



St Bernadette's Roman Catholic Primary School

Live the Gospel and when necessary use words

Our mission as a Roman Catholic primary school is to provide a catholic education that puts the word of God at the centre of our school. Our purpose is the happiness of all of our community through the pursuit of school-wide excellence; with success measured on our ability to sustain and enhance our position as a thriving example of Christ-centred education.

Catholic Life Questionnaire January 2019

Staff responses

1. St. Bernadette's R.C. Primary School's vision statement, 'Live the Gospel and when necessary use words', is central to the life of the school. **100% agree**

- *It is the golden thread that binds the Catholic life of the school together*
- *It is reinforced and promoted daily throughout school; through our morning prayer in our classes, but also very much through liturgies and assemblies. Using Sunday's Gospel in our Monday morning liturgies gives meaning to the vision statement and provides children with the ability to link the Gospel they have heard with real life situations and their own behaviour. It also helps them recognise it in others. This has been noticed even with the younger children who are very proud when their actions and choices have been linked to living out the Gospel's message. This is reflected in the Jelly Bean awards that are given out at the end of the week.*
- *Our vision of living our lives by Gospel values are integral to our whole curriculum and are used to develop the whole person holistically. The children are all aware of our vision and it is referred to regularly by staff and children alike*
- *Our weekly piece of scripture determines the focus of our Jelly Bean Awards that are presented during the Celebration Assembly. The children, as well as staff are watching out for those of us who are living in the image of Jesus by being living examples of the scripture we have listened to during our Whole School Liturgy.*
- *The school works together to help others and the wider community understand and try to live out the vision statement.*

- *Jelly beans promote and recognise living the Gospel values. The staff set a fantastic example and the children are fabulous at recognising the Gospel values in others.*
- *The vision statement permeates every aspect of school life. Children and staff have a deep understanding of the vision statement. They are able to articulate times when they witness those values implicit in the vision statement being lived out by others as well as when they themselves live out those values. The vision of the school has the highest priority in the weekly whole school liturgy and it is reflected upon at the end of the week in the Celebration Assembly. Children and staff are actively encouraged to bear witness to times they have seen the vision statement of the school being lived out in St. Bernadette's unique and inspirational Jelly Bean awards. The culture of the school is entirely steeped in its vision; the spiritual and academic principles of the school is driven by the vision; the identity of St. Bernadette's is an absolute reflection of the vision.*

2. The Catholic Life of the school, underpinned by the Values Curriculum, promotes relationships between staff. **100% agree**

- *I see lots of unsung examples of kindness and generosity within school*
- *The way staff pull together to bring about events and to support each other-whether it is in creating powerful displays or planning together, to putting on performances, to promoting initiatives etc.*
- *All staff participate fully in Liturgies and are always eager to provide experiences of the highest calibre.*
- *The shared prayer before staff briefings helps bind everyone together.*
- *The school has a very warm, supportive and caring atmosphere in which staff are always encouraged to be reflective of our own practice and behaviour. For example, creative prayer sessions during staff meetings and training days have been fantastic not only in providing me with ideas to take back to my own class, but in allowing me to be more mindful and reflective of my own role in school. I feel that these sessions are a lovely way of bringing the team together.*
- *Our vision is the starting point for all policies including our code of conduct and as such staff are encouraged to Live the Gospel. Whenever a staff issue is managed there are opportunities to reflect on whether actions/attitudes are giving consideration to our vision and Gospel values.*
- *Our evolving Values Curriculum has developed relationships between staff as we are now working together to support each other delivering a curriculum that shapes our students as moral beings who care and respect for one another. We continuously work across our Phases to share good practice and reflect on those aspects of the curriculum*

that have been a success. A good example of this is when our Teaching Assistants worked together to create Creative Prayer Stations during Lent last year. Not only did this support our teaching, but it also gave staff members the opportunity to share in the serenity of the atmosphere created.

- *The values curriculum allows us to look in-depth at each Gospel value and look for the value being lived out within school and the wider community.*
- *Staff plan together and offer inspiration to one another about how they can bring the values curriculum to life. Their innovative and creative ideas are a model for HOW the children can do more to live like Jesus.*
- *The Catholic Life of the school underpinned by the Values Curriculum is the vehicle on which the spiritual and academic principles of the school is driven. It bonds staff together as each staff member is wholly committed to it. Staff have a shared understanding of the direction of the school and are actively encouraged to contribute to that direction. There is an atmosphere of pride in that direction from every adult across the school. Staff openly talk about the uniqueness of their workplace and their joy in coming to work.*

3. I feel that my contribution to the Catholic Life of the school is listened to and valued.

100% agree

- *Having held many different positions in school, I can honestly say I feel equally valued in all the roles I have held at St. Bernadette's. Though my level and style of contribution have changed over the years, I feel grateful that the work I do is always acknowledged.*
- *Whenever I have made suggestions for improvements I have been afforded time to explain/explore my suggestions. I have been involved in creating prayer stations and have led creative prayer and have received appropriate praise, recognition and feedback.*
- *We are all given the opportunity to discuss new initiatives and share our opinions about how it may evolve.*
- *Suggestions about creative prayer, liturgies and Songs of Worship are listened to and integrated where possible.*
- *There are many opportunities where I can contribute to the Catholic Life of the school. The leadership team actively promotes an open door policy and are always happy to listen to my views.*
- *Making our school the best place it can be is valued and encouraged always.*
- *Everyone's opinion is listened to.*
- *Everyone's point of view is listened to and respected.*

4. St. Bernadette's has a strong commitment to social justice. **100% agree**

- *The Values Curriculum with its themes of Hope, Justice, Forgiveness, Compassion, Courage and Respect has led the children to learn about the lives of immigrants, the homeless and those less fortunate than themselves.*
- *Our Mini-Vinnies are a great example of how our children engage in actions for social justice. They arrange collections for food banks, raise money for a variety of charities. Our PTA collect school uniforms and wash and iron them to recycle amongst our community.*
- *I feel that through our Values curriculum, the school's work with the community and topics that are taught in the wider curriculum, social justice is given high priority. Both staff and children are encouraged to consider the lives of others and the impact of our own behaviour on others and the world around us. Our youngest children are encouraged to think about concepts such as 'fairness' and the ways in which our choices and actions can affect others both positively and negatively.*
- *We ensure that opportunities are available to all. Requests for monetary contributions for trips are kept to an absolute minimum utilising PTA funds. Participation in charity events are managed carefully to ensure that there is no pressure to contribute/partake. Children are taught with sensitivity about poverty, refugees, discrimination.*
- *The concept of social justice is not only explored in our curriculum, but it is also evident by the way in which we treat each other in school on a daily basis.*
- *Through the values curriculum, the children are able to explore the implications of their actions and the actions of others, question fairness and articulate concerns regarding social justice. The children have worked with refugees, charities and the wider community.*
- *The unique Values Curriculum promotes, on a daily basis, a commitment to social justice. The authentic outcome, which celebrates half termly or latterly termly Gospel values, strives to benefit those who are in need. Children display confidence in seeking out opportunities to re-balance financial or social inequalities. They are confident that the school will do its utmost to support them and can often be seen knocking on the headteacher's door with an idea!*
- *We are always looking for the ways to make our school & community a fairer place. The children and our Junior Leadership team are encouraged to come up with ideas how to support the community. Children take part in the harvest festival and support the walking with project as well as various charities across the school year.*

5. St. Bernadette's takes all opportunities to engage with the parish. **100% agree**

- *St Bernadette's has always tried to make links with the parish. We have a large number of children each year celebrating the early sacraments of Reconciliation and The Eucharist. We hold our KS2 Christmas events in church. Children go down to Church to attend Mass sometimes. Parishioners are invited to join in events at school - eg Poetry Recital, Stations of the Cross, Lights of love service.*
- *During my time so far at St. Bernadette's, it has been lovely to see members of the Parish community come into school including Father John, who has led numerous Masses and Sister Sheila who has led staff training. Father John is very respected by the children and recognised as one of the important members of our school community, as well as by the staff. The children have particularly enjoyed seeing him when visiting church for Mass and when learning about Baptism in R.E. Invitations are made to the parish community to our masses, nativities, assemblies, creative prayer sessions.*
- *Members of the Parish are invited to events hosted by the school. For example, last year our Reception children invited Parishioners to listen to them sing carols. This year, we are hosting a Poetry Recital for the Parish. In addition to this, our school Newsletter is shared with the Parish.*
- *Teachers have utilised the expertise of Father John when both planning and delivering the Come and See Curriculum.*
- *Parish workers have been into school to talk about their role.*
- *Parents and parish members are regularly invited to share in liturgies and creative prayer stations. This affords them the opportunity to be exposed to the different opportunities for prayer that our children are exposed to and how integral this is to the life of the school.*
- *The school has made a significant effort to engage with the parish community. The parish community have been particularly vocal in their support of those relationships. This has been seen in visits to church for Mass; invites to school fairs; volunteers in Open the Book project; prayers for the sick to name but a few!*

6. St. Bernadette's has strong links with the wider community. **100% agree**

- *I feel that St. Bernadette's has a special relationship with families (and not just parents). In my experience, all staff are extremely welcoming and caring towards family members and always make time to chat, and help whenever they can. In addition to this, I feel that St. Bernadette's has good links with other professionals and people from the community who come into school including Reverend Emma, and librarians from the local library*

etc. I think that this particularly enriches the children's spiritual, emotional and moral development. Examples of this are the school's recent 'hope' project which extended into the community, work with the charity 'Walking With', work by the Mini Vinnies, and our school counsellors who come in weekly to work with children.

- *We take advantage of every opportunity to be involved in events with others in our community, we have sung carols to the elderly, we have engaged with volunteers in our local library, we offer harvest bags to those in many communities, we provide a base for a local Guides group to meet, we provide opportunities for St Thomas More students to further develop their skills in our school, eg Girls Active and our caretaker raised money to buy a defibrillator for use in our neighbouring area.*
- *Our projects relating to our Gospel values are shared with the wider community. This includes everything from our joy advent calendar, delivering prayer cards or flowers as random acts of kindness to our hope project, that reached past the boundaries of our country!*
- *There are excellent links with the wider community. Various local, national and global charities have benefited from those links. The authentic outcome of the Values Curriculum seeks to reach out to the wider community. This can be seen by spreading hope through the Hope project in the form of prayers and bracelets or Joy in sharing flowers to passing members of Wallsend community.*
- *We join with neighbouring Special school for Nativity performances and welcome children from the school to spend time with us during lunchtime and playtimes, visiting lessons and work experience.*

7. Catholic life is well led at St. Bernadette's. 100% agree

- *Catholic Life is central to the school and it's leadership*
- *The Catholic Life of St Bernadette's is evident in everything that happens at St. Bernadette's. The Head Teacher, Deputy HT, Assistant HT and SLT always go the extra mile to ensure that the school community experiences the very highest quality of worship and learning.*
- *Leaders are fantastic role models for good practice, especially with regard to promoting the Catholic life of the school. Prayer sessions and time to reflect are something that I really value. I feel that the Catholic ethos of the school is promoted very well by leaders-staff are encouraged to live out the school's vision, and also be creative in inspiring the children to do so too.*
- *Mrs Fallon has transformed the catholic life of the school from knowing about Gospel values to living them. Mrs Fallon and Mrs Milner very effectively facilitate liturgy*

preparation, prayer through song and acts of worship with a great focus on allowing the children to lead. Miss Dempsey encourages and demonstrates creative prayer to staff to enable them to develop it further in their practice.

- *Catholic life is led by approachable members of staff, who are the model of best practice and lead by example. Very supportive and always available to give guidance, share ideas and discuss any concerns or problems I may have.*
- *The liturgies and opportunity to gather and pray are always well-planned into our week and well-lead. High standards of behaviour are always promoted.*
- *Catholic Life is very well led by an inspirational leadership team who seek to engage all by their personal commitment, conduct and energy. The vibrant liturgies with deeply embedded messages of the importance of discipleship from all, acts as a pivot from which the school turns. Leaders have a strategic vision for the development of Catholic life which in turn inspires and drives staff to live as disciples of Christ. Leaders consistently model a welcoming, inclusive culture which has had a deep impact on staff.*
- *The SLT regularly feedback and provide training and up to date ideas and initiatives about what Catholic life involves, listening to ideas from staff.*
- *Senior leadership team lead by example.*

8. Governors play an effective role in the Catholic Life of St. Bernadette's. 100% agree

- *We have a vibrant and supportive group of governors at St. Bernadette's who take their roles very seriously.*
- *Mrs Mullen regularly attends school and takes part in liturgies, celebration assemblies and always spends time talking with staff and pupils.*
- *Governors are supportive of initiatives that support the Catholic life of the school. SLT regularly meet with them to discuss the way in which our school can continue to develop it's Catholic life.*
- *Governors visit liturgies and regularly attend school so that they can experience what our children do.*
- *Governors have proven themselves to be extremely committed to the development of the school as a Christ-centred embodiment of education. They are highly supportive of school life and are a recognised presence in school.*

9. St. Bernadette's successfully meets the differing needs of individual pupils and families.

100% agree

- *We are always striving to meet the needs of our differing families*
- *Staff at St Bernadette's bend over backwards to ensure each and every pupil gets whatever they need. Eg Next Step Counselling, Rainbows, THRIVE*
- *Our SENCO ensures that all agencies are involved whenever there is need.*
- *St. Bernadette's has a warm, caring and supportive atmosphere which extends to welcoming and supporting families. I feel that the children and families are at the heart of everything at St. Bernadette's. I believe that staff try their best to be sensitive and attentive to the needs of every family and their children, and to develop strong relationships with them.*
- *There is definitely not a one size fits all attitude at St Bernadette's. Barriers to learning are identified and support and intervention provided appropriately. Every child and staff member are treated as individuals. Every child/family/staff member is valued with the smallest of achievements recognised and celebrated.*
- *Our school offers varying degrees of support and care for the families in our school.*
- *Each member of staff and each child will go over and above what is necessary to do what they can to help. Staff quickly share any concerns with school leaders so that action can be taken if required and teachers have an 'open door' policy to address issues with families as and when they arise.*
- *This is particularly seen in the needs of some of our most vulnerable pupils and families. Every effort humanly possible is given to support those individuals when maintaining their dignity and respect.*
- *We are an inclusive school and every child matters. There are many initiatives across school to help support children and families.*

What are you proud of, that you think we do particularly well, in promoting the Catholic life of our school?

- *The common ethos of the school and how we move forward together*
- *Our Vision Statement is alive and in action throughout the life of our school-it is not just written on the school letterhead. Everyone in our school community works together for the good of others, which makes me proud. I am proud and privileged to be a part of such a vibrant Catholic Community.*
- *Celebrating children's achievements, including those linked to living out Gospel values.*
- *Our values curriculum, Living the Gospel, Jelly Beans and helping the children link scripture to our values.*

- *I am particularly proud of the way in which our students embrace the Catholic life of our school. Spontaneous prayer during our liturgies is particularly beautiful and heart-warming. Pupils conduct during acts of Collective Worship is respectful, and their enthusiasm going forth from a liturgy is outstanding. Similarly, the way in which they can quote scripture and attempt to live by its words is amazing.*
- *The school has a unique feeling as you enter, the environment explains that we are a catholic school and the way pupils understand our vision statement is so evident when out at festivals with other schools. The kindness and respect they show towards their peers and members of other schools is something to be very proud of.*
- *I am extremely proud of the fact that I travel to school every day to participate in a vision of education that is truly inspirational and that I am part of it. Lucky me!*
- *All children and staff have a voice and everyone is heard. We are all part of the school family and what we do matters. This makes school catholic life important and the beliefs of the catholic faith are embedded as well as those of other faiths.*
- *We care about the well-being of each other and work in a friendly loving environment.*
- *As a school we put the Gospel values at the centre of our lives and educational needs. Children and parents have an active voice within school to ensure their children's individual needs are met. Our school community strives to make links with the parish and our charitable work within the community is a golden thread which links to our Gospel values.*

How could the Catholic life of our school be further improved?

- *I believe we could build on our links with the parish community. We could offer to share skills with them and in turn take advantage of skills our parishioners have.*
- *I would struggle to think of a way in which we could improve the Catholic life of our school. In terms of moving forward we could invite parents to plan and deliver liturgies with our children.*
- *I can't think of anything better!*
- *It would be lovely to see more opportunities to visit our church although I realise this is not always possible.*
- *As leaders in the school are wholly committed to hearing the views of others there is no single burning issue that I feel the need to mention. I take advantage of the culture that exists in school; when I feel more can be done, I simply knock on Mrs Fallon's door and have a conversation.*