



DIOCESE OF  
**SHREWSBURY**

DENOMINATIONAL INSPECTION REPORT:

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

School:	St Aidan's Catholic Primary School
Address:	Rackhouse Road Northern Moor Wythenshawe M23 0BW
Tel No:	0161 998 4126
URN:	105519
Headteacher:	Mrs S Yates
Chair of Governors:	Rev N Kern
Date of Inspection:	5 May 2022
Inspectors:	Mrs J Johnson Mrs R Moores Mrs S Lyonette (shadow)

# ST AIDAN'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

## MISSION STATEMENT



*Christ is at the centre of all we do.*

*Here we value each other as a unique child of God and a citizen of the future.*

*Respect for everyone and the world in which we live in is at the heart of our Catholic teaching and learning.*

*In our Catholic Primary School we nurture, educate and inspire the whole child to develop independence and confidence so as to reach their full potential.*

*Spiritual, social, moral, and cultural growth is actively encouraged through prayer, study, worship, and creative liturgy, also the wider life of the school is nurtured and developed.*

*Together we create a safe happy healthy and welcoming environment for all who enter our school community.*

*Love God, Love one another.*

**SCHOOL: St Aidan's Catholic Primary School**

**DATE OF LAST INSPECTION: 1<sup>st</sup> December 15**

**JUDGEMENT FROM PREVIOUS INSPECTION: Outstanding**

**AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT FROM PREVIOUS INSPECTION**

The school's last inspection was a Monitoring Inspection of Outstanding Schools, and no areas for development were listed.

**PROGRESS MADE WITH AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT FROM THE PREVIOUS INSPECTION**

St Aidan's school has not been complacent since the last Inspection and has remained abreast of all Diocesan and national developments.

**OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS:** how effective is the school in providing Catholic Education.

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**This is an outstanding Catholic school**

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*The above judgement on overall effectiveness is based on all the available evidence following the evaluation of:*

**CATHOLIC LIFE**

1

**RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

1

**COLLECTIVE WORSHIP**

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- St Aidan's is an outstanding Catholic School where pupils fully appreciate, value, and actively participate in the Catholic life and mission of the school
- All members of the school's community spoken to during the Inspection, commented on the school's strong sense of family and community
- The school's strong relationship with the Wythenshawe Catholic Cluster of schools is a strength of the school
- Relationships, at all levels, are extremely positive and pastoral care is outstanding
- The behaviour of pupils is exemplary, and pupils show a great respect for each other
- The school's Mission Statement of 'Love God, Love One Another' is fully understood by all members of the school's community
- The high number of Catholic staff in the school brings a real sense of a common mission
- The Head Teacher, Deputy Headteacher and Religious Education Coordinator, through witness to their personal faith, provide outstanding leadership
- The school's leaders, governors and staff are deeply committed to, and passionate about, the Church's mission in education
- School staff are extremely proud to work in the school, and it is true to say that staff, as well as pupils, grow in faith in this school
- The school works in close partnership with the parish of St Hilda's and St Aidan's and is well supported by the Parish Priest, who is also the Chair of Governors
- Parents are supportive of the school and have appreciated the efforts the school has made to engage with them during the pandemic. They are looking forward to returning to being able to attend school for celebrations and Masses.

## Summary of key findings:

### What the school needs to do to improve further

- Re-establish its monitoring and evaluation systems which have stalled due to the pandemic, and further develop these in order to maintain and increase the school's already high standards
- Enhance the school's provision for Collective Worship by giving pupils further opportunities to plan and lead Liturgical Prayer more independently, as well as providing them with wider experiences of contemporary prayer and worship.

### Information about the Inspection

The Inspection of St Aidan's Catholic Primary School was carried out under the requirements of the Education Act 2005, and in accordance with the Shrewsbury Diocesan Framework and Schedule for Denominational Inspections approved by the Bishop of Shrewsbury. The inspection reviews and evaluates how effective the school is in providing Catholic education. This process begins with the school's own self-evaluation and the inspection schedule follows the criteria set by the National Board of Religious Inspectors and Advisers (NBRIA 2017).

The Inspector reviewed in detail the following aspects:

- 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 pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education
- How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship
- The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school
- How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education, Collective Worship and the Catholic Life of the school

The inspection was carried out by two Inspectors, and an Inspector in training over one day:

- The Inspectors observed teaching and learning in the eight classes
- Three Acts of Collective Worship (Liturgical Prayer) were observed: one was led by the Headteacher and the Y5 Prayer Leaders; two were led by teachers in YR and Y2, with contributions from pupils
- Discussions were held with the Headteacher, Religious Education Coordinator, the Parish Priest who is the Chair of Governors, two other governors, a group of pupils, and 6 members of staff (support staff, teaching support staff and teachers)
- A sample of pupils' Religious Education workbooks was scrutinised from every class from the current school year, along with a wide range of documents evidencing the school's Catholic Life and Collective Worship

- RE Coordinators' files, Denominational Inspection files, the Headteacher's reports to governors and minutes of governing body meetings were also scrutinized
- Pupil, parent, and staff questionnaires were reviewed
- A range of documents was made available and scrutinised including the Diocesan Self Evaluation Form (DSEF), the Religious Education Action Plan which is within the School Improvement Plan, the school's Monitoring and Moderation files, the school's CPD records, as well as a range of school policies
- The school's website was checked for further evidence
- Displays around the school and in classrooms were also noted
- A range of class books, floor books and other evidence showing the celebrations, events and prayer life of the school were also noted.

### **Information about this school**

- St Aidan's Catholic Primary School is a one form entry primary school, which is made up of 8 single age classes, including the Nursery. There are currently 257 pupils on roll, 85% of whom are baptised Catholics
- The school serves St Hilda and St Aidan's Parish
- The Headteacher has been in the school for many years, and at the time of the last Inspection, was the Deputy headteacher
- The Deputy Headteacher was appointed in January 22
- Staffing is stable, and there is the equivalent of 9.1 teachers and 15 teaching assistants in the school
- Out of the 15 teachers in the school, 14 of them are Catholic
- Five teachers hold the Catholic Certificate of Religious Studies (CCRS) qualification, and one is currently undertaking the qualification
- The percentage of pupils with EAL, SEND, from non-white backgrounds, and those who are disadvantaged are all well above the national average
- About half the Y6 pupils transfer to Catholic secondary schools, some out of the Diocese, due to the school's location near to the Diocese of Salford
- The deprivation indicator places many of the school's pupils in the top 10% of deprived areas in England.

## Full report – inspection judgments

### CATHOLIC LIFE

The Catholic Life of the school is outstanding

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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 governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision of the Catholic Life of the school	1

- The school's Mission Statement of 'Love God, Love One Another' permeates all aspects of the school's life and work. The Mission Statement has been reviewed since the time of the last Inspection, and now includes the school's aims and intent, based on the word 'CHRIST'
- Pupils understand and can articulate the school's Mission Statement, and can describe ways in which it influences their lives
- There is a strong sense of family and community at St Aidan's, which is valued and appreciated by all
- The dedicated Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher, Religious Education Coordinator, the Parish Priest and governors are all fully committed to the Catholic Life of the school and give daily witness through their welcome, support, concern, and care for all involved with the school
- Adults in the school are exemplary role models for its pupils, and they are committed to the school's Catholic tradition and ethos. They are proud to work at St Aidan's, and feel it is a privilege to be part of the school. As one member of staff wrote, 'I see God daily in so many areas of daily school life. I see it in the staff relationships, the beautiful children who are eager to learn and feel supported in the teachings of Christ.' Another staff member wrote, 'Our headteacher sets a powerful example of faith in action.'
- Staff fully participate in school activities which reflect the school's Catholic Life, including staff daily prayer. They truly appreciate the way in which the school day begins with them gathering together in prayer
- Parents value the impact the school's Catholic Life has on their children and are looking forward to the time when they will again be able to participate fully in it
- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding, and pupils show respect and care for each other. In proportion to their years, they show an ability to listen, to forgive and be forgiven. Older pupils can clearly explain how their school is different from schools that are not Catholic
- The school environment is rich in its mission and identity through the many concrete and beautiful signs of the school's distinctive Catholic character. Significant funds have been made available in recent years to enhance the school's environment and provide high quality resources, to enhance all aspects of the school's Catholic identity
- Pupils enjoy taking on roles such as Prayer Leaders, School Council, Mini Vinnies, and Eco Council, and they take their responsibilities seriously. Pupils can describe ways in which their work makes a difference in the school and in the wider community

- Pupils benefit from the many opportunities the school provides for their personal support and emotional development. Thanks to this, pupils are happy and secure in their own stage of spiritual, social, moral, and cultural growth.
- The school's strong collaboration with and engagement in the Wythenshawe Cluster of Catholic schools means that its pupils benefit from the rich programme of opportunities planned to enhance their spiritual and the wider development of the Catholic Life of the school, such as Retreat Days and Prayer Relay, alongside pupils from the other schools in the Cluster
- The school maintains strong links with the parish of St Hilda's and St Aidan's and the Parish Priest, as Chair of Governors, knows the school very well. School staff play their part in supporting the work of the parish, including the Sacramental Programme
- The school's recently implemented Dimensions Curriculum-Learning Means the World- which is bespoke to the school and has the principles of Catholic Social Teaching embedded through it, is developing a strong sense of justice, and giving pupils a greater awareness of their responsibilities as Catholic, global citizens
- They are proud of their work for charities, including CAFOD, Shoe Box Appeal, Foodbank, World Down's Syndrome Day to name a few
- School leaders and governors ensure that Diocesan policies and initiatives are implemented fully. Governors recognise the need to attend Diocesan training in order to keep abreast of developments
- Following consultations with parents, and CPD for all staff, leaders and governors have implemented the scheme 'Journey in Love' for teaching Relationships and Sex Education. The RSE Coordinator is fully committed to ensuring that RSE is taught in line with the Catholic faith
- School leaders keep governors well informed about the Catholic Life of the school, but due to the pandemic, leaders and governors have stalled in their planned monitoring activities in relation to the Catholic Life of the school. This now needs to be re-established and further developed, in order to evaluate and plan for future developments, which in turn will enhance the school's provision.



## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

### Religious Education is outstanding

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How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education	1
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education	1
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education	1

- Pupils say that they enjoy their learning in Religious Education lessons, particularly when they are given creative activities such as art or discussion groups. They are hardworking, keen to learn and fully engaged in their lessons. Younger pupils say they love learning about Jesus and can suggest ways in which He was a role model for us. Older pupils are able to articulate ways in which their learning in Religious Education has an impact on their daily lives
- Teaching is very effective across the school and in all the lessons observed, teaching was at least good, and some was outstanding. In the best lessons, teaching was pacy and well matched to pupils' needs. Teaching Assistants supported learning very well during all lessons observed during the Inspection
- Teachers' subject knowledge is particularly strong, and they have high expectations of themselves and of the pupils in their care. They skillfully recap and build on the learning from the previous lesson, and new learning is introduced with confidence and clarity
- Pupils get off to a successful start in the Nursery and Reception classes, and this is maintained throughout the school so that outcomes in Religious Education are high at the end of the each of the three Key Stages in the school
- Pupils are developing a rich religious vocabulary, and displays and working walls in classes and around the school support and develop this
- Almost all pupils make good or better progress in Religious Education, and this is reflected in the high standards they display in their lessons and particularly in their books. Pupils with SEND are well provided for in lessons, so that they can participate fully
- The behaviour of pupils throughout the Inspection was exemplary. As a result, learning was never interrupted and lessons could move at a fast pace, covering much ground. The amount of work completed in the pupils' Religious Education books is impressive
- Pupils take great pride in their work, and their Religious Education books throughout the school are testament to this
- Pupils can explain the school's marking policy, and teachers follow the policy consistently in all classes. However, feedback to pupils is sometimes not as sharp as it could be, and so opportunities to explain, to deepen thinking or take next steps in their learning, are sometimes lost
- Pupils are able to make links from what they learn in their Religious Education lessons to what they hear and experience in the school's provision for Collective Worship and the Catholic Life of the school

- Following the pandemic, the pace of the monitoring of the teaching and learning in Religious Education lessons now needs to be picked up and developed further, so that detailed feedback is given to staff, which in turn, will lead to standards rising further
- Assessment of pupils' work in Religious Education takes place termly, in line with Diocesan requirements. At St Aidan's, thanks to the close collaboration with the Wythenshawe Cluster of Catholic schools, scrutiny, and moderation of the work in the pupils' Religious Education books takes place regularly across the cluster. This enables the school to compare its pupils' work in relation to other schools in a similar context, as well as to share best practice
- Staff have benefitted from high quality CPD provided by the school, the Wythenshawe Catholic Cluster, and the Diocese since the time of the last Inspection
- St Aidan's is very well placed to take on board the impending implementation of the revised Religious Education Curriculum Directory
- Leaders and governors fully comply with the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales Requirements and Religious Education is particularly well resourced to support the high priority given to it. Specific Religious Education teaching in the three Key Stages of the school exceeds the 10% requirement of the Bishops' Conference.

## COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

**Collective Worship is outstanding.**

**1**

How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship	1
The quality of provision for Collective Worship	1
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship	1

- The quality of prayer, liturgy and liturgical prayer at St Aidan's is outstanding, and is central to the life and work of the school, for pupils, staff, parents, and the wider community
- Pupils are respectful and reverent throughout the school, and they sing joyfully and participate willingly in communal prayer
- Y5 Prayer Leaders take great pride in their role, and with some adult support, they are able to plan and lead prayer across the school. These pupils are keen to share their deep faith with others, and have their own ideas of how to do this
- During the pandemic, the whole school community has missed gathering together to worship, praise and celebrate. It is significant that the school's first whole school gathering following the pandemic, was to celebrate Mass
- The school often encourages families to get involved in activities at home such as finding out about St Aidan or entering a design for the Prayer Garden
- Liturgical prayer is given a high status in the school, and this is reflected in the resources given to it, the quality of the prayer tables in all classrooms, as well as the timetabling given to it in all year groups
- The school is working hard to develop the progression and independence of pupils in planning and leading liturgical prayer. Pupils progress from being led by teachers, to being supported by teachers, to being guided by teachers in their planning and leading liturgical prayer. However, Inspectors feel that pupils have the abilities to do more than they are currently expected to do - if pupils were given more opportunities to work collaboratively and independently, according to their age and stage of development, then by the time the pupils leave the school, they would be planning and leading liturgical prayer with confidence and skill, without adult support
- The school's class books which record the weekly liturgical prayer sessions are faithfully and beautifully presented
- The deeply committed Headteacher and the Religious Education Coordinator are visible as leaders of Collective Worship in the school, and they are knowledgeable and supportive of colleagues
- Pupils have a good understanding of the Church's Liturgical Year, seasons, and feast days and this was evident in many high-quality displays in the classes, and in communal areas
- At key points in the Liturgical Year, the school keeps families abreast of what is going on in school through its website. For instance, at the moment, for Pentecost, the school is entering the international 'Spirited Art' Competition and will be making kites to celebrate the Holy Spirit

- During the three Acts of Collective Worship observed, behaviour of pupils was outstanding, and pupils were engaged throughout. Pupils were extremely reverent and respectful, and they made thoughtful and prayerful responses, particularly in the liturgical prayer observed in KS1
- Pupils have a deep respect for those of other faiths, and older pupils have a deep regard for and understanding of difference and diversity
- Pupils recognise what it means to be prayerful, and they value the provision made by the school. As one Y6 pupil wrote, 'I like that no matter what time it is, we do prayers for people in our families or someone that we know who is struggling'
- Pupils and staff have varied opportunities to participate in activities to promote their spiritual development through the school's strong collaboration in the Wythenshawe Catholic Cluster. For instance, recently a Prayer Relay has taken place during Lent, and Y7 transition programmes are in place. These give the pupils a unique understanding of what it means to be part of a worshiping community beyond that of their own school
- Pupils' spiritual development would be enhanced further by the inclusion of other forms of contemporary prayer and by providing more opportunities for extempore (spontaneous) prayer
- Leaders and governors give a high priority to the professional development of staff in relation to Collective Worship, and the school engages extremely well with the opportunities provided by the Diocese
- St Aidan's is very well placed to take on board the impending implementation of the new Prayer and Liturgy Directory
- Following the pandemic, the pace of the monitoring of the Collective Worship in the school now needs to be picked up and developed further, so that the school's provision can be enhanced further.