



Catholic Schools Inspectorate inspection report for **St Aidan's Catholic Primary School**

URN: 104463

Carried out on behalf of the Most Rev. Malcolm McMahon, Archbishop of Liverpool on:

Date: 22nd - 23rd June 2023

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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 Aidan's is a warm, welcoming school, where strong, supportive relationships exist at all levels.
- Pupils feel valued and cared for as unique individuals; as a result, they are happy, confident, and respectful.
- The school is committed to providing high quality pastoral care for pupils, especially for those who are most vulnerable.
- Pupils say that they greatly enjoy their religious education lessons and achieve well.
- Pupils respond to the experience of prayer and liturgy provided; they reflect in silence, pray reverently, and sing enthusiastically.

What the school needs to improve:

- Develop a consistent approach to questioning, feedback, and assessment, so that all pupils understand what they need to do, to maximise progress in their learning.
- As the revised Religious Education Directory is introduced, review and update curriculum plans for religious education in line with Archdiocesan recommendations.
- Prioritise professional development opportunities for all staff in the appropriate selection of scripture to support prayer and liturgy provision.

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

2

Leadership

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

2



Pupils understand and actively live out the Catholic mission of St Aidan's with commitment and pride. They review their mission statement at the start of each school year. They give examples of how they are, 'Learning and growing together; inspired by the love of Jesus'. Pupils respond well to the demands of Catholic Social Teaching. They show some understanding of the theology and reasons for their actions, for example: the Mini Vinnies visit to a local care home demonstrates their kindness and empathy towards those in need; litter picking and planting fruit trees on the school site shows their care for our common home. The school councillors take their roles seriously. They confidently share their suggestions for making their school a better place. Pupils know that they have a strong voice and can make changes together. They are very well supported by adults to achieve this. One pupil said, 'The teachers put the children before themselves'. Pupils say that behaviour is good at St Aidan's and that everyone has respect for others' personal space. Where needed, older pupils help younger ones with their play at breaktimes, reporting that, 'We all help our school community to grow together; we follow Jesus' examples.'

Christ is at the heart of St Aidan's and there is a real sense of community evident in the quality of relationships and the culture of welcome for all. The school strives to provide exceptionally supportive and practical help, especially to those who are in need. New families seek refuge at this school, where cultures and beliefs are valued and respected. Staff are committed to the wider life of the school and the service it offers. They show love and care to each other and to pupils and their families, bearing witness to the school's mission statement. One member of staff stated, 'We show genuine care for our children and their families as part of the wider St

Aidan's Catholic family. We aspire to be role-models in respect of how adults can live a meaningful and spiritual life in service of others.' As a result, St Aidan's is a vibrant and joyful place, where the personal dignity of each person is celebrated. The school environment reflects the Catholic life and mission, through statues, displays and photographs, which communicate the school values of, 'Ready, respectful and safe'. There is a beautiful statue of St Aidan in the entrance hall. Provision for relationships, sex and health education meets archdiocesan and statutory requirements and is faithful to the teaching of the Catholic Church. The subject leader for relationships, sex and health education has enriched learning for pupils through visits and visitors, for example: work with Merseyside Youth Association, Milk Influencers, workshops about asylum seekers and refugees.

Leaders and Governors are committed to carrying out their duty as guardians of the Catholic life and mission of the school. They ensure that the curriculum has religious education at its centre. This is a core responsibility, which is given high priority. Conscientious governors have given much of their time and energy to the successful, recent appointment of a new Catholic headteacher for St Aidan's. They are involved in the drafting of the school's Catholic self-evaluation document with senior leaders and are knowledgeable about the Catholic life of St Aidan's. Governors have high expectations of themselves, and they have a respectful relationship with school staff. One governor stated that, 'We are one school, one parish, one body.' The school community works well with the local parish of St Agnes and St Aidan. There is a close liaison with parishioners, the parish priest, and the parish pastoral assistant, who has helped to forge links with the local care home. There are effective strategies for engaging with parents and carers, enabling them to grow in understanding of the school's mission.

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 are developing secure knowledge, skills and understanding in religious education that reflects the learning required by the Religious Education Directory. As a result, standards of attainment in religious education are at least in-line with other core subjects. Pupils enjoy their learning in religious education and behaviour in lessons is very good. They respond very well to the challenges of learning in religious education and particularly enjoy expressing their ideas through speaking and listening activities such as paired discussion, role play and group work. Pupils work independently, they concentrate well and enjoy collaborative work. Most pupils are aware of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life and can relate some aspects of scripture to their own lived experiences. They can explain how scripture informs their actions, for example: pupils were able to recall the parable of the good Samaritan and talked about how we should be always ready to help others, even those who are of a different race or culture. They remember, reflect, and respond well as they share ideas about friendship, forgiveness, life choices, rules, and reconciliation. Parents are appreciative of the religious education provided by the school. One parent stated, 'My daughter thoroughly enjoys her religious education sessions and will often come home and tell me what they have done.'

Teachers provide a wide variety of creative ways for pupils to express themselves. They know their pupils' abilities and backgrounds very well. They are confident in their subject knowledge and enjoy teaching religious education. This means they are able to provide opportunities for learning about religion through art, drama and a range of forms of writing styles. Effective interactions between teachers and supporting adults are used to model ideas and scenarios which support the learning objective of the lesson. Teachers celebrate, motivate, and ask searching questions. They provide space for reflection. They revisit ideas covered throughout

topics to enable pupils to systematically build up their knowledge. Children in reception can explain that 'Jesus is the Son of God, He is our friend.' Older pupils engage with challenging vocabulary and phrases as they deepen their understanding of scripture. Adults encourage pupils to do their best. As a result, most pupils of all abilities, especially those with additional needs, are inspired and they learn well. Teachers provide pupils with verbal feedback, on what they need to do to make more progress in their learning. A more consistent approach would accelerate progress even further.

Monitoring and evaluation by leaders and governors ensure that religious education is given full parity with other core curriculum areas, which results in good outcomes for pupils. Leaders have a clear vision for the professional development required in religious education as part of the whole school development plan. Recent staff meetings have focused on the moderation of standards in religious education and self-evaluation of pupils' work. Leaders ensure that pupils are provided with engaging enrichment activities and resources to support their learning in religious education, for example: the recent visit to the synagogue. Governors are informed through regular information about religious education through their meetings, the religious education action plan and through the headteacher's reports. There is a link governor for religious education, who works with the subject leader in the scrutiny of pupils' work. The school website communicates up-to-date policies and curriculum information. The subject leader, who is new in role, is keen to develop her expertise further in the monitoring and evaluation of religious education. She meets regularly with a local cluster group to discuss moderation of standards in religious education and to share best practice.

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 participate very well in the experiences of prayer and liturgy provided at St Aidan's. They reflect in silence, join in community prayer and some pupils offer spontaneous prayer with confidence and reverence. Pupils are very proud of their school prayer, which is shared at the end of each school day. This was composed by pupil prayer leaders. Pupils recognise and talk about the ways their prayer and liturgy is influenced by wider world themes and events. They understand how their reflections in worship and their responses to the scripture, inspire them to make changes, for example, as the result of exploring themes of sustainability with CAFOD, and scripture readings about creation, they decided to raise money for a water butt for their school garden. Pupils work well with teachers to play an active part in prayer and liturgy. They are knowledgeable about the liturgical year. One of the very youngest children explained why he was selecting a green cloth to use on the worship focus table and why the colour changes at different times of the year. Pupils enjoy the experience of prayer and liturgy outside in the prayer garden, and in the quiet space of the memorial bench. Prayer leaders take their responsibilities very seriously in caring for these sacred spaces, so they are ready for pupils who need to pray.

There is a daily routine of prayer and appropriately planned opportunities for daily prayer and worship. Good use is made of the space available around the school to create dedicated prayer areas. There is a lovely outside prayer garden, and the entrance hall has an inviting prayer tree and reflection space. Staff work well with families, to include them in the prayer life of the school. Parents and carers access information about prayer and liturgy from photographs and newsletters on the school website. Whole school and class assemblies are well attended by families and are a source of joy for all. They appreciate the efforts of teachers who model good

practice and enable pupils to lead prayer and present scripture. Pupils love of prayer and worship continues at home, as one parent stated, 'My child enjoys creating prayer and worship for herself and her peers. She researches stories from the Bible and then shares them in school.' Themes for prayer and worship are selected according to school wide topics or to reflect the Church's seasons. These are planned by the subject leader for religious education. However, staff would benefit from further guidance, so that pupils are able to deepen their responses to the chosen scripture through a wider range of prayer styles. There are strong links with the parish pastoral assistant, who supports the liturgical life of the school. During Lent, she led child friendly stations of the cross, made an Easter Garden and explored the life-cycle of a butterfly with younger pupils. She also provides support for school families in sacramental preparation which enables pupils to take part more fully in the liturgy.

Leaders, including governors have planned the school calendar to celebrate Mass at key times in the liturgical year, for example, the Mass celebrated on Ash Wednesday. The needs of pupils are considered in the planning of masses and liturgical activities, for example: the Mass for Year Six leavers. Leaders recognise the importance of allocating a specific budget for the development of prayer and liturgy. They have invested in staff training and purchased resources. The link governor for religious education has visited the school to take part in prayer and liturgy sessions and talk to pupils. She has witnessed the joyful responses of pupils during those sessions. All staff have received recent training in prayer and liturgy, provided by the Archdiocese. As a result, they understand the elements of worship and are committed to taking a leading role. Senior leaders now plan to develop staff skills further, through the sharing of best practice and developing a wider range of prayer styles.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St. Aidan's Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	104463
Full postal address of the school	Adswood Road, Huyton, Liverpool L36 7XR
School phone number	0151 477 8370
Name of head teacher or principal	Miss Kathryn Fitzsimmons
Chair of governing board	Mrs Dee Denton
School Website	www.staidanscatholicprimary.com
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	Not applicable
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age-range of pupils	3 - 11
Trustees	Archdiocese of Liverpool
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	27 th January 2016
Previous denominational inspection grade	Outstanding

The inspection team

Mrs Christine Mason	Lead inspector
Mrs Fiona Brownsey	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