



St Alban's RC Primary School

Westbourne Avenue, Walker, Newcastle Upon Tyne, NE6 4HQ

School Unique Reference Number: **108515**

Inspection dates: 21 – 22 May 2018
Lead inspector: Lisa Stokoe

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Catholic Life:		Outstanding	1
Collective Worship:		Good	2
Religious Education:		Good	2

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

St Alban's RC Primary School is a good Catholic school because:

- St Alban's is a warm and welcoming school where the mission and ethos of Catholic education is at the centre of this faith community.
- The Catholic Life of the school is outstanding because the well-being and personal development of each pupil is paramount and the staff and governors are united in implementing this.
- The quality of Collective Worship is good. Pupils respond and participate well in the Collective Worship offered. Leaders and managers are excellent role models and constantly seek ways to develop the spiritual life of the school further.
- Religious Education in the school is good. From low starting points pupils reach levels in line with the diocesan average by the end of key stage two.

It is not yet outstanding because:

- All pupils are not yet given sufficient opportunity to plan and lead Collective Worship independently.
- The school needs to further embed staff expertise and confidence in teaching Religious Education.
- Close any gaps so pupil groups progress at the expected rates.
- Further develop self and peer assessment with pupils.

FULL REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

- St Alban's is an average sized primary school serving the parish of St Anthony of Padua.
- There are approximately 77% of baptised Catholic pupils in the school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium is above average.
- The proportion of pupils with disabilities and those with special educational needs is 6% and is below national averages.
- The school extends its services by providing both a breakfast club and after school wrap around care.

WHAT DOES THE SCHOOL NEED TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- Develop the role of the new link governors through training, allowing them to monitor and evaluate the Catholic Life, Collective Worship and Religious Education of the school.
- Further develop Collective Worship by:
 - Embedding the good practice already used consistently throughout the school
 - Building on the flourishing house group system using older pupils as role models to aid all pupils, including the very youngest, in their spiritual development.
- Raise standards in Religious Education by:
 - increasing the proportion of outstanding teaching in Religious Education by continuing to develop staff confidence and expertise.
 - ensuring all pupils make good or better progress, including those with special educational needs and those known to be entitled to free school meals.
 - embedding self-assessment and peer assessment procedures to ensure pupils understand how they can improve their work.

CATHOLIC LIFE

THE QUALITY OF THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

1

- The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school.
- The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school.
- How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school.

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

- The school's mission statement, recently renewed by pupils, staff and governors is intrinsic to the everyday life of the school. All pupils understand and highly value the mission/motto which has been made extremely visible around the school and therefore accessible to all.
- Pupils are very responsive to the opportunities they are given to support their personal development and, as a result, they are also happy and secure in their emotional and spiritual development. The importance of this is spoken about by pupils who say their school is friendly and safe. 'It's safe here – safer than any other place,' and that 'the statements to live by help us to live in better ways'.
- The Mini Vinnie group embrace their responsibilities with enthusiasm and speak with pride about their recent fundraising efforts for CAFOD, the Samaritans' Purse shoebox appeal and also future plans deciding which charities to support.
- Behaviour management is very effective: pupils are polite and demonstrate good emotional awareness through their treatment of others. Behaviour policies such as, 'It's Good to be Green', are rooted in Gospel values and the teaching of the Catholic church.
- Pupils have a good understanding of key liturgical celebrations throughout the year and also have involvement with parish and diocesan activities and celebrations such as the year six diocesan summer festival.

The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school is outstanding.

- The mission statement and motto, 'enjoying and excelling in the presence of God' is central to the life of the school. This is lived out in the school community and is prominently displayed throughout the school.
- The learning environment clearly reflects the Catholic identity. The wide range of displays and focal points, such as the 'Year of Mary' display in the main school corridor, remind pupils of the school's mission and the focus for current themes.
- There is a real commitment to care for all pupils, in both policy and practice, and the most vulnerable are supported through a variety of effective nurturing programmes including the employment of a parent support advisor (PSA). Pastoral support such as the trusted adult system are used to complement diocesan resources. 'Statements to live by' (Gospel values) and 'Journey in Love' (relationships and sex education programme), are all used effectively

to promote Catholic teaching and principles.

How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school is outstanding.

- The headteacher and Religious Education coordinator are highly visible sources of inspiration for all. The headteacher is fully involved in all aspects of school life and has a clear understanding of Catholic education and of the role of the Catholic school. He has embedded this so that it is immediately recognisable to pupils, staff, parents and governors who, in turn, support it wholeheartedly.
- School self-evaluation is rigorous and gathered from a range of sources. It identifies areas for future development and is directly linked to the school development plan.
- Governors know the school well, they are knowledgeable, well informed and provide support as well as challenge. Three governors are currently taking over the role as link governor in this area and their commitment and enthusiasm will be a great addition to the school.
- The outstanding leadership at St Alban's, and the surrounding team, ensures that all pupils are extremely well cared for and nurtured in a loving, safe and supportive environment.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

THE QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

2

- How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship.
- The quality of provision for Collective Worship.
- How well leaders and managers 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 is good.

- St Alban's is a prayerful community where various forms of worship are part of the school's daily life. There is a calm ethos which pervades the school and is reflected in both pupils' behaviour and their treatment of others.
- Pupils act reverently and show respect when participating in acts of worship. They listen well, reflecting in silence and joining in community prayers with confidence and are happy to take part in Collective Worship, thus contributing positively to their spiritual and moral development. As one pupil said, 'It makes me feel like Jesus is always with me even when I'm not praying'.
- Pupils independently lead worship with increasing confidence and enthusiasm, although this is not fully embedded across the school.
- Pupils have a good understanding of religious seasons and festivals and the implication this has for Collective Worship. The 'Lenten Stations,' which were celebrated using the new house group system during Lent this year, made a real impact upon pupils, staff and parents alike. This was commented upon as being, 'a great way to highlight the important events of Holy Week'.

The quality of provision for Collective Worship is good.

- There is a clear policy for Collective Worship and the school uses a good range of strategies to ensure it is both regular and inclusive. Praying together is part of the daily experience for all pupils and staff. All school members are familiar with, and use, the school prayer written by the late and much loved parish priest.
- The prayer room at St Alban's is often used by pupils independently and allows them a calm, quiet space for prayers and thoughts for others as well as a peaceful place for themselves. Pupils were seen to take this opportunity during lunchtimes, both individually and in pairs. The worry boxes in the classrooms are also appreciated and used regularly by pupils: 'In my class we have a box where you can put your worries so you don't have to say them out loud'.
- Focal points are evident throughout the school and provide encouragement for independent reflection and prayer. Resources for Collective Worship have also been improved throughout the school and reflect careful, well thought out choices.

- Staff ensure that Collective Worship is carefully planned and resourced to reflect the liturgical year. Families are becoming more involved in the pupils' religious development through the use of the travelling crib during Advent and the regular invitation to Monday morning prayer.

How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship is outstanding.

- The senior leadership team have a thorough liturgical understanding and deliver high quality Collective Worship as effective role models, for example the headteacher washing pupils' feet during a Lenten liturgy.
- There is a high percentage of staff who have completed, or are currently completing, the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies (CCRS) and two members of the leadership team have been given the opportunity to attend an upcoming retreat at Ampleforth Priory.
- All staff have recently completed diocesan training on developing the prayer life of the school and a staff twilight session led by the new parish priest on nurturing spirituality. These have been well received by all staff members and are in the early stages of being implemented and embedded within the whole school community.
- The leadership team has sought the views of pupils, staff, parents and carers regarding the quality and significance of Collective Worship within the school and have acted upon these findings appropriately.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

THE QUALITY OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

2

- How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education.
- The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education.
- How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education.

2

2

2

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education is good.

- Pupils enjoy Religious Education lessons: they have positive attitudes to learning, display interest and enthusiasm and want to do their best. Pupils are able to talk with some confidence about their learning in Religious Education.
- Behaviour for learning is good, pupils are focused and disruptions to lessons are unusual. Pupils value and appreciate the support they receive from their teachers.
- Pupils start school with knowledge and skills typically below those expected for their age. They generally make good progress in their learning as they journey through school. There are slight variations in the attainment and progress of pupils with special educational needs and those who are known to be entitled to free school meals. Leaders are aware of this and are addressing it within the school development plan.
- Through evidence seen in books and conversation, pupils are able to demonstrate effective use of prior knowledge when making links between religious ideas and using scriptural references accurately.
- Pupils identified as having special educational needs are well supported by highly skilled teaching assistants who have also recently attended diocesan training aimed at supporting pupils within Religious Education lessons.
- Current tracking for 2018 shows that the standards of attainment of most pupils in each year group are now in line with diocesan averages and, where this is not the case, the difference is diminishing.

The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education is good.

- The teaching in the school is good overall. As a result pupils generally make good progress, both in lessons and over time, as evidenced by their books. In the lessons observed during the inspection teachers demonstrated good subject knowledge using a variety of teaching strategies. Support staff are used well throughout the school to both support and extend pupils of different abilities.
- Teachers have high expectations and all have enthusiasm and interest in the subject, seeing it as a core subject within the school.
- Achievement and effort of pupils are often celebrated in a variety of ways within the school community, including the weekly awards assembly and golden book.

- Where marking and feedback are rigorous, pupils are aware of what they have done well and what they need to do to improve. The consistency of this approach needs to be embedded across the school.
- There is insufficient evidence of the use of self-assessment as a means of developing pupils understanding of what they need to do to improve. The school has identified this need for future action.
- The school has attended all diocesan moderation sessions and also is part of a triangulation system for school moderation with three other Newcastle Catholic schools. This has also aided in-house moderation and training with all staff.

How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education is good.

- As a result of clear leadership, Religious Education has a high profile in the life of the school. Governors are regular visitors to the school and are actively involved in the school and parish community. They have a growing understanding of the school's performance in Religious Education and are becoming more involved in monitoring and evaluation activities. They are supportive of leaders and staff, but are also developing confidence in their challenge and questions.
- The extremely conscientious Religious Education coordinator is committed to ensuring that pupils achieve the very best they can. She has a clear view of strategies to support improvements in teaching and keeps all staff well informed as to current developments in Religious Education.
- The Religious Education curriculum is rich and varied providing a range of interesting activities enabling all pupils to make good progress. The Religious Education curriculum meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference.
- St Alban's works closely with other primary schools to moderate standards and share good practice. Good links are forged with other agencies and the wider community, allowing pupils to explore and extend their understanding of the diversity of their own school and surrounding area.
- Diocesan guidelines for Sacramental preparation are now followed enthusiastically by all. The parish priest, along with other school and parish members, work very effectively with pupils, parents and staff.

SUMMARY OF INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

HOW EFFECTIVE THE SCHOOL IS IN PROVIDING CATHOLIC EDUCATION:**2****CATHOLIC LIFE:****1**

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

1

The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school.

1

How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school.

1

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP:**2**

How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship.

2

The quality of provision for Collective Worship.

2

How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship.

1

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION:**2**

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education.

2

The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education.

2

How well leaders and managers monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education.

2

SCHOOL DETAILS

School name	St Alban's RC Primary School
Unique reference number	108515
Local authority	Newcastle
This Inspection Report is produced for the Rt. Reverend Séamus Cunningham the Bishop of Hexham and Newcastle Diocese under canon 806 of Canon Law. For voluntary aided schools it also fulfils the responsibility the Governing Body has to inspect the school under s48 of the Education Act 2005.	
Chair of governors	Ms Helen Woods-Walters
Head teacher	Mr Martin Smith
Date of previous school inspection	November 2012
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