



# ARCHDIOCESE OF LIVERPOOL

## INSPECTION REPORT

### ST. ALBAN'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

#### WARRINGTON

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Inspection Date Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> April 2018

Inspectors Mrs Julie Rourke Mrs Angela Paget

Unique Reference Number 111307

Inspection carried out under Section 48 of the Education Acts 2005 and 2011

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Type of School Catholic Primary

Age range of pupils 3-11

Number on roll 194

Chair of Governors Mrs Bernadette Gorman

Headteacher Mrs Frances Curless

School address Bewsey Road  
Warrington  
WA5 0JS

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Date of last inspection 16<sup>th</sup> April 2013

# Introduction

This inspection was carried out under Section 48 of the Education Acts 2005 and 2011

The report of the inspection is produced for the Archbishop of Liverpool (Code of Canon Law 804 and 806) and for the governors of the school.

The inspectors are members of the Christian Education Department and their associates approved by the Archbishop of Liverpool for this purpose.

## Information about this school

- St. Alban's school is a slightly smaller than average sized Catholic Primary School situated in Warrington serving the parish of Sacred Heart and St. Alban's.
- There are 194 number of children on roll of whom 121 are baptised Catholic, 28 come from other Christian denominations and 23 from other faith or religious traditions. Twenty-two pupils have no religious affiliation.
- There are 10 teachers in the school. There are 7 teachers baptised Catholic. There are eight teachers teaching Religious Education. Seven teachers have a suitable qualification in Religious Education.
- Since the last inspection a new Deputy Headteacher has been appointed.

### Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Requires Improvement
Grade 4	Inadequate

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Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school.

# OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

St. Alban's Catholic Primary School is a good school in providing Catholic Education.

## CATHOLIC LIFE

### The extent to which the pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school

- The extent to which the pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school is outstanding.
- Pupils at St. Alban's understand and know how to live out their mission, '*We pray together, work together and play together.*' They have taken an active part in regular mission reviews.
- Pupils show a respect for themselves and others as made in the image and likeness of God. In proportion to their years, they show an ability to listen, to give thanks, to forgive and be forgiven.
- Pupils embrace the demands that membership of a Catholic school entails. They accept their responsibilities and as a result, they become, for example; Eco club members, part of the school council or play leaders.
- They enjoy promoting the Catholic Life and mission of the school. The school choir makes regular visits to the local care home. The children also provide cards and hampers for the residents at Christmas and Easter.
- Pupils continually raise funds for a variety of causes including, *Nugent*, cancer charities, earthquake and flood victims and *CAFOD*. They recently supported the victims of the Manchester bombing and held their own tribute music festival to raise funds. Pupils are alert to the needs of others and seek justice for all within and beyond the school community.
- Pupils enthusiastically embrace a holistic approach to education, understand what it means to have a vocation and recognise the importance of using their gifts in the service of others. Children actively seek ways to ensure they fundraise for national charities but are also aware of the needs of their own school and local community.
- Pupils value and respect the Catholic tradition of the school and its links with the parish community. Pupils have been involved in a *Faith in Action* project and children have worked with the local parish to train Altar Servers.
- Pupils value their residential trips to *Tatton Scout Camp* and to London. The children can develop their mission in working together and playing together in different settings with other children.
- Pupils respond well to the many opportunities the school provides for their personal support and development. There are a variety of support groups, such as; *Circle of Friends*, *Stop, Understand, Move On*, buddying systems, nurture prayer groups.
- Pupils appropriate to their age and capability are developing in their understanding of loving relationships and sexual development within the context of a Christian understanding. This is through the successful implementation of the Archdiocesan advised programme, *Journey in Love*.

### The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school

- The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school is outstanding.

- The school Mission Statement is a clear and inspiring expression of the educational mission of the Church. The whole school community fully embraces the clear aims and objectives of the mission.
- The school environment reflects its mission which is clearly identified throughout the school.
- All staff promote high standards of behaviour and provide many opportunities for the spiritual and moral development of pupils.
- The curriculum reflects a commitment to Catholic Social Teaching, to care for our common home and to the dignity of every human person. The school regularly supports the teachings of *CAFOD*. They also take part in *Active Hope*, a Christian based charity offering alternative outdoor activities, which is having a great impact on pupils.
- There is a strong sense of community and family at all levels, evident in the high quality of relationships and the centrality of prayer. One staff member expressed, *'I am incredibly proud to part of such a caring, supportive Catholic community. It is a pleasure to watch all members of the school community truly live our mission.'*
- There are many opportunities for parishioners and the whole school community to come together, for example in masses and assemblies. There are regular church Masses during Lent and on Holy Days of Obligation.
- Staff are offered regular spirituality retreats in collaboration with other local Catholic schools and they are keen to develop this practice further, particularly for *Come and See for Yourself* reflection opportunities prior to Religious Education topics.
- The Relationships and Sex Education programme, *Journey in Love*, has been implemented across the school. The school now needs to continue to develop ways of recording work and show how the programme is being identified along with other subjects, such as *Science* and *Personal, Social and Health Education*.

## **How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school**

- Leaders and governors are outstanding in promoting, monitoring and evaluating the provision for the Catholic Life of the school.
- Leaders and governors demonstrate a public commitment to the mission of the Church. They are well regarded as models of Catholic leadership by both staff and pupils.
- The school's mission statement is reviewed regularly by the whole school community.
- The provision for the Catholic Life of the school is given priority by leaders. The schools' Self Evaluation Document contains a variety of well presented evidence throughout and has planned improvements to further enhance the Catholic Life of the school. Further development of monitoring, analysis and self- challenge will continue to ensure the priority of Catholic Life in the school.
- The school has strategies for engaging with parents and carers to the benefit of pupils, including those who might traditionally find working with the school difficult. As well as pastoral support, the school signposts families to support agencies and social services.
- The school makes effective use of online learning journals, such as *Tapestry* and *Seesaw*. This enables parents to track and celebrate their child's learning. There is *English as an Additional Language* support throughout the school and the schools' website can translate parental information.
- Parent questionnaires received show that the majority of parents are in full agreement of the Catholic values and welcome they receive at school. One parent commented, *'I always feel welcome at St. Alban's, the school has good family values. They care about all aspects of my child.'*

- The Parish Priest, Governors, the headteacher and senior leaders are ambitious for the Catholic Life of the school and lead by example in the way it consistently emphasises Catholic Life as a school improvement priority. They make a significant contribution to the Catholic Life of the school.
- Governors are committed and are able to challenge as well as support where necessary. They visit school regularly and there are good links with the parish. The governors, which includes a newly appointed Religious Education Governor, receive updates from the headteacher regarding the Catholic Life of the school. The school is keen to develop regular meetings and updates with the governor responsible for Religious Education.
- Continuous Professional Development focusing on the Catholic Life of the school occurs and is effective. Staff are involved in shaping and supporting it.
- The school responds well to Archdiocesan policies and initiatives and actively promotes them throughout the school, including, Archdiocesan subject leader Religious Education training and regular staff meetings linked to Catholic Life.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

### **How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education**

- The extent to which pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education is good.
- Pupils, from their varied starting points, make good progress in each key stage.
- Pupils with special educational needs, are supported through careful planning for teaching assistants and support given to them in their work. This good work can be enhanced with the use of specific needs lesson plans that are available on the Come and See website.
- Pupils, relative to their age and capacity, are religiously literate and engaged young people; they use their knowledge, understanding and skills, to reflect spiritually, and to think ethically and theologically.
- Pupils are actively engaged in lessons and are keen to improve their knowledge, understanding and skills, in order to further develop as competent learners.
- Pupils are interested and enthused in the variety of activities provided for them. Pupils respond well to opportunities which extend their learning.
- Pupils' attainment, as indicated by teacher assessment is good. Pupils achieve at least average attainment.
- The subject leader is keen to develop tracking of pupil progress and introduce Religious Education groups that will use data to inform planning.
- Formal assessments provide good evidence to the pupils' overall progress. They show good evidence needed for higher standards of attainment.
- The quality of pupils' current work, both in class and in written work, is good. Pupils workbooks celebrate their achievements. There is some evidence of developmental marking with the use of driver words. This good practice should be shared across the school to be consistent. This will enable pupils to benefit from challenges, know how well they are progressing and know how to keep improving.

### **The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education**

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education is good.
- Teachers plan good lessons, are confident in their subject expertise and have a good understanding of how pupils learn. As a consequence, pupils apply themselves well and make good progress in lessons and over time.

- Teachers are developing ways to include driver words to differentiate and challenge pupils. This will enable them to communicate high expectations for Religious Education.
- Teachers manage time well to secure good learning in lessons and across sequences of lessons.
- On the day of inspection, teachers planned a variety of creative activities to engage the pupils. Teachers employ a range of appropriate strategies, including individual and collaborative work.
- Teachers used questioning well during lessons to adapt tasks and explanations, so improving learning for pupils. Driver words are used to show differentiation and this practice now needs to be embedded and consistent across the school.
- Plenaries used in some year groups were excellent. They were a celebration and a challenge of children's learning. In one plenary observed, children were shown how faith can be expressed in real lives. The children, having learned of Stephen who was chosen to spread the Good News, saw through a film clip what ordinary people '*do*' for others. Children then expressed how they might live out the Good News, thinking about the *#dosomethingfornothing*.
- Teaching assistants are used well to optimise learning for pupils. They show great care and consideration of the needs of pupils in their care.

### **How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education**

- Leaders and governors are good in promoting, monitoring and evaluating the provision for Religious Education.
- Leaders and governors ensure that the Religious Education curriculum meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference in every respect and in each key stage.
- Leaders and governors ensure that the required amount of curriculum time is given to Religious Education in each key stage. This is reflective in the children's workbooks and portfolios. Leaders and governors now need to embed the monitoring of Religious Education timetabling that shows age appropriate and quality teaching and learning time.
- Leaders and governors ensure that Religious Education is comparable to other core curriculum subjects, in terms of professional development, resourcing, staffing and accommodation.
- Any additional requirements and policies of the Archdiocese regarding the Religious Education curriculum are fully implemented.
- Leaders' and governors' self-evaluation of Religious Education is reflected in assessment, tracking, and some monitoring. Monitoring of Religious Education needs to be rigorous and embedded further to ensure leaders and governors can analyse, evaluate and share current best practice.
- The curriculum leader for Religious Education has worked hard to ensure any new initiatives are in place and staff are supportive of those changes. She attends a local cluster group to share best practice. She is keen to develop her role particularly with development of the delivery of the *Come and See* programme and tracking data to inform planning.
- There is some good evidence through planning that leaders and governors are ensuring that Religious Education is planned to meet the needs of different groups of pupils. Planning shows some differentiation using the driver words. This now needs to be consistent across all planning, teaching and learning to match the tracking of pupils' progress across the school.

## **COLLECTIVE WORSHIP**

### **How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship**

- Pupils response to and participation in the school's Collective Worship is outstanding.
- Pupils act with reverence and are keen to participate in Collective Worship. They sing joyfully, reflect in silence and join in community prayer appropriately and with confidence.
- Pupils are involved in a variety of approaches to prayer which includes scripture, religious artefacts, liturgical music and other forms of prayer both traditional and contemporary. Pupils value and participate voluntarily in liturgy and prayer.
- Pupils regularly prepare and lead worship with confidence, enthusiasm and a degree of independence. They are thoughtful in their planning of liturgy. Other pupils are engaged by the worship opportunities planned by their peers.
- On the day of inspection, pupils gathered reverently to well-prepared, meaningful liturgies and in one worship observed, children led the liturgy with teacher support. The pupils were well prepared and confident in their approach to prayer. Both worships were creative and well resourced. There were moments for silent reflection and appropriate litanies. Pupils gave heartfelt responses when prompted. Go forth messages were clear and enabled the children to spread the message that they had heard.
- Pupils are keen to respond to Scripture and worship leaders encourage children to participate in what they have heard. The heartfelt responses observed on the day of inspection gave children great opportunities to express themselves through worship without the need for teacher assessment. This outstanding practice allows all present in worship, to meet God where they are.
- On the day of inspection, pupils sang joyfully. Older pupils had made a 'rap' to express the liturgical message. The school is keen for children to use *John Burland* music recommended by the Archdiocese to continue to hear the message of Scripture through songs and hymns.
- There are a variety of opportunities throughout the school year for pupils to develop their understanding of the Church's liturgical year and its seasons and feasts.
- The experience of living and working in a faithful, praying community has a positive impact on the spiritual and moral development of the pupils, irrespective of ability or faith background.

### **The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school**

- The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school is good with many outstanding features.
- Collective Worship is part of the life of the school and prayer is included in all school celebrations. Praying together is part of the daily experience for pupils and staff.
- Relevant staff have a good understanding of the Church's liturgical year, seasons and feasts and ensure that pupils have a variety of experiences of the Church's liturgical life.
- Staff are skilled in helping pupils to plan and deliver quality worship when appropriate. They have a good understanding of the purpose of Collective Worship.
- Collective Worship has a purpose, message and direction. The themes chosen for worship reflect the Church's liturgical life. The school would benefit from reorganising a yearly planner that clearly indicates all liturgies with weekly themes. The themes could, for instance, mirror the topics in the Religious Education programme, *Come and See*. This will support and aid teachers when planning for worship by using the Scripture already prepared and age appropriate.
- Opportunities are planned in a manner that facilitates attendance by other adults associated with the pupils and school. The school invites parents and carers to be a part of pupils' liturgies, such as, *Rejoice* celebrations, carols, *Warrington Walking Day* and parish masses throughout the year. The school is keen to keep developing opportunities for parents and other adults to attend class liturgies.

- Collective Worship is planned and resourced well. The school now needs to develop ways of evaluating worship to continue to engage and plan worship in response to the whole school community.

## **How well leaders, governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship**

- Leaders and governors are good in promoting, monitoring and evaluating the provision for Collective Worship.
- Leaders know how to provide clear policies and guidelines to plan and deliver quality Collective Worship. They lead Collective Worship within the school and are appropriate models of good practice for staff and pupils. They promote pupils' planning and leading Collective Worship.
- They have a good understanding of the Church's liturgical year, seasons and feasts and they are able to make these accessible to the pupils in a contemporary context.
- Leaders offer regular support for Collective Worship and the subject leader ensures any Archdiocesan updates are discussed at staff meetings.
- Governors are informed of policy guidelines and are also invited to and attend Collective Worship celebrations.
- Leaders and governors now need to embed regular reviews and formal monitoring of Collective Worship. This will have a greater impact on sharing good and outstanding practices across the school.

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

- Enhance the Catholic Life of the school by:
  - Developing staff spirituality and opportunities for reflection.
  - Continuing to develop how the Relationships and Sex Education programme is being identified and recorded.
- Continue to develop Religious Education further by:
  - Using the driver words consistently to differentiate and challenge in planning, teaching and learning and through developmental marking.
  - Using pupil data from tracking to inform planning.
  - Developing a monitoring timetable to enable analysis, evaluation and sharing good and outstanding practice.
- Continue to develop Collective Worship further by:
  - Providing themes for Collective Worship that aids teachers planning for appropriate Scripture.
  - Developing the monitoring of Collective worship to evaluate, share best practice and plan future worships.



## INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

### OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

How effective the school is in providing Catholic Education	2
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### CATHOLIC LIFE

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 for the Catholic Life of the school	1

### RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education	2
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education	2
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education	2

### COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship	1
The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school	2
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship	2

***Key to judgements: Grade 1 is Outstanding, Grade 2 Good, Grade 3 Requires Improvement and Grade 4 Inadequate***