmerpool Catholic Voluntary Academy
Unique Reference Number	137425
CMAT	Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Multi-Academy Trust

The inspection of this school was carried out on behalf of the Bishop of Nottingham under Canon 806 of Canon Law in accordance with the *Evaluation Schedule* (September 2018) for diocesan canonical inspections in the Diocese of Nottingham. The inspection reviews and evaluates how effective the school is in providing Catholic education. The process begins with the school's own self-evaluation and the inspection schedule is in line with the criteria set by the National Board of Religious Inspectors and Advisers (NBRIA).

During the inspection, the inspectors observed 7 Religious Education lessons, 1 whole-school and 1 class Act of Collective Worship.

Meetings were held with the headteacher, the subject leader for Religious Education, the Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Academy Trust Director of Performance and Standards, the lay chaplain, parish priest and governors. Discussions were also held with pupils and parents.

The inspectors scrutinised a range of documents including reports of the local governing body, action plans, the school development plan, monitoring forms, assessment information and parental response forms. Inspectors also examined the work in pupils' Religious Education books.

Chair of Governors:	Mrs Catherine Hayward
Headteacher:	Mrs Luisa Maylard-Mason
Date of Previous School Inspection:	15 March 2015
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WHAT INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS MEAN

Within the report, the following grades are used:

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Requires Improvement
Grade 4	Inadequate

In the context of the whole school, the overall effectiveness grades have the following meaning:

Grade 1	Outstanding	The school is a highly effective Catholic school. Pupils' needs are exceptionally well met.
Grade 2	Good	The school is an effective Catholic school. Pupils' needs are met well.
Grade 3	Requires Improvement	The school is not yet a good Catholic school, it is not inadequate however, and there are aspects that require improvement. There will be a monitoring visit within the next 18 months and the school will be re-inspected within 3 years.
Grade 4	Inadequate	There are features in need of urgent and immediate attention. The school is not meeting the basic minimum requirement for adequacy as a Catholic school. The school will receive an annual monitoring visit and will be re-inspected within 3 years.