

## Catholic Schools Inspectorate inspection report for **St Alban's Catholic Primary School, Wallasey**

URN: 105072

Carried out on behalf of the Most Rev. Mark Davies , Bishop of Shrewsbury on:

Date: Thursday 26 - Friday 27 January 2023

### Overall effectiveness

The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school.....

2

### Catholic life and mission (p.3)

How faithfully the school responds to the call to live as a Catholic community at the service of the Church's educational mission.....

2

### Religious education (p.5)

The quality of curriculum religious education.....

2

### Collective worship (p.7)

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

2

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

- St Alban's Catholic Primary School is a warm, welcoming school, where strong, affirming relationships exist at all levels and the importance of family and community is prioritised.
- The school's mission statement is known and lived and informs the everyday life of the school.
- Pastoral support is outstanding, staff know the community well and are fully committed to supporting the needs of the most vulnerable.
- The ambitious senior leadership team have a clear vision for the school and work with passion and integrity to achieve it, supported by dedicated governors.
- Partnership working with the parish clergy enhances provision for all within the community.

What the school needs to improve:

- Provide more opportunities for pupils to be actively involved in the Catholic life and mission of the school and ensure they are included in evaluating its quality.
- Ensure the quality of teaching in religious education is consistent across the school by sharing best practice in planning, delivery, assessment and monitoring.
- Prioritise professional development opportunities for all staff in the provision of prayer and liturgy so that they become more confident and skilled in supporting pupils in liturgical ministry.

## 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:.....

2

### Pupil outcomes

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

2

### 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 .....

2

Pupils at St Alban's understand and live out their mission statement: 'Love one another as I have loved you' and they are supported in doing this with the focus on monthly values such as faith, compassion, and forgiveness. They recognise the importance of being part of a Catholic community and they value the opportunities to be involved in parish life. A growing number of pupils and their families are taking an active role in monthly Sunday Masses. Pupils understand the school's distinctive Catholic identity and know that they are being, '...helped to learn to live like Jesus...'. They are happy and secure in the knowledge that they are valued as unique individuals, because of very strong, affirming relationships. Pupils behave well and show respect for one another, and they understand the importance of reconciliation within relationships. Pupils enjoy taking responsibility and are given some opportunities to belong to groups such as: the Mini Vinnies, the Eco group, and the Communication team. Pupils have demonstrated their response to the demands of Catholic Social Teaching and are supported in fundraising for appeals such as a local hospice and foodbank and in writing Christmas cards to prisoners.

The school's recently introduced Values Framework supports the school's mission statement which is central to everyday school life, and the Catholic ethos of the school is, as one parent wrote, '...real, tangible and powerful...'. Governors and staff are wholeheartedly committed to ensuring that Christ is at the centre of the school and the sense of welcome and inclusion is a real strength. Governors commented that the school, '...lives and breathes its mission...'. Staff know the community and its needs very well and go above and beyond in supporting it, from the staff being on hand every morning to welcome parents and pupils, to the many parish

events that staff voluntarily attend. They are exemplary role models to all. Parents appreciate the commitment of all staff and comment, '...there is always someone on hand to help...'. Pastoral support for all members of the community is excellent, with a wide range of strategies in place, including an initiative called Rest Easy, to support pupils' emotional needs. This is led once a week by a specialist and is supported by staff volunteers daily at lunchtime. The school's Catholic character is explicit within the school environment and priority is being given to developing all prayer spaces.

The school's programme for relationships, sex and health education is faithful to the teaching of the Church and meets diocesan requirements.

Leaders and governors are fully committed to the Church's mission in education and are passionate and resolute in their pursuit of this mission - they are exemplary role models within the community. They are fully supported by the parish clergy, and a very strong partnership continues to be developed and nurtured. The school works closely with the diocese to ensure the bishop's vision is supported and promoted. The school has effective strategies to support and engage parents/carers, including 'Stay and Pray' sessions, weekly Masses, and sacramental preparation meetings. These ensure all parents feel welcome and involved. Leaders and governors are supportive of the needs of all staff and are committed to their physical and mental wellbeing. Staff feel that, '...everyone is valued and included, irrespective of role...'. Governors have a clear vision for the school and are ambitious and committed to making improvements. They are becoming more involved in some monitoring and evaluation processes, but their work now needs to be more rigorous and systematic to ensure that self-evaluation is well-planned and targeted to further enhance the life and mission of the school.

## 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

Pupils generally enjoy their religious education lessons especially when more creative approaches are included, such as art and drama. Most pupils make good progress over time, demonstrate that they know more and remember more, and achieve well in their lessons. They are given opportunities to work in a variety of groupings and can respond well to questioning when supported to do so. With encouragement, they can reflect on their learning and make links to their own lives. Pupils generally take pride in their work and their books are valued and well cared for. Some feedback is given to pupils to support them in understanding how well they are doing, but they are not always given sufficient guidance to help them to improve their work. In the most effective lessons, pupils are highly motivated, engage well in their learning and respond eagerly to the tasks set. In such lessons, pupils are able to work with initiative, interest, and enthusiasm; they are able to show a developing religious literacy and can articulate what they have learned using appropriate subject-specific vocabulary. In the least effective lessons, lessons lack pace and challenge, pupils are less engaged, and not always able to use their knowledge and understanding to reflect spiritually and theologically.

Teachers are growing more confident in their subject knowledge and are fully committed to the value of religious education, with more than half having achieved a professional qualification in religious education. Planning is becoming more effective and knowledge organisers provide support for staff in sequencing lessons and ensuring that teachers build on learning from the previous lesson. Teaching assistants, who know the pupils well, support staff effectively during lessons and ensure that most pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make appropriate progress. In the best lessons seen, staff use very skilful questioning to encourage pupils to think more deeply such as in a lesson on the theme of

'Inspirational People'. During this lesson a pupil was able to make the link between St Josephine Bakhita and the Beatitudes by saying, 'Blessed are those who are persecuted.' Engagement of all pupils increased in the resulting conversation and encouraged further links to be made with scripture and pupils' own life experiences. There is good coverage of the curriculum in most books with some written feedback being provided and evidence of verbal feedback being given to celebrate achievement and support pupil progress. Assessment is in line with diocesan requirements and the school works in partnership with local schools to ensure moderation of work is accurate.

Leaders and governors ensure that the school curriculum is faithful to the *Religious Education Directory* and that it fully complies with diocesan requirements. They ensure that religious education is given full parity with other core curriculum subjects. Class timetables show that at least 10% of the taught curriculum is devoted to teaching religious education. Resources are provided for enrichment activities, including visits from local people to talk to pupils about racism, and university students to work on global projects, and these enhance the curriculum. The dedicated head teacher, supported by a passionate, knowledgeable, and very recently appointed subject leader, have a clear vision for improving teaching and learning and much has been accomplished in a short time. The subject leader accesses diocesan professional development opportunities and supports all staff in the drive to secure outstanding teaching across the school. As a result of recent changes, governors now feel empowered to support and challenge the leadership team appropriately. Leaders and governors now need to consider how best to achieve their high expectations by ensuring strategic action plans allow time for change and that monitoring and evaluation processes are rigorous and firmly established.

## Collective worship

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

Collective worship key judgement grade:.....

2

### 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 .....

2

### Leadership

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

2



Pupils understand different forms of prayer and through regular participation in Mass and other acts of liturgical prayer, they have a growing understanding of Catholic tradition and practice. They pray every day and are encouraged to add their own prayer intentions at these special times. They are helped to understand that prayer can unite a community in a very special way. Pupils can respond to scripture and make connections with their everyday lives and are increasingly more able to reflect appropriately. They sing joyfully and with enthusiasm. Older pupils understand that the liturgical year reflects important seasons of the Church's year, and they know that different colours are associated with these different seasons. Pupils participate regularly in planned liturgical prayer and have some opportunities to work with others in preparing and leading prayer and liturgy. Pupils are willing to undertake liturgical ministries and have some experience of this in reading at Mass in school and in the parish. Pupils now need to have further opportunities to prepare and lead prayer and liturgy more independently, and to evaluate the quality of these sessions.

Prayer and liturgy are central to everyday life at St Alban's and staff and pupils have many opportunities to gather in prayer, in classes, at Mass, during gospel assemblies and in 'Stay and Pray' sessions in classrooms. Prayers are said daily in class, and pupils participate respectfully. Staff, pupils, parents, and governors value these opportunities and recognise how they help them to feel part of the universal Church. An overview of prayer throughout the school ensures consideration is given to progression in praying traditional prayers and in the use of other resources to enrich provision. Information provided on the school's website helps parents to be involved in the prayer life of the school and they are very appreciative of the opportunities to join their children in class at 'Stay and Pray' sessions. Each class has a Prayer

and Liturgy class book which shows examples of classroom prayer and liturgy and these books are valued and placed centrally within each classroom showing the centrality of prayer. Senior leaders are exemplary models of good practice and support staff in helping pupils to become more confident in leading prayer and liturgy. The partnership which exists between school and parish is a real strength. Working together on initiatives such as 'Messy Church', where catechists, staff, pupils and parents meet together to be creative and share a meal, are greatly valued by the community and benefit all. School is focused on developing dedicated prayer spaces to further support the prayer life of the school.

Leaders and governors have a very clear vision for the development of prayer and liturgy at St Alban's. They have recently produced policies to support its development, and these have been carefully formulated to provide appropriate guidance for staff when preparing prayer and liturgy, and to inform parents of recent changes. School works closely with parish catechists to provide a full sacramental programme and parents value the support given by all staff in attending the celebration of the first sacraments. Leaders and governors ensure sufficient time is set aside for the regular celebration of Mass, the Sacrament of Reconciliation, and prayer. The school's involvement with the local Wallasey Catholic cluster provides further opportunities for staff and pupils to pray together. Leaders and governors recognise the importance of good quality professional development for all staff and have committed resources to ensuring such opportunities are provided. Leaders have begun reviewing the quality and impact of prayer and liturgy as part of their strategic self-evaluation, and governors look forward to becoming more actively involved with this process.



## Information about the school

Full name of school	St Alban's Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	105072
Full postal address of the school	Ashburton Road, Wallasey Ch44 5XB
School phone number	0151 6386373
Name of head teacher or principal	Mr John McDonald
Chair of governing board	Mr Kevin Doogan
School Website	<a href="http://www.stalbans.wirral.sch.uk/">http://www.stalbans.wirral.sch.uk/</a>
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	N/A
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age-range of pupils	4-11
Trustees	Diocese of Shrewsbury
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	10 March 2016
Previous denominational inspection grade	Outstanding

## The inspection team

Mrs Roisin Moores	Lead inspector
Mrs Sue Lyonette	Team inspector
Name of inspector	Lead/team
Name of inspector	Lead/team

## 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