



St Edward's Catholic Primary School

URN: 119666

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Bishop of Salford

25–26 January 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

Religious education (p.5)

The quality of curriculum religious education

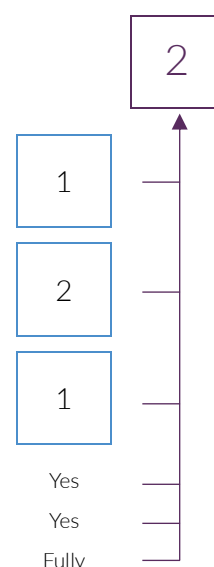
Collective worship (p.7)

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

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 to the areas for improvement from the last inspection



What the school does well

The headteacher leads the school with energy and determination to ensure that it grows in its mission. The staff team and governors share this collective drive with her superbly supported by the parish priest. The result is a flourishing and happy Catholic school.

St. Edward's is a school which is highly inclusive. It provides an excellent quality of care for all the children including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities or who are vulnerable. This is fully recognised by parents who hold the school in very high regard.

The learning environment provided for the children is outstanding. Every space is carefully used with the children and their needs in mind. This is complimented with a deeply caring culture reflecting the mission statement in action.

School leaders have invested hugely in developing collective worship in the school providing a wide range of opportunities for prayer and liturgy. This whole school focus has been led extremely successfully and is leading to improved experiences and outcomes for the children. This is having a direct and positive impact on the Catholic life and mission of the school.

Pupils have good attitudes to learning. They are very well behaved and enjoy strong friendships. They love coming to school and the care they show each other is a privilege to witness.

What the school needs to improve

To provide for the children a wider range of opportunities for the deeper exploration of scripture in religious education and personal prayer, so that they can more eloquently express their knowledge of the Bible and the relevance of this in their own lives.

To give opportunities for staff development to support them to improve their skills and knowledge to raise the quality of teaching and learning so that children experience greater challenge and are able to give increasingly complex and well-structured responses.

To use questioning in a more effective way to challenge the children in their skills of enquiry to encourage deeper thinking so that they have a more mature approach to the big questions and in their roles as ambassadors and stewards of creation.

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

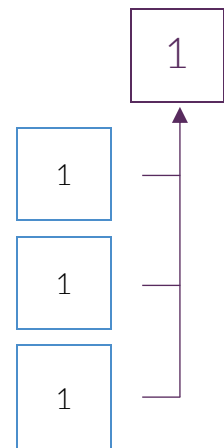
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

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



Providing an authentic Catholic school with its Christian mission at heart is a clear and tangible priority at St. Edward's. They do this outstandingly well. Relationships across the school are strong, giving a shared sense of community, of which everyone is very proud. This is complimented by a physical environment which is thoughtfully planned out. Each space is used creatively to enhance the school experience of the pupils and to support them with their needs. Displays throughout the school reflect the strong ethos and the result is a bright, tidy and purposeful learning environment. The quality of care provided for children with special educational needs and/ or disabilities (SEND) and different vulnerabilities is a key strength of the school. Provision is well thought out and planned to support these children and their families. St. Edward's is a highly welcoming community including new arrivals to the school. Consequently, this assists the pupils to develop and enjoy strong friendships. As one boy expressed 'it doesn't matter if you are different in any way, you are still treated the same'. They are quick to support each other if they feel emotional or upset. In a very personalised class prayer time, two children put their arms around a friend when she felt emotional. The recently reviewed mission statement involved all stakeholders in the school. It is now alive throughout and gives the foundation for St. Edward's as a unique place to learn. Parents hold the school in very high regard. They talk about a very inclusive school where all are included. One parent mentioned how her daughter came home every day enthusiastically talking about religious education, faith and values. Another parent added that her child gets upset during the holidays as she wants to be in school. Pupils feel safe in school and talk about the sense of happiness and fairness they feel. Parents feel more involved with the school and greatly appreciate the extent they are listened to, in a wide range of ways.

Pupils enthusiastically take on ambassadorial roles and love the responsibility they are given. They are proud of the wide range of charitable acts they do. 'Each little thing we do has an impact' is a typical view of the pupils. CAFOD, Caritas and McMillan are amongst the charities supported as well as Collins, a little boy in Africa. The children are aware of global and local ecological issues and can talk competently about the challenges facing the world we live in. The school encourages them to be proactive and to have a say. As one parent described, 'In the best way possible, it's the kids that run this school'. Chaplains are well trained and enjoy a key role in the school. Supported by the religious education subject leader, they are very well organised. St. Edward's can build on the children's drive and energy to bring about an even greater sense of determination and action as stewards of our common home.

The high quality and the authentic character of the Catholic life and mission at St. Edward's is a result of excellent leadership at all levels. The Headteacher, with her management team, drive the school forward as a Catholic school. They are fully supported by the staff who gel together with a shared sense of purpose. Governors know their school extremely well and provide an excellent level of support and challenge, which is valued greatly. The parish priest is a key figure around the school, and he makes an invaluable contribution to the great success of this Catholic community. The pupils are developing into powerful leaders in their own right – they are justifiably proud of the ambassadorial roles they take on. They are now ready to drive forward new initiatives and actions to improve the world they live in. The school does a wide range of outreach activities, supporting other schools with professional development. The headteacher is a qualified Catholic schools inspector. A common feature of the school is to look at next steps using the expression, 'going forth.' The potential here is exciting in this forward-thinking school.

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

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

2

St. Edward's provides a good quality of religious education. The work is well-planned and there is a shared approach across the school using '*Come and See*' as the central structure. The school use '*Life to the Full*' to support the teaching of relationships, sex and health education. Teachers work hard to ensure that religious education is prioritised in the curriculum, and this is reflected in the pupils' exercise books and class work, which are of a good standard. The pupils have well-developed skills and knowledge and can express themselves competently and fluently. The religious education curriculum is suitably balanced and progressive. The children respond positively to their learning in religious education and they are enthusiastic. They benefit from the quality of the relationship between them and the adults who work with them, who are determined for them to be the best they can be. Displays around the school reflect the strengths of the religious education curriculum. Nevertheless, lessons feature too much time spent with over simplified question and answer sessions, led largely by teachers. This delays the time for pupils to begin learning. At times, teachers talk too much preventing pupils from owning their own learning and developing higher order thinking skills. Sacred scripture features in every lesson and pupils have a good understanding of the Bible – this is reflected in the exercise books and the work pupils provide. They are proud of their work and approach it with a sense of care, however pupils are capable of an even deeper understanding of the scripture and how this relates to their own lives. They have the potential for this because of the good teaching and learning they experience and the potential they show to develop their skills in enquiry and philosophical thinking. This will assist them to grow in the knowledge and understanding they have and to internalise their learning more effectively. The headteacher has identified the need for the staff to be provided with high-quality professional development to increase

their understanding and use of questioning in the classroom and this will strongly support the pupils to grow as deeper thinkers.

St. Edward's has developed a check-in, check-out system to support assessment strategies in religious education – this helps both pupils and teachers to see the progress being made. Progress is good, as clearly evidenced in the books. The quality of work matches that in other areas of the curriculum and in parts exceeds this, reflecting the school's priority of religious education. Marking and feedback are deployed effectively; the school anticipates further improvement here as the pupils develop thinking skills and benefit from more probing questioning.

The journey of improvement in religious education is clear to see; leaders, including governors, have clarity in the next steps they wish to take. They are formulating a plan to compliment the staff development, to explore using a wider range of training opportunities and to participate in research to identify the benefits of cutting-edge thinking. Early career teachers are well supported. St. Edward's has benefited from the close work it has done with other schools, Salford Diocese and other outreach activities. Staff and governors are excited about the future, understandably and the potential they have to continue the rapid improvement.

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

1

Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for collective worship

1

1



St. Edward's has been on a significant journey in developing all aspects of collective worship. This process has been led in a highly effective way by the headteacher and the religious education subject leader. Outcomes for pupils are now strong. Prayer and worship are a central part of school life. Although further time is needed for the highly improved provision to make full impact, progress has been rapid, as a result of the skilled leadership in the school. Pupils pray with reverence and maturity. They enjoy all aspects of liturgy and worship and are actively involved participants. They sing beautifully with enthusiasm and enjoyment. All lessons begin with a quiet time of reflection focusing on the teachings of the Bible. Sacred scripture is central to all types of prayer in the school. There is a real opportunity for a deeper and more sustained examination of the gospels to be introduced as pupils develop in their understanding of the relevance of the gospels in their own lives. Parents are welcome to participate in assemblies and speak very highly of the stay and pray sessions. They feel a sense of greater involvement. The pupils have experience of planning their own liturgies and do this very well. The planning framework from Salford Diocese is used as a scaffold. This also supports teachers in their preparation and delivery of liturgies. The evaluation of collective worship in the school is less well-developed. Teachers, pupils and parents, with the broader community, have the skills to evaluate collective worship in a more systematic way, to celebrate the journey the school has been on and to look for ways to improve the offer for children.

The variety of opportunity for prayer is wide and features extensively throughout the school week. The whole school assembly on a Monday, led by the headteacher, assisted by pupils, is rooted in the gospel reading from the Sunday. This forms a constant thread throughout the week – in key stage assemblies, class-led prayers, pupil-led prayers and celebration

assemblies. Meditation and reflection are well-developed, offering periods of stillness, mindfulness and contemplation. The use of a body scan script was used to lovely effect in a Key Stage two assembly, preparing the children to be in the present moment with Christ. This provides a powerful model for the pupils to use in their own acts of worship and meditation. The school uses individual prayer journals for the pupils; they are valued greatly and reflect the ongoing journey of faith of the children. Pupils and staff can see how these can be developed further and more creatively to increase the impact of such a powerful tool. The school has strong links with the parish and children regularly walk over to church to pray and to participate in services. The parish priest is a real asset to the school and plays a full part in all aspects of school life – he is hugely valued across the whole community.

The quality of collective worship at St. Edward's and the improvements made are the result of determined leadership, sourcing appropriate staff training and the recognition of the value that pupils place on this aspect on their journey of faith. Outcomes are rapidly improving because of this outstanding leadership and the high quality of provision in place.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Edward's Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	119666
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	8893778
Full postal address of the school	St Edward's Catholic Primary School, Blackburn Road, Darwen, BB3 0AA
School phone number	01254701616
Headteacher	Vannessa Knowles
Chair of Governors	Robert Beardsworth
School Website	www.stedwardsrccdarnen.co.uk/
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	4-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	14 th June 2016
Previous denominational inspection grade	Outstanding

The inspection team

Damian Harrison – Lead Inspector

Mark Mountcastle – 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

