

St Alban's Catholic Primary School

URN: 110841

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Bishop of East Anglia

29-01 March 2024

Summary of key findings

Overall effectiveness

The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school

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

1

Religious education (p.5)

The quality of curriculum religious education

1

Collective worship (p.7)

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

1

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

1

What the school does well

- Pupils are highly successful and extremely confident learners with a strong sense of self-worth.
- The Catholic faith is taught confidently and expertly so that pupils grow in knowledge and understanding, and become true witnesses to their faith.
- School leaders, at all levels, have a deep faith and true sense of vocation to Catholic teaching.
- The whole community is deeply proud of, and love their school. They feel blessed and privileged to be a member of it. This is reflected in the excellent behaviour and commitment to learning shown by all pupils.
- Relationships in school are highly positive and staff feel well supported by a visionary and deeply committed senior leadership team.

What the school needs to improve

- Review and develop the existing school systems and processes for the evaluation of Catholic life and mission, religious education and prayer and liturgy to ensure continued improvement.
- Develop the role of the religious education coordinator by providing high quality professional development opportunities to ensure teaching and learning in religious education continues to improve.

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

Pupil outcomes

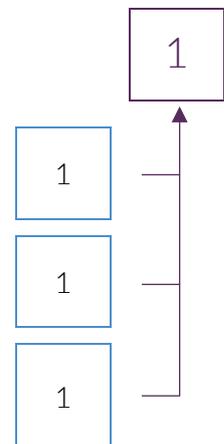
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

Provision

The quality of provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school

Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school



St Albans is a community built on strong faith where the light of Christ illuminates every aspect of school life. Pupils know they are loved, respected, and valued by the whole school community. As a result, they have the confidence to express themselves and take on many opportunities to care for those in their school and wider community. They comment 'Everyone is so warm and we are a close community, we feel safe in school.' Pupils have a profound sense of self-worth which further gives them the confidence to challenge things which they feel are not fair or just. Their strong sense of justice for others demonstrates a deep respect for those less fortunate and an understanding that everyone is made in the image and likeness of God. They know they are all children of God. Pupils' words and actions clearly indicate that they fully understand Gospel values and the principles of Catholic social teaching. This is seen in the eagerness of older pupils serving others as chaplains, eco council members, Caritas members, house captains, school councillors and buddies to the youngest children. Joining younger children and their parents for their naming ceremony leaves a lasting and beautiful memory for them. Younger pupils respond enthusiastically to the excellent examples set by their older peers as they want to be like them. Pupils have an insightful and lived understanding of Church teachings and share these with peers to engage and involve them in the life of the school.

The mission statement, 'Believe, Achieve, and Succeed' is known, owned, and lived by all because all members of the school community, pupils, parents, staff and governors, were involved in a vision evening where it was discussed and reviewed. Under the inspirational guidance of school leaders, all staff contribute to the Catholic life and mission of St Alban's, as a result there is a deeply embedded sense of welcome which is highly valued by parents who comment that staff 'model a respectful, joyful, and prayerful community and work for the formation of the children

in it.'. This is clearly evidenced in the relationships, respect and hospitality awarded to all and affirmed by parents who report that 'Catholic values are an integral part of all the learning.' There is a powerful and tangible sense of family and community because of the excellent pastoral provision for pupils and families with parents reporting a 'very strong ethos of caring and respect.' The physical environment fully reflects the Catholic character and ethos of the school. It provides everyone with a very special place in which to learn and grow academically and spiritually. St Alban's has a carefully planned programme for relationships, sex, and health education which meets all statutory and diocesan requirements and is firmly rooted in the teachings of the Church.

The head teacher provides authentic witness to the faith. Under his excellent leadership, he empowers his team to grow and develop. Leaders are highly ambitious for the school's continuous development. They are unwavering in their commitment to the Catholic life and mission of the school and of the families they serve. Governors are equally ambitious for the school clearly seen in their energy and strong desire for the school to be the best it can be, and are committed to the professional development of all staff. Leaders' self-evaluation is accurate in recognising that there are areas which they need to develop, and they are keen to adopt and embed new systems for evaluation across all areas of school life. Links with the local chaplaincy team are flourishing and priests are regular visitors to school leading Liturgy throughout the year, and supporting pupils and staff.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

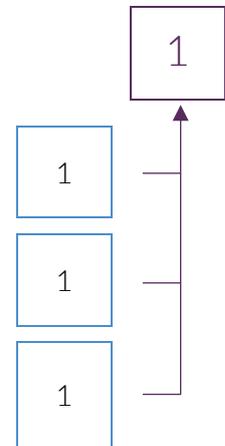
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

Provision

The quality of teaching, learning, and assessment in religious education

Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for religious education



Pupils of all ages are curious, confident, and highly articulate. They have a real love of learning, as a result they are developing excellent knowledge, skills and understanding. They make consistently good progress in religious education as they journey through the school, achieving the best possible outcomes by the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils confidently use their well-developed religious literacy skills to articulate their learning in speech and writing. They are happy, independent learners thinking for themselves and asking incisive questions which furthers their progress. Written work is of a high quality, pupils know their religious education books are special and consequently treat them with care and respect, ensuring every piece of work is beautifully presented. Regular marking and feedback of their written work enables pupils to understand how they can further improve. Pupils enjoy their religious education lessons and actively engage in tasks leading to excellent standards of behaviour and motivation. Class Special Books are very strong testimony to the high standard of work being produced, they are prominently displayed so that everyone can see and celebrate the achievement of others.

Teachers demonstrate high levels of confidence in their delivery of the religious education curriculum based on sound subject knowledge and skilful practice. They have high expectations of their pupils. Lessons are planned carefully to meet the differing needs of the pupils in their care, and together with a group of committed and strong teaching assistants support individual learning extremely well. Questioning is used effectively and skilfully throughout the school to identify what pupils have learnt, and where they may need further explanation or extension. High quality resources are provided to ensure lessons are creative and engaging, 'Godly Play' sessions for the whole school are thoroughly enjoyed by all pupils. Assessment occurs regularly and internal moderation is being used to support teachers in their assessment.

Leaders and governors ensure that the curriculum fully meets the requirements of the *Religious Education Directory*. They are strongly committed to implementing the new curriculum throughout the school as soon as possible, and effective training has been provided to support this implementation. Religious education has equal parity with other core subjects in terms of funding and time allocation. The newly appointed subject leader is enthusiastic and committed to her role and has a clear vision for her subject. She works closely with senior leaders to realise this vision. She is generous in sharing her expertise with colleagues, especially those new to Catholic schools or those at the start of their career. The introduction of well-planned curriculum folders is successful in providing staff with support when planning lessons, undertaking assessments or finding resources. Staff are well supported by senior leaders in their training needs which include utilising in-house expertise as well as opportunities provided by the diocese. A number of staff have been involved with the 'New to Catholic Schools' training programme. Although the school provides regular internal opportunities for the moderation of pupils' work, there is as yet limited opportunity for external moderation and leaders have identified this as an area for future development. Governors show an intense interest in learning, visiting classrooms and challenging leaders, as well as being highly supportive. They know the school very well.

Collective worship

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

Collective worship key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

How well pupils participate in and respond to the school's collective worship

1

Provision

The quality of collective worship provided by the school

1

Leadership

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

1

1

The centrality of prayer is evident in all areas of school life and is valued by all members of the community. Pupils are provided with multiple opportunities for prayer throughout the day. All pupils, regardless of their age, respond reverently to different prayer forms including singing, silence and reflection and meditation. They engage in prayer with high levels of respect and sincerity due to the embedded expectations and routines and excellent modelling by adults. They confidently articulate how praying, both individually and as a community, deeply impacts their daily lives. Singing is strength of the school, and pupils sing with great joy and enthusiasm. Older pupils relish and excel in their roles as chaplains, planning, leading, and delivering very high-quality prayer and liturgy sessions. They work together with staff and each other and are excellent role models to younger pupils. Pupils have a good understanding of the Liturgical year and the importance of prayer in responding to world events such as the recent earthquakes, this is clearly evident in the Year 3 world prayer board.

The rich provision for prayer makes a significant contribution to the spiritual life of the whole school community. The head teacher is a strong role model for prayer life, as a result all teachers are also models of excellent practice. The school makes creative use of the spaces available to provide engaging displays and spaces where pupils can quietly engage in silent prayer or reflection. The simple act of laying down large carpets in the school hall significantly enhances pupils' experience of prayer and liturgy. Pupils immediately recognise that the hall is transformed into a special place. Each classroom has its own prayer space which is placed in a prominent position. Pupils proudly take on the responsibility of ensuring that they are beautifully maintained. The school has a strong partnership with parents who fully appreciate the many opportunities to join the school for prayer and liturgy; a parent commented: 'The Masses and Prayers are so joyful and the faith of the staff... is inspiring.' During the inspection a number of

parents and grandparents joined Year 2 pupils in church for a celebration of the word based on the theme of Baptism. The school has formed a flourishing relationship with priests from local parishes who work alongside school staff and pupils to support and guide the prayer life of the school.

St Alban's has a carefully crafted policy for prayer and liturgy. It is reviewed regularly, and is accessible to, and used by staff when planning prayer and Liturgy. Further success of the policy is clearly seen in pupils' ability to plan and lead liturgies and how they embrace the opportunity to do so. All leaders place a high priority on the spiritual formation of staff and pupils. The school calendar is carefully put together to ensure that there are many opportunities to celebrate the Eucharist throughout the year including on holy days of obligation. Pupils also have the opportunity for the Sacrament of Reconciliation during Advent and Lent. Older pupils spoke of the honour and privilege of administering ashes during their Ash Wednesday celebration. At Christmas time all pupils enjoy 'Dressing the Crib'. Governors are active in their support of prayer and liturgy and are regular visitors to school Masses, weekly meditation and other celebrations.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Alban's Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	110841
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	8733360
Full postal address of the school	St Alban's Catholic Primary School, Lensfield Road, Cambridge, CB2 1EN
School phone number	01223712148
Headteacher	J A McCrossan
Chair of Governors	Lia Campos
School Website	http://www.stalbans.cambs.sch.uk/
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	N/A
Phase	Primary
Type of school	Voluntary Aided School
Admissions policy	N/A
Age-range of pupils	4-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	19 th May 2016
Previous denominational inspection grade	Grade 1

The inspection team

Mrs Angela Podmore
Mrs Anne-Marie Price

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