



**DENOMINATIONAL INSPECTION
REPORT**
(Under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005)

on

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

School: St. Alban's Catholic Primary School

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School URN: 112927

Headteacher: Mr Mark Booton

Chair of Governors: Mrs Clare Cuomo

Inspectors: Mrs Geraldine Willders
Mrs Helen White

Date of Inspection: 4 February 2014

INTRODUCTION

The inspection of this school was carried out on behalf of the Bishop of Nottingham under Canon 806 of Canon Law and Section 48 of the Education Act 2005 in accordance with the Diocese of Nottingham Schedule for Section 48 Inspections. The inspection reviews and evaluates how effective the school is in providing Catholic education. The process begins with the school's own self-evaluation and the inspection schedule is in line with the criteria set by the National Board of Religious Inspectors and Advisers (NBRIA).

During the inspection, the inspectors observed 7 Religious Education lessons, 1 whole school Act of Collective Worship and 1 class based Act of Collective Worship in addition to worship at the start and end of lessons.

Meetings were held with the headteacher, the 2 subject leaders for Religious Education, the chair of governors and the parish priest. Discussions were also held with pupils and parents.

The inspectors scrutinised a range of documents including the Section 48 SEF (Self Evaluation Form), Religious Education action plans, the school improvement plan, assessment data for Religious Education, governors' minutes and a range of monitoring documentation. The work in pupils' Religious Education books and on displays was also examined.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St. Alban's is a larger than average primary school.

- There are 341 pupils on roll of which 218 (64%) are baptised Catholic. 12% of pupils are from other Christian denominations, 2 pupils are from other world faiths and 79 pupils have no religious affiliation.
 - Just over 75% of pupils are from White British backgrounds. The number of pupils of Polish origin is increasing steadily and the remaining pupils come from a wide range of backgrounds. A small number of pupils are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language.
 - Almost half of the pupils transfer to St. John Houghton Catholic Voluntary Academy as they move into Year 7 and approximately a third transfer to Lees Brook. Other local secondary schools include St. Benedict, Landau Forte, West Park, Da Vinci, Heanor Gate and Cheetham's Music School.
 - The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is below average. In this school, this extra government funding is currently received for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.
 - The proportions of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action, school action plus or a statement of special educational needs are well below average.
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INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS	2
CATHOLIC LIFE	1
COLLECTIVE WORSHIP	1
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION	3

KEY FINDINGS

- St. Alban's is a good Catholic school. Collective Worship and the Catholic Life of the school have improved significantly since the last Section 48 inspection and can now be considered as strengths of the school.
- The Catholic Life of St. Alban's School is an outstanding feature. Pupils are rightly proud to be members of St. Alban's and have a good understanding of what makes their school, as a Catholic school, distinctive and special.
- Significant progress has been made in Collective Worship since the last inspection and this is now judged to be outstanding. The value that the school places on Collective Worship, including the level of training, monitoring and evaluation, has had a positive impact. Pupils are engaged and interested in planning, delivering and taking part in Acts of Collective Worship.
- Pupils at St. Alban's enjoy their Religious Education lessons and they are keen to work hard and apply themselves. However, this aspect is not yet good because of the lack of clear, accurate tracking of pupil progress and attainment over time, indicative that, in this area - the leadership and management require improvement. The quality of teaching over time is mainly good, however, expectations for pupil attainment and progress need to increase so that overall attainment in Religious Education is improved. This area also requires improvement.

WHAT DOES THE SCHOOL NEED TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- Ensure that pupil attainment and progress in Religious Education is tracked rigorously across both key stages. Data analysis should be explicit, identifying groups of pupils and how well they progress and attain throughout the school over time. Analysis from data should in turn assist with driving up standards in Religious Education.
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- Improve teaching across the school further so that all teaching in Religious Education is at least consistently good. Leaders and managers in the school need to:
 - (i) Ensure that there are high expectations in terms of how much progress needs to be made both across each key stage and from one key stage to another in Religious Education and that this evidence is clearly available from the school's tracking system.
 - (ii) Continue to moderate pupils' work in Religious Education to ensure that a reasonable amount of recording is completed within each lesson and that pupils do not become too reliant on worksheets which scaffold the written work too heavily.
 - (iii) Further facilitate training for support staff to ensure that their knowledge and understanding of Religious Education, particularly in terms of Church teaching, is sound.

CATHOLIC LIFE

THE QUALITY OF THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

1

- 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 leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school.

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Pupils are rightly proud to be members of St. Alban's School. They have a good understanding of what makes their school, as a Catholic school, distinctive and special. There is a tangible sense of everyone working to an agreed set of values which is evidenced in recent developments concerning the review of the school's mission and ethos. As a result of this, pupils have a sense of belonging and are enthusiastic to play their part in promoting the mission of the school both within and in the wider community. The behaviour of pupils is mostly good and their capacity to respect and value themselves and others is rooted in the ethos of the school. In the words of one child, 'it is important to learn from our mistakes and try to make things better'. Pupils also recognise the importance of respecting the belief of others and are keen to learn about other faiths, and similarities and differences that individuals may have compared to their own beliefs. Pupils have a good understanding of the importance of key celebrations in school throughout the liturgical year and greatly value the involvement with the parish and the school community in the life of the school.

Pupils are eager to live out their faith through the range of opportunities that are provided. They are fulfilled by the charitable works in which they are involved and this makes a positive impact on their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They are particularly proud of the ways in which they support each other, for example through 'prayer partners'. Both the Year 6 pupils and Reception pupils involved in this benefit from the variety of activities that are planned to support and nurture younger members of the school. This positive development of individuals' prayer development could be extended across the school to build on those positive early foundations. The centrality of the

nurturing ethos of the school is equally evident in the provision provided through the 'Jigsaw Group'.

Leaders and managers are committed to the Catholic Life of the school and the headteacher and subject leaders demonstrate good levels of commitment through their leadership. Provision is given a high priority and the recent appointment of a chaplain demonstrates the desire for all members of the community to be supported in their wellbeing and faith development. The chair of governors and parish priest demonstrate exceptional passion for the mission of the school and recognise that the school has been, and continues on a determined journey to be the very best. They are active in evaluating the Catholic Life of the school and are ready to challenge and support where necessary. The formal review of the mission of the school, which has recently taken place, needs to become a regular focus for leaders and managers if it is to sustain and further improve the positive progress that has been made to date.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

THE QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

1

- How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship.
- The quality of provision for Collective Worship.
- How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship.

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There has been significant improvement in Collective Worship since the last inspection and this is now judged to be outstanding. All pupils demonstrate a palpable enthusiasm and enjoyment in both whole school and class based Acts of Worship which are imaginative and engaging for all those involved. Pupils act with reverence and are keen to participate in all aspects of worship, particularly singing - they respond positively to opportunities for quiet reflection. The whole community is actively encouraged to be involved in weekly whole school worship. This adds positively to whole school Collective Worship and is clearly embedded, evident in the ways in which pupils respond. Older pupils in the school are involved in the planning and preparation of worship and do so with a good knowledge of non-Eucharistic liturgy. This now needs to be extended further so that pupils prepare and lead worship even from their earliest years.

The significant improvements made in Collective Worship are indicative of the extent to which it is now seen as central to the life of the school. Opportunities are planned carefully across the school and throughout the liturgical year to ensure that pupils and the wider school community are drawn in and, as a result, prayer and worship is highly valued. The recent appointment of the school chaplain is already having a positive impact on outcomes for pupils and this group is now skilled at preparing non-Eucharistic liturgy. This is a positive step forward. The school is now in a positive position to disseminate this expertise across all year groups. Pupils plan class Masses throughout the year and are involved in the life of the parish. Together with class, whole school worship and the focus on relevant liturgical themes, pupils and staff are developing a good understanding of the Church's mission.

Subject leaders have worked extremely hard to ensure that staff, including those who are new to the school, have had access to relevant support and training in relation to Collective Worship. They have been central in ensuring that the induction of new staff in particular is focussed and supportive and that they, in turn are able to be part of the planning and development of worship in the school. This has been very well received by staff. They are becoming more confident in the preparation, monitoring and evaluation of Collective Worship. The parish priest is an excellent model for the school and is heavily involved in the formation of staff and pupils. This includes being highly visible in the school as a leader of Collective Worship, but also as a participant. As a result, pupils in particular can see that all are welcome to join in worship. The school has developed effective monitoring and evaluation systems involving all members of the school. Views are sought and actions for improvement are put in place and reviewed on a regular basis. Consequently, the whole community feel that they have a voice and take ownership of the worship that is now central to the life of the school.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

THE QUALITY OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

3

- How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education.
- The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education.
- How well leaders and managers (including governors) monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education.

3
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3

Pupils enjoy Religious Education and are keen to apply themselves and behaviour during lessons is generally good. The ‘Come and See’ scheme of work is planned over a two year cycle to ensure access for mixed age classes and themes have been appropriately adapted to ensure effective continuity and progression. Enrichment activities, such as WOW days to learn about the saints are planned throughout the year and these opportunities not only enhance pupils’ knowledge and understanding of Religious Education, but also have a positive impact on pupils’ overall enjoyment. During the inspection, there were a number of discrepancies between the various sources of evidence concerning pupil progress and attainment presented to inspectors. The school’s recently devised assessment system only tracks pupils’ attainment and progress in Religious Education over the past two years which does not enable leaders and managers to make accurate and informed judgements on pupil progress from one key stage to another. The school’s own monitoring indicates that, although pupils seem to make good progress in Key Stage 1, progress is slower across Key Stage 2 resulting in pupil attainment by the end of Key Stage 2 which is, at best, in line with diocesan averages (based on the evidence presented to inspectors during the inspection and the scrutiny of a sample of pupils’ workbooks in Religious Education).

Teaching observed during the inspection was good overall. Whilst some outstanding practice was observed, some lessons which required improvement were also seen. In these lessons, teachers’ expectations were not sufficiently challenging. Scrutiny of pupils’ written work showed that the school has placed great effort into improvements in the marking of pupils’ work. Written comments are constructive, often giving praise and identifying the

next steps for the pupil; however, in some classes there is an overreliance on verbal feedback - when asked, pupils could not on any occasion recall what the teacher's feedback had been. Best practice was evident when pupils responded in writing to teachers' comments and in some classes, time is given for pupils to do this. This should now be disseminated across the school. In the lessons observed, differentiation was evident, however, this consisted of a range of different tasks to complete but not all tasks were sufficiently 'fine-tuned' to pupils' abilities, resulting in some pupils working at a level which did not challenge them enough. In order to ensure that pupils make more rapid progress especially within Key Stage 2, it is important to ensure that the differentiation strategies employed allow for all pupils to challenge themselves fully at their own particular level. The school needs to further develop quality first teaching in Religious Education through sharing of good practice and continued professional development in order for it to have a more positive and rapid impact on standards in Religious Education.

The subject leaders for Religious Education are very enthusiastic and hard working. They are keen to raise standards and have forged good links with outside agencies and stakeholders to improve standards for pupils. They have already demonstrated their capacity to improve by accessing support and training for Collective Worship within the school. In future inspections, it is vital that assessment data is presented in a consistent format and that it enables inspectors to see clearly how well pupils make progress in Religious Education over a number of years, especially in terms of progress from one key stage to another. Governors are also keen to raise standards and have an understanding of where the school is at in terms of standards. However, they need to be provided with accurate and consistent information particularly regarding pupil attainment and progress in Religious Education over time so that they can both challenge and support the school even more effectively.

WHAT INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS MEAN

Within the report, the following grades are used:

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Requires improvement
Grade 4	Inadequate

In the context of the whole school, the overall effectiveness grades have the following meaning:

Grade 1	Outstanding	The school is a highly effective Catholic school. Pupils' needs are exceptionally well met.
Grade 2	Good	The school is an effective Catholic school. Pupils' needs are met well.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	The school is not yet a good Catholic school, it is not inadequate however, there are aspects that require improvement.
Grade 4	Inadequate	There are features in need of urgent and immediate attention. The school is not meeting the basic minimum requirement for adequacy. The school will receive a monitoring visit within twelve months.
