



St Alban's Catholic Primary School

Rothbury Avenue, Pelaw, Gateshead, NE100QY

School Unique Reference Number: **108398**

Inspection dates: 26 – 27 April 2018
Lead inspector: Jane Weatherall

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Catholic Life:		Outstanding	1
Collective Worship:		Outstanding	1
Religious Education:		Outstanding	1

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

St Alban's Catholic Primary School is an outstanding Catholic school because:

- St Alban's is a very warm and welcoming school where everyone works together as an extended family. The mission and ethos of Catholic Education radiates throughout the whole school community.
- The quality of Collective Worship is outstanding. Worship is central to the life of the school. Pupils, guided by very skilled staff, deliver acts of worship of high quality.
- The Catholic Life of the school is outstanding. It has the highest possible priority and excellent relationships exist with all members of the school community.
- The quality of Religious Education is outstanding. It is central to the life of the school and most children make very good progress over time. Pupils enjoy their Religious Education lessons and their behaviour is exemplary.

FULL REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

- St Alban's is an average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is below average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is below the national average.
- The school serves the parishes of St Alban's, Pelaw and St Patrick's, Felling

WHAT DOES THE SCHOOL NEED TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- Continue to develop the quality of teaching by:
 - sharing best practice in creative Religious Education teaching throughout school.
- To continue to increase attainment for the most able pupils by:
 - ensuring that differentiation in tasks and consistency of questioning in pupils' feedback enables all pupils, but especially the more able, to attain the higher levels.

CATHOLIC LIFE

THE QUALITY OF THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

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- 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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The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school is outstanding.

- Pupils make an outstanding contribution to the Catholic Life of the school and benefit greatly from it.
- The mission statement 'Life to the full' is central to the life of St Alban's school and is fully embraced by all pupils. They were fully consulted in revising the mission statement and therefore feel that they have ownership of it.
- Pupils are happy, confident and secure in their own stage of spiritual development. They have a deep sense of belonging to their school family and are proud of the religious identity of their school.
- Behaviour is exemplary; pupils show kindness towards each other and are quick to congratulate others and celebrate their success.
- Pupils show a very good understanding of the Church's liturgical year and its key celebrations, which they enjoy being part of, both in school and in their parishes.
- They are developing a strong sense of discipleship through the many and varied activities they choose to take part in such as caring for the local community centre garden and the 'be a goody, wear a hoody' day, raising money for good causes but also giving themselves in service to others.

The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school is outstanding.

- From the moment you enter St Alban's it is apparent that this is a Christ-centred school, deeply committed to the Catholic tradition and ethos.
- Very supportive relationships exist between colleagues, support staff and pupils. 'There are high expectations of behaviour', one child told me, which the pupils live up to.
- Parents speak positively about the school being a family and staff speak positively of the home-school links, saying how well the pupils are supported by their parents.
- Pupils have the chance to take part in many varied activities enhancing their Catholic Life such as their retreat to Holy Island each year, where they 'walk on Holy Ground'.
- Children are developing a strong sense of social justice and feel that they can make a difference in the world, for example, writing to the home secretary calling for a change in law for refugees.

How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school is outstanding.

- School leaders show a deep commitment to the mission of the Church and ensure that this permeates every aspect of school life. They provide very clear direction for improvement and ensure that opportunities for pupils' spiritual and moral development are frequent and have significant impact.
- Staff receive high quality training via a variety of sources, including Diocesan programmes, cluster events and through focused staff training carried out by senior leaders.
- Parents say that their views and suggestions are welcomed and valued by senior leaders. They are well informed about the Catholic Life of the school through the website, the messaging system and regular parish and school newsletters, which school and parish circulate for each other.
- Governors are fully involved in many aspects of the school's work. Along with parishioners, they are regular visitors to school and enjoy speaking with pupils, reading Bible stories, saying the Rosary and attending school events. These interactions all contribute towards the schools monitoring processes.
- Links between school and parish are very strong. Parishioners are regular visitors and enjoy being involved in all aspects of school life, especially Collective Worship.
- Wonderful initiatives enable pupils to spread and share their mission within the local community, one example of this being their visits and shared activities with the elderly at McErlane Square.
- Governors discharge their statutory and canonical duties well working very effectively with the staff and headteacher, committed to upholding the strong caring ethos that exists throughout.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

THE QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

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- 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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How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship is outstanding.

- Pupils are engaged in a wealth of worship opportunities available at St Alban's. This is a very prayerful and spiritual community where worship enhances the day. There is a calm and peaceful ethos which permeates throughout school and is reflected in the pupils' excellent behaviour and consideration for others.
- Pupils sing in joyful praise during acts of worship and experience prayerful silence in their meditation sessions. They are happy to take active parts in whole school and class liturgies and services in their parishes and are able to explain their thinking in planning different aspects of those liturgies.
- Pupils take the initiative in leading their class community in prayer and do so in a confident, reverent and meaningful way. Pupils see prayer as an essential element to their school and celebrate the fact that they have many opportunities to pray and reflect in different areas of the school and beyond.
- The experience of being at this school has a profound and visible effect on the development of all of its pupils; they have a deep sense of respect for their own faith and the different world faiths.

The quality of provision for Collective Worship is outstanding.

- Pupils and their families appreciate being invited to rich and inspiring liturgies. Parents and parishioners help to prepare informal Collective Worship sessions with their children. They enjoy being involved in this activity.
- Pupils feel that they are part of the wider Church because of the opportunities on offer, including praying for peace with one million children around the world saying the rosary.
- Staff pray together regularly in school. Home school prayer books, travelling cribs and Lenten journey resources all provide quality opportunities for pupils to share with their families.
- The chaplain is passionate about ensuring that pupils have high quality worship experiences of the Church's liturgical life. She has worked in a highly skilful way to empower staff and pupils to plan and deliver liturgies at their appropriate stage of development.

How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship is outstanding.

- Leaders have a deep understanding of the rich traditions of the Catholic faith. They also provide contemporary experiences for pupils to take part in which enhances Collective Worship. Pupils enjoy this variation and respond enthusiastically to both.
- Developing the liturgical and spiritual life of the school is of paramount importance and as a result quality time is devoted to staff development in this area. Response to this training is wholehearted and positive.
- Staff prayer unites staff and nurtures their spiritual well-being as well. Staff are proud of this school and relish being part of this vibrant Catholic community.
- The headteacher and school chaplain are highly visible leaders of Collective Worship within school and are models of outstanding practice.
- Collective Worship is at the heart of the school and the role of the chaplain is valued by all. One room in school has been devoted to a worship space which pupils can access as a space for quiet contemplation. St Alban's room is a place of true spiritual uplift; a sacred space.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

THE QUALITY OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

1

- 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 promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education.

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How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education is outstanding.

- All pupils make outstanding progress in Religious Education both within lessons and over time. They make excellent progress across a range of skills and are developing well in their knowledge and understanding. This is evidenced in books, in the school tracking system and through pupil discussions.
- Outcomes for pupils are very strong. From below average starting points in the early years foundation stage pupils make good progress, this continues through key stage one and two. The attainment of all groups of learners is at least in line with the diocesan average.
- Pupils enjoy and understand the value of Religious Education, demonstrating passion and commitment in their learning. Learning proceeds without interruption; pupils apply themselves diligently in lessons and endeavour to produce their best work. They are confident to talk about their learning and demonstrate very positive attitudes.
- They are developing a wide range of skills which they are applying to great effect. They continue to use these skills effectively across the subject and enjoy activities such as Bible Quest.

The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education is outstanding.

- The majority of teaching is outstanding and never less than consistently good. As a result pupils are achieving well over time. Teachers demonstrate strong subject knowledge and have high expectations for their pupils.
- Where teaching is best, teachers skilfully question pupils during lessons as well as in their marking and feedback, which maximises the learning and progress, however this is not always consistent. In the vast majority of lessons pupils are set challenging tasks which are well matched to their learning needs.
- Assessments are regular and the school has developed a rigorous tracking system which ensures that underachievement can be quickly recognised and tackled. The levelling of pupils' work is consistently accurate as teachers have grown in confidence with levels of attainment in Religious Education.
- All pupils use the 'I can' statements effectively allowing them the opportunity to self-assess pieces of work.

How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education is outstanding.

- The Religious Education coordinator has a key role within the school which ensures that Religious Education has a high profile. All staff have a very clear vision of Religious Education and use assessment accurately.
- Monitoring and evaluation of the provision for Religious Education is rigorous and robust. It enables leaders to plan effectively and ensures excellent outcomes.
- Governors are active in their roles. They have a wealth of different experience which they bring to the governing body; offering both support and challenge. They are regular visitors to school and are actively involved in the monitoring and evaluation of the school's work and its Catholic Life.
- The leadership of Religious Education inspires the whole school community. Numerous and varied links are forged with the wider community and local parishes to provide an outstanding range of enrichment activities to promote pupils' learning and engagement.
- Leaders are relentless in their desire to improve both teaching and learning of Religious Education across the school and in inspiring staff, pupils and parents to share in their vision. As a consequence, Religious Education has a very high profile in the life of the school and very clear steps for its further improvement are detailed in the school improvement plan.
- The Religious Education curriculum meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference; it is well resourced and contributes very effectively to the pupils' spiritual and moral development.

SUMMARY OF INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

HOW EFFECTIVE THE SCHOOL IS IN PROVIDING CATHOLIC EDUCATION:

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CATHOLIC LIFE:

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The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school.

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The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school.

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

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COLLECTIVE WORSHIP:

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RELIGIOUS EDUCATION:

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How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education.

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The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education.

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How well leaders and managers monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education.

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SCHOOL DETAILS

School name	St Alban's Catholic Primary School
Unique reference number	108398
Local authority	Gateshead
This Inspection Report is produced for the Rt. Reverend Séamus Cunningham the Bishop of Hexham and Newcastle Diocese under canon 806 of Canon Law. For voluntary aided schools it also fulfils the responsibility the Governing Body has to inspect the school under s48 of the Education Act 2005.	
Chair of governors	Mr Barry Coleman
Head teacher	Mrs Emma Bridon
Date of previous school inspection	November 2012
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