



Catholic Schools Inspectorate inspection report for St Alban's Catholic Primary And Nursery School

URN: 106771

Carried out on behalf of the Right Rev. Ralph Heskett, Bishop of Hallam on:

Date: 6-7 December 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 fully to the areas for improvement from the last inspection	Fully

Summary of key findings

What the school does well

- Strong relationships are the bedrock of all that takes place at St Alban's. The school exudes a culture of warmth, welcome and inclusion.
- Staff provide the highest level of pastoral care in response to the needs of pupils, families and each other.
- Leaders, including governors, demonstrate a deep commitment to the Catholic life and mission of the school.
- Pupils enjoy their learning in religious education, engaging well in lessons and demonstrating interest and enthusiasm.
- The regular celebration of Mass in church, with the school and parish community united in prayer, is a time which is cherished by all.

What the school needs to improve:

- Ensure that pupils, relative to their age and capacity, explicitly understand how well they are doing and how they can improve their work in religious education.
- Adhere to a consistent approach to marking and feedback in religious education across the school.
- Enable pupils to gain ownership of the planning, delivery and evaluation of collective worship.

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:.....

1

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

1

Leadership

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

1



Pupils are happy and settled at school because they know that they are loved and cherished at St Alban's. Pupils value what the school offers in relation to its Catholic life and mission. They can recite the revised mission statement and the 'children's promises', which they were involved in devising. They show an awareness of the school's values and ethos in their exemplary behaviour, though they are not able to routinely talk about this with ease as being related to the Catholic nature of the school. However, they demonstrate the Catholic characteristics which they see and hear about at school, so that they are loving towards and accepting of each other; they are highly respectful of their peers, adults and the environment. They enjoy opportunities to carry out activities which support those in need, involving themselves in charity work which is helping them to develop their understanding of the principles of Catholic Social Teaching.

Staff have worked hard to create an atmosphere conducive to learning which also helps pupils to feel settled, calm and happy. Staff embrace the mission of the school: they live it out through the quality of their relationships, at all levels, and their unwavering commitment to enabling pupils to flourish. The level of pastoral care and love shown by staff is outstanding. This contributes to the lived sense of community in the school: parents fully appreciate the fact that staff 'go the extra mile' to support and value each individual, without exception. For example, parents and carers comment that, 'there is a lot of love here and that shines in the children'. There is a spirit of generous hospitality which draws together all members, no matter their background, belief or culture. As a result, staff are true role models, bearing witness to the Catholic life and mission of the school. The physical environment is neat, tidy and well kept: a sense of pride exists. Chaplaincy provision is recognised as an important part of school life and resources are subsequently directed to this aspect.

Leaders, including governors, are explicit about their vocation to support the Church's mission in education. They recognise that the school is 'the Church' and work in close partnership with the parish priest and parishioners, accompanying pupils and families in their faith journeys. They say, 'We work hard for children to develop spiritually and socially'. The headteacher is resolute in her drive to provide the strongest support for pupils, actively promoting and embodying the school's mission and enabling the pupils to fulfil their own 'children's promises'. Leaders, including governors, therefore, direct resources effectively to benefit those most in need, both materially and educationally. This extends to the development of nursery provision from two years of age, and the employment of committed teaching assistants, whose calming influence supports the smooth running of the school day. Leaders and governors have a high regard for the dignity and rights of workers: this has not gone unnoticed by staff, who recognise and value the positive way in which they are cared for and treated. Leaders can see how Catholic Social Teaching principles can permeate the wider curriculum and have plans to investigate this further. Professional development in relation to the Catholic life and mission of the school is well received and this is having a positive impact on the understanding, competence and commitment of the wider staff team.

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 enjoy their learning in religious education. They listen to input from teachers and pay good attention; they work well alongside their peers when carrying out paired tasks or group work, taking turns and showing respect for the opinions of others. Learning time is rarely lost because pupils try hard to focus and they want to do well. Pupils are not always clear how well they are doing or how they might improve their work: however, they know that they are expected to do their best, and they aim to please and meet the expectations of teachers. Pupils are beginning to make some connections between what they learn in their religious education lessons and how they live their lives, though they do not make extended links in their written work to scripture, prayers or hymns. This limits independence and improvement. Pupils make an effort to present work well: in the best examples, work is completed neatly and in a timely fashion. In conversation, pupils demonstrate the ability to remember prior learning and can talk about previous topics they have enjoyed, pointing out work of which they are proud. Where creative activities are included in lessons, pupils respond positively: in Key Stage 1, pupils can explain the message to Mary of the Angel Gabriel: 'I bring good news: there's a baby!'.

Teachers have developed confidence in their subject knowledge since the last inspection. They have a good understanding of how pupils learn and this is evident in the variety of tasks which they plan and present in lessons. Teachers have been working hard on asking pertinent questions, trying to engage pupils in a deeper understanding of the curriculum in religious education: they recognise that this is an ongoing priority across the school. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, teachers do this particularly well: they give clear feedback and address misconceptions as they arise. Teachers do not clearly point out to pupils how they can improve their work. When marking pieces of written work, there can be an overreliance on checking

spellings rather than keeping a focus on the quality and content of what has been written. However, verbal feedback keeps learners on track in lessons and supports pupil progress. In the best examples, teachers follow the agreed marking and feedback policy to good effect. Pupils' efforts in all classes are celebrated by staff, leading to a rise in pupils' motivation. Teaching assistants make a good contribution: they know pupils well and attend to their needs calmly and appropriately.

Much work has been undertaken by leaders to address the areas for improvement from the last canonical inspection. Leaders ensure that the programme for religious education is followed faithfully in all year groups, delivering a good level of learning which is in line with and comparable to other core curriculum subjects. Where support is needed, the leader for religious education teaches alongside colleagues and acts as a mentor for teachers new to the profession, which is much appreciated and valued. Leaders, including governors, carry out monitoring activities on a regular basis, though the evaluation and impact of these activities is less well developed. Leaders and governors ensure that opportunities are available for further professional development, in close association with the diocese and other schools within the St Clare's Catholic Multi-Academy Trust; they dedicate resources to ensure that staff have the support and materials they need.

Collective worship

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

Religious education 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 respond well to the experiences of prayer and liturgy on offer. They reflect in reverent silence, join in confidently with traditional prayers and sing particularly beautifully. Pupils are clear about the four-part structure to celebrations of the word, where they gather, listen to scripture, reflect and respond, and conclude with a mission. They can talk about the appropriate religious artefacts which should adorn a prayer table or focus area, showing understanding of Catholic traditions. Pupils work well with each other and with adults when leading celebrations of the word. On some occasions they directly prepare aspects, such as writing their own 'prayers of the faithful' for Mass. They do not routinely plan most or all the elements of whole school celebrations of the word, though they ably accompany adults and read prepared scripts willingly on a regular basis. Some evaluation of the quality of prayer and liturgy is undertaken by pupils, but this tends to be recorded in a single line of feedback, so it is difficult to trace where pupil evaluation has had a positive impact and led to improvement. Pupils are moved by the prayer life of their school.

Prayer and liturgy remain central to school life, with prayer punctuating the day and regular visits planned for the community to attend parish and school Masses in the local church. A range of ways to pray are provided: whole school and class opportunities are a firm feature of each week; prayer bags and prayer journals are taken home by pupils so that families can benefit and enjoy prayerful times as well. Parents are invited into school to join the community for liturgical celebrations, which is greatly appreciated and described as 'joyous'. Scripture is shared, though adults usually take the lead on choosing the theme or passage rather than pupils. Staff demonstrate good practice: they help pupils to feel confident about leading others and reading aloud. Space is used well: the wide corridors are used, for example, to display

nativity sets during Advent and enable pupils to develop their understanding of this important season. Classrooms have a designated area reflecting the school's prayer life: these follow an agreed format and the school's system is visible and consistent.

Leaders, including governors, show a commitment to the faith development of all pupils. They work hard to ensure that pupils are involved in leading the community in prayer and have some input in aspects of planning, for example alongside the lay chaplain. There is not a clear overview in place regarding the sequence of skills to be built up, year on year, for pupil-led planning and delivery of celebrations of the word. Leaders have, however, prioritised holy days of obligation and significant days in the both the Church and school calendars, ensuring that these are appropriate and accessible for all. The relationship with the parish priest ensures that pupils have a positive experience of being part of a faith-filled community: he is immensely supportive of the school staff and leaders and enhances leadership by his own contribution. Self-evaluation of collective worship is undertaken, although pupils do not play a significant part. Leaders, including governors, recognise the importance of setting aside budget and resourcing to support prayer and liturgy: when recently upgrading the school building, the prayer room was included in refurbishment and this has become a welcoming sacred space.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Alban's Catholic Primary and Nursery School
School unique reference number (URN)	106771
Full postal address of the school	Wadworth Street, Denaby Main, Doncaster, South Yorkshire, DN12 4AQ
School phone number	01709 862298
Name of head teacher or principal	Lindsey Ebsworth
Chair of governing board	John Cape
School Website	www.st-albans.doncaster.sch.uk
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	St Clare's Catholic Multi-Academy Trust
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy
Age-range of pupils	2-11 years
Trustees	Diocese of Hallam
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	28 July 2016
Previous denominational inspection grade	2

The inspection team

Fionuala Boucher	Lead inspector
Ellen Archer	Team inspector

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

Key to grade judgements