



St Alban's Catholic Primary School Walker

URN: 148447

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of Bishop Stephen Wright, Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle

19–20 March 2025

Summary of key findings

Overall effectiveness

The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school

Catholic life and mission (p.3)

How faithfully the school responds to the call to live as a Catholic community at the service of the Church's educational mission

2

Religious education (p.5)

The quality of curriculum religious education

2

Collective worship (p.7)

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

2

The school is fully compliant with the general norms for religious education laid down by the Bishops' Conference

Yes

The school is fully compliant with any additional requirements of the diocesan bishop

Yes

The school has responded to the areas for improvement from the last inspection

Fully

2

Compliance statement

- St Alban's Catholic Primary School is fully compliant in relation to curriculum time dedicated to the teaching of religious education laid down by the Bishops' Conference.
- St Alban's Catholic Primary School is fully compliant with the requirements of the Diocesan Bishop.
- St Alban's Catholic Primary School has responded to and met the areas for further development which were identified within the last inspection.

What the school does well

- There is a tangible sense of community at St Alban's Catholic Primary School. Staff care for all pupils, and pupils feel safe, secure and loved, particularly those who are disadvantaged.
- Leaders have a clear vision for the school, and have successfully evaluated the school strengths and areas for improvement.
- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are excellent throughout the school.
- The relationships with parents, parish and community are strong, and the school is one of inclusivity. All are welcome.

What the school needs to improve

- Ensure pupils have a clear understanding of the principles of Catholic social teaching and how they can act these out on a daily basis.
- Religious education lessons are more creative, providing pupils with a wider range of activities that engage and excite.
- Develop pupils' evaluation of celebration of the word, and provide opportunities to act upon this evaluation.

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

Pupil outcomes

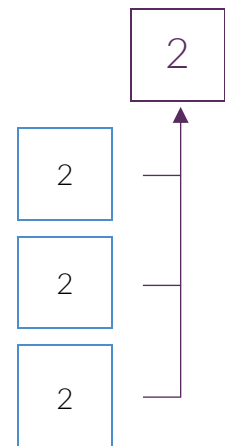
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

Provision

The quality of provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school

Leadership

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



At St Alban's Catholic Primary School, pupils are happy and confident. They have a clear love of learning. Behaviour is consistently good in all year groups, with high expectations from staff. Observations in the playground show pupils who are self-regulated and display kindness to their friends. All pupils move around school sensibly and with respect for one another. Pupils are able to discuss how the teaching and example of Jesus influences their actions, both in and out of school, with one pupil in Year 5 stating that he wants to be, 'An example to others of how Jesus wants me to be.' Pupils in early years classes consistently show respect for their environment and were particularly caring in Reception when looking after 'God's lovely creatures'. Pupils are able to talk about what they do to support beyond the school walls, and are actively engaged in Catholic mission, such as singing in the community and taking part in the Cafod 'Big Lent Walk'. However, pupils are not yet able to explain the reasons behind the principles of Catholic social teaching.

School provides a joyful and welcoming community, described by a governor as, 'an oasis for our pupils'. Pupils and staff understand the school mission statement, 'At St Alban's we are proud to celebrate each individual for all that they are. We are a caring community, enjoying and excelling in the presence of God.' The mission statement is regularly reviewed, ensuring all stakeholders fully understand its meaning and purpose. Staff show a clear commitment and understanding of the school's mission and what it personally means to them. This includes staff regularly attending parish Mass and giving support to disadvantaged members of the community. Relationships between staff and pupils are extremely strong, and staff are clear role models for both their colleagues and the pupils in school. There are obvious warm and supportive relationships between colleagues in school, identified by one staff member who stated that, 'I

could not have been part of a more caring and supportive community.' Staff clearly live out gospel values in their relationships and, as stated by the parish priest they 'let the children come'. This is particularly evident in pupils who have special educational needs and disabilities, where increased love and care is displayed by staff. A programme for relationships and health education is well planned, and pupils can talk about how this influences their day to day friendships and actions.

The executive headteacher and head of school have a clear vision for Catholic life and mission in this school, and with support from governors have identified precise areas of need. They see this mission as an intrinsic part of school development. The relationship between school and parish, especially with the priest, is very strong, and leaders seek ways to further strengthen this relationship, such as inviting parishioners for informal celebrations. Parents are supportive of the school's mission, and welcome opportunities to be involved in this. One stated that, 'It is a school of community and care.' The school puts its mission into practice and demonstrates a commitment to the disadvantaged in the community, such as the 'Canny Friday' food appeal, and all staff are able to articulate how this mission underpins all that they do as a Catholic school. The school environment clearly displays its Catholic mission. Displays celebrate the uniqueness of the school, identifying how pupils can grow in the image of God. Pupils are rightly proud of their school surroundings.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

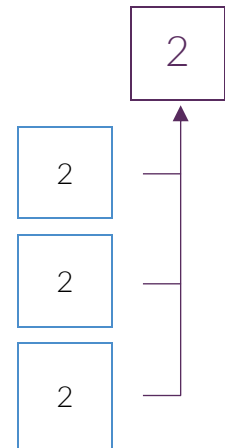
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

Provision

The quality of teaching, learning, and assessment in religious education

Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for religious education



Pupils enjoy religious education in every class, and this was clear through the engagement and interest seen in observed lessons. In discussion, pupils were unanimously positive in the response to whether religious education was well taught in school. At the time of inspection, most pupils school are achieving at an expected level, and coverage of the curriculum is in line with expectations. In most classes, religiously literate pupils show good understanding of prior learning in the subject through 'Flashback 5', which checks their understanding of concepts taught both recently and in the units during the past year. This helps the pupils know more and remember more. However, in some classes, the understanding and use of key vocabulary is inconsistent. In addition, some pupils were unsure of how they had achieved and how to improve their work. Presentation and productivity in most classes is excellent, and pupils rightly feel proud of their work, which shows clear care, with one older pupil stating that, "We take more care with our work in religious education because it is about Jesus." Pupils' independence and engagement in religious education is very good, with even the youngest children showing high levels of concentration and a willingness to participate.

Teachers are committed to the purpose of religious education, and in most classes ensure that there is parity with other core subjects in both quantity and quality. There is an appropriate use of scripture which is used consistently throughout the school, and this is reflected in workbooks. Productivity in books is mainly good, however, there are limited opportunities to present work in more creative ways. Teachers use questioning and ongoing assessment well in most classes, which enhances the learning for pupils, and indicates to staff the level of pupils' understanding. A good example of this was in Year 1, where a pupil's misconception about making sensible choices was swiftly identified by the class teacher and successfully addressed. However, in some classes, marking does not sufficiently help pupils understand how to improve their learning,

meaning opportunities to scaffold further support are missed. Staff consistently praise pupil's work and effort, and encourage them to be motivated and to achieve their best. Teachers throughout the school plan using key resources from the Diocese. Additional adults are used effectively to support pupils, especially those with additional needs.

Leaders and governors ensure that the religious education curriculum complies with Diocesan requirements and follows the *Religious Education Curriculum Directory*. It is taught in a clearly sequential manner from Nursery through to Year 6. There is clear parity between this and other core subjects, both in terms of curriculum time as well as in terms of resourcing. School self-evaluation of religious education is rigorous and, through the monitoring of lessons and pupils' books, school leaders have recognised the strengths and areas for improvement in the school. This has led to the identification of specific professional development needs for some newer members of staff, with two members of staff enrolled onto the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies programme. The development of enrichment activities to enhance religious education was identified by leaders as an area to improve. This development is showing positive signs of progress. Opportunities to learn in a more creative way was also identified as a wish when discussing the subject with older pupils. The subject leader of religious education attends all relevant Diocesan training and updates. She has a clear vision for teaching and learning in religious education and is a well appreciated source of knowledge and support for all staff within school.

Collective worship

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

Collective worship key judgement grade

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

2

Pupils throughout school are engaged in worship and participate fully. Pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 joined in whole school worship with enthusiasm, reverence and a clear understanding of the importance of the service, with meditation, reflection and singing. Younger children in Nursery and Reception classes joined in class prayer with eagerness and already know the routines of daily prayer. As they progress through school, pupils plan together with increasing independence. They are confident to include a variety of ways to engage and include others, such as silence, music, reflective tasks, and the use of scripture. Pupils now need to evaluate the quality of these carefully, so that they can deliver consistently high-quality experiences for others. Pupils throughout school understand the liturgical season, and were able to describe the importance of the colours of the cloths, as well as ways in which the school and parish community recognise and celebrate these times. Prayer is often centred around the particular needs of the school or individuals, for example, pupils planned a celebration of the word based on friendship for a pupil who was leaving the school. Pupils welcome the opportunity presented to worship alongside parishioners in church, while family Mass on Saturdays presents the community with the chance to share their faith.

Prayer and liturgy is a central purpose of St Alban's, and children recognise the many opportunities that they have to pray. There is a clear weekly routine of prayer and worship which is well embedded. Pupils in Key Stage 2 were enthusiastic about the creative prayer opportunities presented in many classes, as well as the formation of a pupil led Rosary Club which was very well attended. Use of scripture is the heart of prayer and liturgy in school, and themes and content are suitably chosen to match the Church's year. Each class has a 'Prayer and Liturgy' book where they record their prayer and liturgy activities. Staff are inspiring role models, not only in leading but also in participation. Music and artefacts are used well, while prayer

spaces, both in and out of classrooms, are very well prepared and enhance the prayer life of the school. Governors, parents and the community are welcome at key celebrations and the school works incredibly hard to secure the flourishing partnership with the local parish, aiming to support pupils and their families in participating fully in liturgy.

School leaders place great importance on high quality liturgical prayer and worship throughout St Alban's. Leaders, including the religious education subject leader and parish priest, ensure that staff receive appropriate support and guidance in delivering prayer and liturgy, which results in increased levels of confidence for all staff. Leaders ensure that the provision for prayer is well resourced through allocation of resources and time, therefore high-quality prayer experiences that reflect the Catholic tradition and mission of the Church are engaging and enriching. Pupils are developing leadership skills as they progress through school, with some evidence of high-quality pupil led worship in older year groups. Pupils, however, do not yet have the skills to critically evaluate worship throughout school. The school has a planned programme so that children and staff have the opportunity to attend Mass, holy days of obligation and other significant days, such as the Feast of St Alban, and have ensured that all in the school community have access to these events. Leaders evaluate the impact of prayer and liturgy and monitor the impact of their actions to ensure that prayer is the foundation that underpins the school community.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Alban's Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	148447
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	3913874
Full postal address of the school	St Alban's Catholic Primary School, Westbourne Avenue, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, NE6 4HQ
School phone number	01912625552
Executive Headteacher	Louise Nealings
Chair of local governing body	Dominic Curran
School Website	https://www.stalbansrcnewcastle.co.uk/
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	Bishop Bewick Catholic Education Trust
Phase	Primary
Type of school	Academy
Admissions policy	Non-selective
Age-range of pupils	3-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	May 2018
Previous denominational inspection grade	2

The inspection team

Paul Craig

Nicola Noble

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