



# St Alban's Catholic Primary School

URN: 119706

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Bishop of Salford

03–04 July 2024

## 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 curriculum requirements laid down by the Bishops' Conference

Yes

The school is fully compliant with all requirements of the diocesan bishop

Yes

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

Fully

2

## What the school does well

- The school has pupils who are well behaved, attentive and keen to learn.
- Care and love is clearly demonstrated for all, especially the most vulnerable.
- There are a growing range of opportunities for pupils to participate in the prayer and Catholic life of the school.
- Pupils praise with enthusiasm through songs and actions.

## What the school needs to improve

- The school requires a clear and effective assessment system to be implemented which is clearly understood and consistently applied by staff leading to progress at a level matched to pupil ability.

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- Pupil leaders need to be able to plan and deliver prayer and liturgy which is aligned to their own experience, age and ability and also the classes they are working alongside and not be restricted by a set framework to follow.
  - Regular opportunities need to be sought and evidenced for pupils to produce individual and creative responses in their learning.

## 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

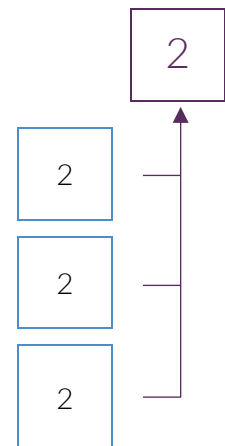
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

#### 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



The pupils of St Alban's recognise the Catholic life and mission of their school and they show a clear love of their school and the opportunities that are offered to them. This was summed up effectively by a child who said, "Everyone is lovely and is like a family to me at my school." A further child was keen to speak about how he had left the school but then returned and 'it was like coming back home'. Pupils clearly care for their school, local community and serving those in need. To be outstanding, the children need to have the opportunity to fully articulate why they are taking actions, who this is supporting and the impact that this has had upon others. Pupils demonstrated a clear respect for themselves and others. The children were extremely honest in their views and their positivity about their school and how staff are able to support their personal development. Behaviour in the school was seen to be at least good at all times, both in and out of the classroom.

The school has a clear mission statement which is known by the pupils and is referred to often. However, the impact of the mission statement is limited as pupils do not feel that they have ownership of this mission or how this impacts upon their school life and individual or collective mission. There is a clear sense of community within the school and several parents commented upon the centrality of the school within their community linked together with the parish church. Several parents, who have children at the school with significant special educational needs and/or disabilities, spoke about how they have been made to feel welcomed by the school and that the needs of their child have been carefully considered to ensure that they are involved fully within the school life. The school environment does reflect the mission and identity of the school, however the pupils require a deeper understanding of the purpose of their environment and to feel that they are fully involved in the development of this. There is a strong and loving

connection with the school's parish priest who is clearly an integral part of the school's daily life. Pupils, staff and families speak about the warm welcome they receive from him and how valued the support received from him is. The provision for relationships sex and health education within the school meets both the statutory and diocesan requirements.

Governors of the school speak passionately about their commitment to developing and strengthening the Church's mission in their school. Leaders are determined to further the Catholic mission of the school and are able to clearly identify the challenges they face and the steps they have taken to remove these barriers. Governors are now established in suitable positions at the school to be able to effectively challenge and support future developments to take place. Leaders have worked effectively with other local schools to identify core targets and steps for development. Resources within the school cater well for the needs of the pupils and funding has been effectively directed to the development of religion at all levels. The wellbeing of staff is well considered and staff spoke about feeling supported in their roles and in the steps that they need to take in order to further progress. Staff feel that they have regular opportunities for professional development and for discussion around furthering the curriculum. Those new to the school were able to speak about how they had been effectively supported to participate fully in the Catholic life of the school. Pupils do feel that they participate in developing the school's Catholic life and mission but they need to be clearer in their role within this and the impact that their actions have.

## Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

### Religious education key judgement grade

**Pupil outcomes**

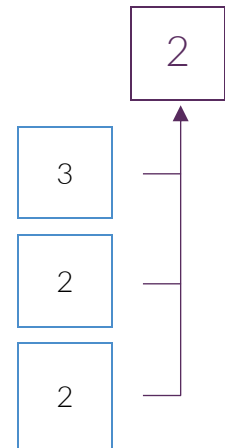
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

**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 are developing secure knowledge, understanding and skills, however this progress could be deeper and more substantial with a more consistent approach to expectations and assessment within the school. Although pupils demonstrate a high level of curiosity and a desire to succeed, there is limited evidence demonstrated regarding the progression of pupils due to a wide range of different approaches being taken to assessment and moderation. There are several systems in place within the school which need to be more effectively planned and implemented in order for these to have a consistent impact upon the development of knowledge and skills over time. This further means that pupils are not always effectively challenged at a level suited to their potential, as staff are not fully aware of the areas of success for pupils and those which require further development. Feedback to pupils needs to be consistently applied and linked carefully to the learning objective which should be consistent with the desired outcomes for the session. Although attainment is assessed by the school as being in line or above that of other curriculum areas, it is difficult to validate this view due to the inconsistencies within assessment in religion education. Pupils are engaged in their learning, and many of the pupils spoke about their enjoyment of religion lessons. Pupils are inquisitive and have a natural desire to further develop as competent learners. As a result of this, behaviour in lessons was consistently at least good.

Teachers have a growing confidence in their subject knowledge and feel that this has been developed over time through training and support. This leads to teaching which is consistently good. Teachers clearly value religious education and this is given dedicated time within the school day. This was regularly seen to be a 'special time' within the school day. Questioning throughout lessons is thoughtful and leads to some in depth discussion amongst pupils. Pupils are able to clearly demonstrate their curiosity for developing knowledge through the use of

effective questioning, seen within lessons and also when speaking directly to the children. They are able to clearly articulate what they have learned and how this relates to their own life. Opportunities for reflection were taken during lessons and this had a clear impact for pupils who were able to relate their learning to their personal experiences. In those lessons that were most effective, pupils were highly engaged in their learning and had a desire to complete the activities that were presented to them. This improved understanding for most pupils within these lessons.

Religious education at St Alban's follows the 'Come and See' framework, and leaders have also considered further developments that are required to this curriculum in order to ensure that it is more relevant to their pupils. Leaders ensure that religious education has full parity with other curriculum subjects. Leaders need to ensure that they have a clear understanding of what are the expected outcomes for the different groups and abilities of learners and that these expectations are shared clearly with all staff and can be clearly evidenced in pupil's books. Leaders need to ensure that a consistent format for feedback and assessment, alongside monitoring, is implemented that leads to clear evidence of areas where pupils are succeeding and those areas which require further development. Leaders were able to recognise in discussion the areas that they need to carefully consider and develop to further the school's religious education provision and identified the significant impact that this could have upon the development of pupils over time.

## 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 the school respond well to the experiences of prayer and liturgy provided for them. In every class, children recognised that during prayer their classroom became a 'sacred space' and this was reflected by the reverence with which the pupils participated in liturgy. Within every class, pupils were able to access scripture which was appropriate to the theme taken throughout the school. Opportunities for silence and reflection were also used effectively in all classes. Pupils were given the opportunity to participate fully within each class and there were several examples of children being able to support and lead prayer and liturgy where this was appropriate. At all times, behaviour was very good, leading to a meaningful and spiritual experience for all pupils.

Prayer and liturgy is carefully planned. There is a daily pattern of prayer within each classroom which follows the liturgical calendar and also reflects the celebration of significant events for the school. The children spoke about the time for prayer as being 'a time to be with God' and 'a special time to think'. Scripture is selected that is appropriate for the age and ability of the children and which fully reflects the age and understanding of the pupils to enhance their prayer experience. The school should ensure that scripture is consistently treated with reverence and where possible is read directly from a bible rather than pieces of paper. Staff are fully engaged and speak about the support they have received to develop their own understanding and confidence in the effective delivery of prayer and liturgy. They feel confident in being able to use materials provided by the school and feel that there is a growing ability to develop prayer opportunities for every child. Music and singing are used particularly effectively to establish the setting as a peaceful and calm environment and also to enhance moments of reflection and thoughtfulness. Pupils sing with enthusiasm and use their voices along with actions to further enhance their experience. The school needs to build upon this energy from the pupils to enhance

the opportunities for pupils to have a wider variety of prayerful activities. The school has established a prayer room which is well utilised and is looking at the ways in which other spaces in the building can be more effectively developed. Each classroom has an altar which is treated with reverence by the children and they can speak about how they have had the opportunity to bring items to this linked to their prayer and liturgy and also, 'it is somewhere to go to think and to pray'. The school has sought to work effectively with the local parish to develop the prayer life of the pupils which is reflected in the connection between the parish priest, staff, pupils and families.

The school has a well-established policy for prayer and liturgy which is followed consistently throughout the school. Pupil leaders are confident in their delivery of prayer and liturgy with other classes and speak with pride about the work that they carry out with a range of classes throughout the school. For this to be outstanding, pupils need to be able to have a greater level of independence in their planning and organising of the prayer and liturgy and developing this further than the set template which is used in all classes. This will allow the pupil leaders to use their skills and confidence to prepare and deliver prayer and liturgy which is fully suited to the age and ability of the children they are leading. Pupils should also be given greater opportunity to be involved in the evaluation of prayer and liturgy at all levels of the school. This will allow them to express their thoughts about what is most relevant and important to them and will help them to develop their prayer life more fully and deeply as they have a desire to have a deeper level of understanding and participation.



## Information about the school

Full name of school	St Alban's Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	119706
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	8893999
Full postal address of the school	St Alban's Catholic Primary School, Trinity Street, Blackburn, BB1 5BN
School phone number	0125457582
Headteacher	Claire Speakman
Chair of Governors	Ted Baker
School Website	<a href="http://www.stalbansrcprimaryschool.co.uk/">www.stalbansrcprimaryschool.co.uk/</a>
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	N/A
Phase	Primary
Type of school	Voluntary Aided School
Admissions policy	N/A
Age-range of pupils	3-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	13 <sup>th</sup> November 2015
Previous denominational inspection grade	Good

## The inspection team

Carl McIver

Annemarie Bell

Lead inspector

Team inspector

## 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