

**DENOMINATIONAL INSPECTION  
REPORT (Section 48)**

**on**

**THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE  
SCHOOL AND RELIGIOUS  
EDUCATION**

**School:** St Alban's RC Primary School

**Address:** Westbourne Avenue  
Walker  
Newcastle upon Tyne  
NE6 4HQ

**Telephone Number:** 0191 2625552

**Email address:**

**School URN:** 108515

**Headteacher:** Mr M Donnelly

**Chair of Governors:** Fr M Conaty

**Lead Inspector:** Mrs A Boyle

**Team Inspector:**

**Date of Inspection** 20 - 21 November 2012

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Alban's is an average sized primary school serving the Newcastle upon Tyne east end wards of Walker and Walkerdene, which are in the bottom 10% of wards as measured by the index of deprivation. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium is higher than the national average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is well below average. The number of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and the number of pupils who speak English as an additional language is average. The school extends its services by providing a breakfast club and offers a number of learning opportunities for families.

### Pupil Catchment

Number of pupils on roll:	232
Planned Admission Number of Pupils:	30
Percentage of pupils baptised RC:	71%
Percentage of pupils from other Christian denominations:	21%
Percentage of pupils from other World Faiths:	2%
Percentage of pupils with no religious affiliation:	6%
Percentage of pupils from ethnic groups:	16%
Percentage of pupils with special needs:	11%

### Staffing

Full time teachers:	10
Part time teachers:	2
Percentage of Catholic teachers:	90%
Percentage of teachers with CCRS:	40%

### Percentage of learning time given to Religious Education

FS	10%
Year 1	10%
Year 2	10%
Year 3	10%
Year 4	10%
Year 5	10%
Year 6	10%

### Parishes served by the school

St Anthony of Padua  
St Francis

# INSPECTION JUDGMENTS

**OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS**

**2**

**CATHOLIC LIFE**

**1**

**COLLECTIVE WORSHIP**

**2**

**RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

**2**

## KEY FINDINGS

- St. Alban's is a good Catholic school with some outstanding features. The school is a very inclusive and welcoming community. It has a strong ethos rooted in Catholic values which permeate all of school life. The Catholic Life of the school is outstanding; Collective Worship is good as is the overall provision for Religious Education (RE). The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is exceptional.
- Religious Education is good. Learning and progress are at least good in each key stage. Teaching and assessment are good and effective in ensuring pupils learn well. The RE curriculum is thoughtfully adapted to meet pupils' needs and thorough self-evaluation by leaders and managers impacts positively on provision and outcomes.
- The Catholic Life of the school is outstanding. The well-being and personal development of each pupil is at the heart of the school's vision and is reflected in the strong sense of pastoral care. Excellent relationships at all levels are a strength of the school. Pupils are keen to participate in the varied opportunities provided to contribute to the Catholic Life of the school and benefit greatly from them. Effective monitoring and evaluation systems are in place and result in continuing improvement to outcomes for pupils.
- The quality of Collective Worship is good and pupils response to and participation in Collective Worship is good. This is not yet outstanding because pupils across the school are not skilled in planning and preparing worship. Leaders and managers' promotion, monitoring and evaluation of the provision of Collective Worship are good.

## **WHAT THE SCHOOL NEEDS TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER**

To improve further the school needs to:

- Develop further the effectiveness of the learning process by ensuring that:
  - marking consistently provides information to pupils about how to improve their work;
  - time is built in to allow pupils to respond to feedback;
  - all pupils are aware of their targets and best practice in self assessment is implemented consistently across the school;
  - teachers use assessment information to challenge more able pupils.
  
- Provide further opportunities for pupils to plan and prepare worship:
  - in whole school and class based contexts;
  - ensure there is a systematic progression of skills in planning worship across the school.

# CATHOLIC LIFE

## THE QUALITY OF 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.
- 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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Pupils make an outstanding contribution to the Catholic Life of the school and benefit greatly from it. They take advantage of the many opportunities offered to them and can articulate how the school is helping them to become better people. Pupils say they feel valued and are able to articulate the importance of Gospel values within their school community expressing the view that this is what Jesus asks of us. They have a good understanding of equality for all and of being part of an inclusive school community. The strong Catholic ethos enables them to take an active part in shaping activities with a religious character in the school and the wider community. They respect the Catholic tradition of the school and its links with the parish community and are active participants in numerous parish celebrations and activities. Pupils are proud of their religious backgrounds and beliefs; they are reflective, can discuss their own faith and spirituality with confidence and are respectful of those with beliefs different to their own. They are conscious of the needs of people beyond the school and have a well developed sense of justice and concern for others. Pupil behaviour is exemplary at St Alban's and this is underpinned by outstanding moral, social and cultural development.

The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school is outstanding. The headteacher, staff and governors have a very strong sense of purpose and commitment to the Catholic mission of the school and it is given the highest priority. All staff are involved in nurturing and living out the school's mission statement and are fully committed to implementing it across the whole curriculum. St Alban's is a welcoming friendly community with a strong family ethos, there is a strong sense of belonging, all are respected and pupils flourish. Excellent relationships and close co-operation of the whole school team are key strengths of the school. The school's Catholic character is effectively reflected through displays and artefacts in the learning environment and the creation of sacred spaces around the school, it is a prayerful, joyful community. Clear policies and procedures are in place, which provide the highest levels of pastoral support to pupils and there is an explicit commitment to the most vulnerable and needy. Pastoral programmes and the work of the parent support adviser, have a significant impact on pupils and their families. High quality staff training and induction supports staff commitment to Catholic principles and values which underpin behaviour and relationship policies rooted in Gospel values. The physical resources of the school are used very well to help achieve priorities set.

The leadership and management of the Catholic Life of the school are good. The headteacher communicates a strong sense of spiritual purpose, with a focus on promoting high standards and the fullest, personal development of the pupils. It is a very inclusive and welcoming community where the Gospel message of sharing and caring is seen in action. Leaders provide a clear direction for the Catholic life of the school which is a priority, along with the spiritual and moral development of pupils. Focused staff training has developed awareness, understanding and a commitment to the school's strong Catholic ethos. Consequently, pupils are able to articulate the distinctive mission of the school well. Effective systems are in place to monitor and evaluate the Catholic Life of the school which are clearly linked to school improvement and subsequently to outcomes for pupils. The school has very successful strategies for engaging with parents and carers; they have a clear understanding of the school's mission and are highly supportive of it. Governors make a significant contribution to the Catholic Life of the school, committed to the school's mission, they are involved in self-evaluation and are prepared to challenge where necessary as well as support.

# COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

## THE QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

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

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- The quality of provision for Collective Worship 

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

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St Alban's is a prayerful community where pupils' response to and participation in Collective Worship is good. They are at ease when praying with their school and parish community, they are developing a good awareness of a variety of styles and forms of prayer and their liturgical formation is developing well. They participate with a good level of interest and engagement and their response in both small and large prayerful gatherings is respectful, reverent, and reflective. Pupils speak of feeling calm and peaceful following collective worship. They eagerly lead prayers in class, school liturgies and Eucharistic celebrations in Church. They understand that there are different forms of liturgies and have a good understanding of the Church's liturgical year. They know some traditional prayers appropriate to their age. Pupils are acquiring skills in preparing and leading prayer and Collective Worship. With support they are becoming skilled in the use of scripture, religious artefacts, hymns and other forms of prayer. However, the school recognises that pupils are not yet competent in planning and preparing worship independently. Collective Worship contributes positively to the spiritual and moral development of the pupils. Pupils participate actively and with great enthusiasm in the school's sacramental preparation programme.

The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school is good and ensures that the spiritual needs of the pupils are well met. It is central to the life of the school and well resourced. A regular rhythm of prayer is built into the daily life of the school and an established pattern of opportunities are offered for the school community to gather for prayer, reflection and liturgy. Parents and parishioners are welcomed and take advantage of the opportunities offered by the school to be involved in worship. Staff are skilled in planning and leading worship and actively encourage pupils to lead and to write prayers. Some pupils can plan, prepare and lead acts of worship but this has yet to become embedded throughout the school. The school recognises the need to increase pupil knowledge of prayer styles and to further develop their skills in preparing materials for acts of worship and in leading them. Acts of worship are appropriate to the age and needs of the pupils with themes based upon the scheme of work topic and the liturgical calendar; they are responsive to the diversity of the pupils. Staff regularly review and plan improvements to the school's provision for Collective Worship.

Leaders and managers' promotion, monitoring and evaluation of the provision for Collective Worship is good. Leaders have a clear vision for its development, which is understood and supported by the entire school community. They have a good understanding of the Church's liturgical year, its seasons, rites and symbols and use a range of artefacts, symbols and information communications technology (ICT) effectively to deepen pupils' appreciation, knowledge and understanding. Leaders model good practice in Collective Worship in school. As a result of staff training and a focused drive to enhance the prayer and liturgical life of the school, improvements have been made over time so that staff and pupils now have a developing liturgical sense and know what constitutes a variety of worship. The monitoring and evaluation of Collective Worship is a priority in the regular review of school performance and is informed by feedback from pupils, staff, parents and governors. Leaders respond to these findings; good practice is also evidenced in newsletters, where parents are informed of their child's involvement in Collective Worship and given guidance for follow up at home. The school ensures that pupils have very good sacramental preparation in accordance with diocesan policy.

# RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

## THE QUALITY OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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- 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 monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education

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Pupils demonstrate passion and commitment to learning. They have very positive attitudes and speak enthusiastically about their learning. They work with concentration and want to do well. They clearly articulate their enjoyment of and interest in RE lessons. Pupils enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with abilities and skills which are below average, by the end of key stage one (KS1) standards in RE are above average at level two and by the end of key stage two (KS2) are above average at level four in both attainment targets. The school has identified that pupils are not as yet achieving higher levels at the end of each key stage. This indicates that pupils of higher ability could be doing better. Progress is consistent and sustained across all key stages. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make very good progress, because their needs are accurately identified and support is adapted to meet them. Systems are in place to evaluate the progress of different groups of learners. Inspection findings show little variation between boys and girls, and Catholics and those other than Catholic. Across the school, pupils are acquiring knowledge, understanding and skills appropriate to their age as well as developing their ability to reflect on meaning. They are increasingly able to interpret different sources of information and symbols, pupils talk confidently about their work in Religious Education and their personal beliefs.

Teaching and assessment is good overall. The majority of teaching is good with outstanding teaching observed during the inspection. A range of teaching styles, good questioning skills, clear explanations and well paced lessons ensure that pupils are consistently interested in their learning and most make good progress. Teachers have strong subject knowledge which inspires and promotes confidence learning. However, tasks are not sufficiently differentiated nor challenging enough to ensure more able pupils achieve higher levels of attainment. Support staff are effectively deployed and less able pupils are supported well in their learning. The curriculum is enriched by a programme of visits and creative activities which engage and motivate pupils and facilitate a high level of enjoyment. Effective assessment systems are in place and monitoring is securing improvement. Assessments are regular and systematic and both internal and external moderation shows leveling is accurate. Pupil progress is tracked and is being used to produce targets for pupil attainment. Teachers mark work regularly using Religious Education level descriptors and their comments are positive and support learning. However, guidance, feedback and marking to move learning on are not consistent and systems to allow pupils to respond are not effective in all classes. The school recognises that pupils' skills in self-assessment need to be developed further.

The monitoring and evaluation of Religious Education is good. The headteacher and the recently appointed Religious Education coordinator, have an accurate picture of the school's strengths and areas for development. They have detailed action plans in place to secure improvement; these initiatives have a positive impact on standards in the school. Staff are kept informed of priorities identified from a range of systematic monitoring activities undertaken to evaluate the provision and outcomes for pupils.

The RE curriculum is thoughtfully adapted to meet pupils' needs and fulfils the requirements of the Bishops' Conference well. It makes a significant contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils which enables them to become reflective learners. However, current work as evidenced by the work scrutiny does not reflect previous work in books. This may indicate that the new religious education programme 'Come and See' is yet to be implemented effectively in all year groups. The school works effectively with a range of partners to increase the range and quality of opportunities for pupils. Governors make regular visits to the school. They are involved in monitoring and evaluation activities, extremely supportive but also confident and questioning in their approach.

## 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.

2

### 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.

2

### 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

	Pupil Outcomes	Provision	Leadership and Management	
Religious Education	2	2	2	2
Catholic Life	1	1	2	1
Collective Worship	2	2	2	2
	2	2	2	2