



DIOCESE OF
SHREWSBURY

DENOMINATIONAL INSPECTION REPORT:

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

School: St Alban's Catholic Primary School
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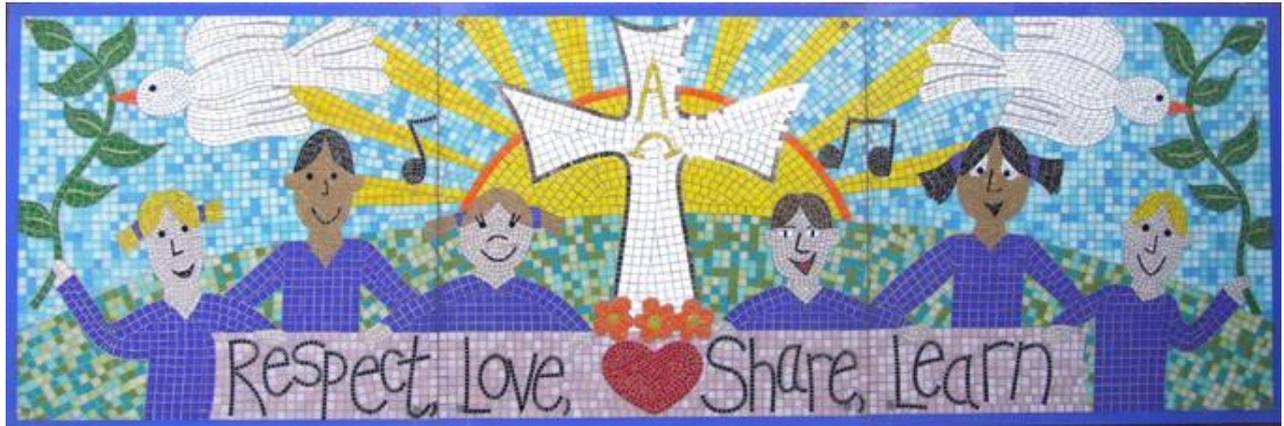
Headteacher: Mrs T Cooke

Chair of Governors: Mr D Caldwell

Date of Inspection: 30 November 2021

Inspectors: Mrs C Morgan
Mrs J Johnson
Mr K Toms

**ST ALBAN'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL
MISSION STATEMENT**



*Love, learn, share and respect in
the light of Jesus.*

SCHOOL: St Alban's Catholic Primary School, Macclesfield

DATE OF LAST INSPECTION: 19th March 2015

JUDGEMENT FROM PREVIOUS INSPECTION: Outstanding

AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT FROM PREVIOUS INSPECTION

There were no issues for development identified in the Monitoring Visit in March 2015. However, the school has identified its own areas for improvement:

Catholic Life

- To continue regular reviews of the School Mission Statement to ensure that it is relevant and understood in the school community and firmly embedded in the daily life of the school.

Religious Education

- To continue regular monitoring of Religious Education through book scrutiny, lesson observations, data analysis and professional dialogue.
- Moderation of assessments within school and within the local cluster of schools.

Collective Worship

- To continue regular modelling, monitoring, and evaluation of the quality of Prayer and Liturgy in school through observation, pupil feedback and professional dialogue.
- Provision of varied opportunities for children and staff to deepen their relationship with God through Prayer and Liturgy.

In all three areas, the school has sought to ensure that staff have access to quality CPDF provided by the Diocese and in house.

PROGRESS MADE WITH AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT FROM THE PREVIOUS INSPECTION

Catholic Life

Annual reviews show that the School Mission Statement continues to be relevant, understood in the school community and firmly embedded in the daily life of the school. The school prayer clearly emphasises the School Mission Statement.

Religious Education

The dedicated and knowledgeable RE Team has delivered regular CPD to staff in all areas of RE, including planning, preparation, resources, and assessment. This has ensured consistent, high quality Religious Education across the school.

Collective Worship

Effective CPDF, relevant resources and a deep desire to provide quality opportunities for spiritual growth have ensured high quality Prayer and Liturgy across the school.

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

1

This is an outstanding Catholic school

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

1

Summary of key findings:

- St Alban's is a vibrant, joyful and caring school where the Mission Statement, 'Love, Learn, Share and Respect in the Light of Jesus', is lived every day by the whole school community.
- Pupils feel valued and cared for and they, in turn, live the Church's mission by responding to the call to help others less fortunate than themselves, both within their community and beyond.
- Pupils' behaviour is exemplary, in lessons and around the school. They show respect for other pupils and for adults and they appreciate the ways in which adults help them to feel safe and nurtured.
- Leaders and governors have a clear vision for the school's role in supporting its community and the whole school staff works hard to support the spiritual, emotional and practical needs of the pupils and their families, particularly during the recent pandemic.
- Teaching is outstanding. RE lessons are exciting, interactive, and build on pupils' prior knowledge, ensuring creative teaching and learning takes place where pupils are highly motivated and make rapid progress.
- Leaders and governors know their school and its community well and work in partnership with the supportive Parish Priest, and the parish, to ensure the school fulfils its mission. The school fulfils all diocesan requirements for RE.
- Collective Worship is varied and interesting, engaging almost all pupils in prayer and reflection. By Year 6, pupils confidently plan and lead Collective Worship

- Staff appreciate the support they receive from the RE Lead and RE team in developing their skills in leading Collective Worship, and in supporting pupils to do so. They speak highly of the support and training they receive from the school and the Diocese, ensuring that St Alban's delivers outstanding Collective Worship.
- The deeply committed Headteacher demonstrates committed leadership, which is strongly supported by the Senior Leadership Team, the governors and the staff and volunteers, ensuring St Alban's continues to be an outstanding school.

What the school needs to do to improve further

- Undertake further Continuing Professional Development and Formation in order to ensure that the new national document on Prayer & Liturgy and the revised Religious Education Curriculum Directory are fully understood and implemented.
- Following the recent period of disruption caused by the pandemic, governors should, when restrictions allow, ensure that their monitoring and evaluation of the Catholic Life of the school, Religious Education and Collective Worship is reimplemented.
- The outstanding practice observed during the inspection should be shared within the local cluster of schools and within the Diocese.

Information about the Inspection

The Inspection of St Alban'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 inspectors 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 three inspectors over one day:

- A range of Collective Worship was observed including a Key Stage Two (KS2) Act of Worship led by the Headteacher, a Key Stage One (KS1) classroom Act of Worship led by a teacher and two KS2 Acts of Worship led by pupils.
- The Growing in Faith Team (GIFT), Mini Vinnies, and a Rosary Group, each led by a parishioner, were also observed.
- The Inspectors observed teaching and learning in all Year Groups.
- Discussions were held with the Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher and Religious Education (RE) Lead, Governors, including the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Multi Academy Trust (MAT), Parish Priest, and representative groups of staff and pupils.
- General conversations were conducted with staff and pupils throughout the day.
- A representative sample of pupils' RE books was scrutinised.
- Files relating to Catholic Life, Religious Education and Collective Worship, as well as pupils' responses to Collective Worship were also made available and scrutinised.
- The school's website was reviewed.
- A wide range of documents was made available including the Diocesan School Evaluation Form (DSEF), RE Action Plan, School Improvement Plan, timetables, parent, staff and pupil questionnaires and correspondence, governors' information, Minutes, and correspondence relating to meetings, and Monitoring reports.
- Displays around the school and in classroom were noted.

Information about this school

- St Alban's, Macclesfield, is a two form Catholic Primary School with independent Pre-School provision on site. There is also an independent before and after school care facility on site.
- There are 330 pupils on roll, of whom 40% are Catholic, 27% of other Christian denominations, 4% of other Faith, 25% of no Faith affiliation and 4% who did not wish to disclose.
- The school is part of the Holy Family of Nazareth Multi Academy Trust, comprising of one High School and three primary schools.
- The school serves the parish of St Alban's.
- St Alban's is a leading partnership school for Initial Teacher Training with Manchester Metropolitan University.
- There are 14 full-time teachers and 4 part-time teachers - total full-time equivalent 16.1.
- There are 12 Teaching/Support Assistants.
- 16 teachers teach Religious Education.
- 5 teachers hold Catholic Certificate of Religious Studies (CCRS) qualifications with a further 6 undertaking CCRS.
- The school holds the Dyslexia kitemark.

Full report – inspection judgments

CATHOLIC LIFE

The Catholic Life of the school is outstanding

1

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

- St Alban's is an outstanding Catholic primary school, where pupils appreciate, value, and actively participate in the Catholic Life of the school.
- The school's Mission Statement, 'Love, Learn, Share and Respect in the Light of Jesus,' is at the heart of everything that is done within the school community and in its reaching out to the local and global community.
- There are strong links between the school, parish, and home.
- Pupils are confident in expressing their religious beliefs and in discussing their views on how they can make a difference to their school and to their world.
- Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They treat each other, staff and visitors with care and respect and there is an environment of warmth and friendliness.
- Pupils are keen to take on leading roles in the Catholic life of the school. They show great commitment to all the activities which support and enhance its Catholic ethos. For example, pupils were keen to demonstrate their involvement in Mini Vinnies, the GIFT, and in the Rosary group; they show their concern for the needs of others and work hard to make a difference through their actions.
- Pupils show great appreciation of the strong pastoral care provided by the school. They present as happy, confident young people who are eager to experience the many opportunities they are offered to grow spiritually, emotionally, and physically. They understand the importance of this within strong, loving relationships.
- All groups of pupils are supported to be the best they can be. Staff work hard to ensure every pupil is included in the full life of the school and this is supported by parental and pupil comments.
- It is evident through the many activities the school undertakes that staff are deeply committed to the Catholic Life of the school. Staff consistently participate in Continuing Professional Development and Formation (CPDF) offered through the school, the parish and the Diocese and speak highly of the opportunities offered to support and deepen their spiritual growth through the prayer life of the school.
- The staff feel this support enables them to develop and sustain a strong commitment to working as a team. They provide excellent role models to the pupils, ensuring both staff and pupils feel nurtured and appreciated.
- Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the Catholic Life of the school. They comment on the strong commitment of the staff, particularly welcome during the recent pandemic. They feel the school ensured that pupils and their families were supported both spiritually and practically. Many parents commented on the way in which the school supported families in need and engaged the whole school community in contributing to that support.

- Regular newsletters keep parents informed of the opportunities for pupils to become involved in the Catholic life of the school and the community and the majority of parents are supportive of all that is on offer.
- The deeply committed Headteacher, RE Lead and Deputy Head, and the RE team, as well as the staff and governors, are clearly focused on the Church's mission in education. They willingly share their deep faith and, as a result, the Catholic Life of the school is at the centre of all that is done. They view the Catholic Life of the school as a core leadership responsibility.
- The school accurately identifies its own strengths and areas for development and considers the views of all stakeholders in its pursuit of excellence.
- The Chair of Governors is the Religious Education Link Governor. The Parish Priest, along with local clergy and parish liturgists are involved in many aspects of the Catholic Life of the school and some are active members of the school's RE team, supporting and leading groups of pupils.
- There is a Link Governor for RSHE. Governors are kept well informed by the Headteacher and RE Lead and visit school regularly (when COVID19 restrictions allow).
- School leaders and governors take advantage of the training and support offered by the Diocese and regularly attend courses and meetings which support them in their roles.
- Through the MAT, there are strong links with other Catholic schools in the area, which supports and enhances the school's development.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Religious Education is outstanding

1

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

- Almost all pupils make at least good, and many make outstanding, progress in each Key Stage, despite their varied starting points.
- Pupils are enthusiastic about their learning; they enjoy the challenge and excitement offered through well-planned, creative lessons.
- In the RE lessons observed, pupils were able to recall their prior learning and used this to support and develop their knowledge and understanding of what they were studying.
- Behaviour in all lessons observed, and around the school, was outstanding. The pupils are keen and eager to learn about all aspects of RE; they are developing a religious literacy which enables them to speak confidently about their RE lessons. Pupils are extremely well motivated and keen to do their best through challenge, praise and affirmation.
- The work in the pupils' RE books is outstanding. They obviously take considerable pride in the content and presentation of their work, which is interesting and varied.
- In the lessons observed during the inspection, teaching was at least good, and most was outstanding.
- Teachers and support staff were seen to ensure that all pupils are actively engaged in their learning; they have high expectations of their pupils.
- Care is taken to ensure that teaching matches all pupils' needs. Differentiation, support, and exciting, interactive experiences are planned to enhance pupils' learning and enjoyment.
- The school complies fully with the requirements of the Bishops' Conference. Religious Education is well resourced, given parity with other core subjects and at least 10% of the timetable is dedicated to the teaching of RE across all year groups.
- The school has been proactive at putting systems in place, which reflect the move nationally towards Age Related Expectations (ARE). These assist leaders and governors to provide the best possible opportunities for all pupils to progress and to achieve their potential. The school works successfully with its partner schools to moderate and support its judgements.
- Throughout the school, displays reflect the current topics.
- Parents are incredibly supportive of the school. One commented: "The school works hard to give children a sense of belonging to the Catholic faith. The Catholic teachings are visible daily in the work the children do and how they are taught to treat each other..." Another parent stated: "It is obvious to all that the school is a happy, caring, and safe learning environment for our children. The teachers care about each child and their individual needs. They foster interest and curiosity whilst guiding the children on their faith journey..."
- The Headteacher, the RE Lead and RE team are inspirational and have a clear vision for the journey of their school, fully supported by the staff, governors, and parents.

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

- In the Acts of Collective Worship observed by the inspectors pupils' interest was engaged in a variety of ways. Pupils' responses were confident, thoughtful, and relevant.
- Pupil-led Collective Worship was related to the current RE topic and the liturgical season of Advent. Pupils are supported and encouraged to plan creative and prayerful experiences.
- As they move through the school, pupils gain confidence and expertise in planning and leading Collective Worship. According to their age, they understand the relevant themes of the Church's year, its feasts, and celebrations, and about how Prayer and Liturgy is structured in different ways for different occasions.
- During the inspection, there was an opportunity to observe a voluntary lunchtime Rosary group, which was led by a parishioner. This provided a calm, thoughtful place for reflection and the group was confident and comfortable in participating in quiet prayer.
- In each classroom and in the halls and corridors, there are interactive areas for prayer and reflection on a seasonal theme such as Advent.
- Prayer is central to the daily life of the school and pupils experience many forms of prayer, during the school day and during Collective Worship. The school prayer is well known by almost all pupils and is linked to the Mission Statement. During their time at St Alban's, pupils experience many forms of worship and from this they are able to grow spiritually and morally. Pupils are skilled at writing their own prayers for Collective Worship and in relation to their RE lessons.
- The Parish Priest attends many of the school's celebrations, as well as some governors and parishioners.
- Leaders have ensured that the excellent resources provided for Collective Worship are used to inspire and promote collective and individual prayer and reflection. From the Reception class onwards, pupils are encouraged to choose appropriate resources to enhance their liturgical experiences. This was evident in the classroom-based Collective Worship observed during the inspection.
- Pupils confidently help to plan and lead parish family Masses and there is an excellent relationship between the school, families, and the parish. This is much appreciated by the families and the school.
- Staff are enthusiastic about the way in which prayer and reflection has been embedded into their staff meeting time and praise the RE Coordinator and RE team for planning and leading thoughtful and thought-provoking prayer experiences. Staff feel more confident in leading prayer and reflection and welcome the opportunities offered to do so.

- Staff are very well guided in planning and leading Acts of Collective Worship. The RE Coordinator, Headteacher and RE team ensure that Collective Worship is always carefully planned with a clear message and is relevant to the occasion. This is appreciated by pupils, parents and staff who participate joyfully in the school's liturgies. One parent commented: "Our children come home talking about what they have learned in school and our child particularly enjoys participating in prayer and liturgy...".
- Monitoring of Collective Worship by the Headteacher and RE Lead was suspended during the recent pandemic but has now resumed. During monitoring, points for future development are noted and staff and pupils are encouraged to work creatively to plan and deliver meaningful and memorable worship. Modelling outstanding Collective Worship, and CPDF will support this.
- When restrictions allow, governors carry out monitoring and evaluation of Collective Worship. Governors should evaluate all monitoring and ensure that development points are acted upon.
- The Parish Priest, and leaders and governors, ensure that Collective Worship as well as the RE curriculum plays a vibrant part of the Catholic Life of the school.
- The effect of being immersed in a faithful, praying community is obvious in the deep sense of respect the pupils use when talking about or to those who are not of the Catholic faith. Through prayer and liturgy, all pupils, irrespective of faith or ability, develop morally and spiritually during their time at St Alban's.