



DIOCESAN CANONICAL INSPECTION REPORT

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL, RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AND COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

St Alban's Catholic Voluntary Academy

Newstead Avenue, Chaddesden, Derby, DE21 6NU

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| School URN: | 146253 |
| Inspection Date: | 29 January 2019 |
| Inspectors: | Mrs Ann King and Mr Gregory Hughes |

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| Overall Effectiveness | Previous Inspection: | Good | 2 |
| | This Inspection: | Good | 2 |
| Catholic Life: | | Outstanding | 1 |
| Religious Education: | | Good | 2 |
| Collective Worship: | | Good | 2 |

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

St Alban's Catholic Voluntary Academy is a good Catholic school.

- St Alban's is a welcoming Catholic school where all stakeholders embrace and live out the mission statement, 'Learning together, side by side with God'. The strong and unified leadership team led by the headteacher embrace diocesan initiatives and work closely with the rest of the St Ralph Sherwin Catholic Multi-Academy Trust. Parents hold the school in high regard and pupil behaviour is exemplary.
- The Catholic Life of the school is outstanding. The home, school and parish links are strong. The community is valued; local and global charity work reflects the school's engagement with diocesan initiatives which promote Gospel values being lived out in our lives. Local governors and the parish priest are supportive and pro-active in ensuring that the core ethos of the school is maintained and grown.
- Collective Worship is good. The school has established a competent and capable chaplaincy team. Their effectiveness now needs to be broadened to all pupils allowing them to have similar opportunity and ownership. Participation throughout the school is reverent and respectful. A lay chaplain is in the early stages of supporting the school.
- The teaching and learning of Religious Education is good. Pupils produce good quality work in line with diocesan guidelines. Over time, pupils make good progress broadly in line with diocesan averages in both key stages. Assessed work is accurately marked and shows the good potential of all ability groups.

FULL REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

- St Alban's is a larger than average primary school. It is part of the St Ralph Sherwin Catholic Multi Academy Trust. The school serves the parish of St Alban's Chaddesden and St Hugh's Borrowash.
- There are currently 362 pupils on roll. 64% of pupils are baptised Catholic; 14% belong to other Christian faiths; 1% identify with other world faiths and 22% have no religious affiliation.
- 8% of the school population has SEND (special educational needs and/or a disability).
- 11% of pupils on roll are in receipt of additional pupil premium funding (the pupil premium funding is additional government funding that schools receive to support those known to be eligible for free school meals and those looked after by the local authority).
- A new headteacher and senior leadership team is in place since the last inspection. The team has worked hard to address all previous areas for improvement and in ensuring that the school is endeavoring to ensure that all pupils achieve their potential.

WHAT DOES THE SCHOOL NEED TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

■ Catholic Life:

- Ensure that key leaders continue to develop collaborative partnerships supporting and promoting good practice in Catholic Life within the St Ralph Sherwin Catholic Multi-Academy Trust and throughout the diocese.
- Ensure that St Alban's, as part of the new St Ralph Sherwin Catholic Multi-Academy Trust, strengthens the collaborative links with feeder Catholic secondary schools in order to promote a smooth transition.

■ Religious Education:

- Establish a marking policy which is consistently followed by teachers and that is fully understood and by pupils.
- Ensure that the quality of work produced by pupils in their assessed pieces is replicated in pupils' work books consistently throughout the school.
- Ensure that writing frames are not restricting pupils' written responses so that they are able to develop their thoughts in greater detail.

■ Collective Worship:

- To build upon the current effective chaplaincy provision in supporting and promoting the Collective Worship by ensuring that all pupils share the school mission and have a greater say in decision making.
- Further raise the pupil ownership in both class and whole-school liturgies so that all pupils are participating and evaluating Collective Worship.

CATHOLIC LIFE

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| THE QUALITY OF THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL | 1 |
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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 governors 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 – outstanding

- There is strong sense of community within the school where everyone's contribution is valued. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school especially where they have seen changes driven by the headteacher and deputy headteacher which include parents being encouraged to be more involved in school liturgies. One parent said, 'there are strong bonds with the church and we receive the Wednesday Word which keeps in touch with what the school is teaching'.
- Pupils have recently written and live out the school motto – 'Learning together, side by side with God'. It is clear that the pupils have complete ownership with comments such as, 'the school helps us to shape our lives as Christians'. Pupils' behaviour and attitude towards learning is excellent.
- Pupils in Year 6 cherish their role as prayer partners supporting the pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage with passion and with a sense of pride. They can talk about their faith confidently. One pupil wrote, 'the Bible influences us to do the right things in life'.
- Charity work such as Race for Life, the Christmas shoebox appeal, Harvest festival - for the Hope Centre in Derby and CAFOD during Lent, is very much at the centre of the school where the pupils not only recognise what it is to serve others but in what and how they want to put forward their ideas, they have a very clear vision for their school.
- There are many opportunities for the pupils to follow Christ's teaching in which they take every opportunity to engage for example, they take flowers to the elderly following the May procession and fresh produce from their harvest thanksgiving to the local community.
- Pupils regularly participate and lead the Mass both at church and in the school. It is evident that pupils have a huge respect for their faith as seen in their attitude to Collective Worship. One 6 year old pupil said to his Mum, 'I would like to do some Bible study with Father David'.

The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school – outstanding

- Vision and mission are clearly embedded within the school, it is visible in policies, documents and on the school website. The school displays the distinctive nature of the Catholic Life of the school in every corner of the building.
- Local governors and the leadership team are key to the success of the Catholic Life of the school, where their commitment to the Catholic faith and visible presence within the parish and community is valued by the parents and other staff members.
- The mission statement is embraced fully by all stakeholders. There is clear evidence to show that the school has a strategic plan to further develop the skills of staff. The leadership team has a clear plan to involve the staff in the formation of a prayerful community.
- The school is very proud of their two-year cycle in providing opportunities for the pupils to engage and experience scripture, the Old Testament and the saints. There is clear evidence of this across the school with the excellent quality of displays and focus areas within the school.
- The school has adopted 'Journey in Love' and the resources provided by Sister Dorothy as a scheme of work for Relationships and Sex Education (RSE); this is embedded throughout the school. Parents are encouraged to attend workshops within the school to support the teaching of Relationships and Sex Education.
- The strong and unified leadership team has enabled excellent relationships between all stakeholders, there is a culture of trust, respectfulness and 'A Heart that Sees' as recognised in the award given to pupils by the lunchtime staff.

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school – outstanding

- Effective communication by the headteacher ensures that all stakeholders have a clear understanding of the Catholic ethos of the school and its journey in faith. The reflective practice of the leadership team within the school has led to an effective approach to ensure that the Catholic Life is fully embedded.
- The impact of pupils' participation in leading the Mass throughout the year is evidenced through their responses at Mass and their knowledge and understanding of the different elements of the Mass.
- The senior leadership team monitors the Catholic Life of the school on a daily basis as evidenced by the enthusiasm of the subject leader for Religious Education who continues to sustain the excellent links with the parents, parish and community. The school embraces diocesan initiatives and works closely with other schools in the St Ralph Sherwin Catholic Multi-Academy Trust.
- Local governors regularly visit the school undertaking various tasks that ensure that all staff have access to professional development. The school has supported three members of staff to complete the Bishop's Certificate and staff new to teaching in a Catholic school have also benefitted from training from the diocese.
- The parish priest and newly appointed lay chaplain for the Catholic Multi-Academy Trust are instrumental to the Catholic Life of the school and their presence is valued by all stakeholders.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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| THE QUALITY OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION | 2 |
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- How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education.
- How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education.

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How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education – good

- Pupils enjoy Religious Education. They are settled, ready to work and show good listening skills. Lessons are well structured and engaging. Pupils are increasingly articulate and their answers show a good knowledge and understanding of religious themes and concepts.
- The quality of pupils' work in terms of output and coverage is good. Pupils' books are well presented and pupils say, 'we have to work hard'. There is evidence of extended pieces of writing captured in Religious Education books or Literacy books. Diocesan expectations are met. The use of worksheets help pupils to focus on capturing ideas but, at times, can restrict the ability of pupils to capture their knowledge and thoughts fully or to write at greater depth.
- Behaviour for learning is a strength of the school. Pupils are respectful of each other and listen intently to each other's thoughts and opinions. Pupils are given time to reflect and, in some classes, are exposed to a rich religious vocabulary.
- Pupils enter St Alban's from a low starting point. Data is collected regularly and accurately evidences good progress. Taking into account their low baseline starting point, standards of attainment are broadly in line with diocesan averages at Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. Pupils produce a high level of achievement in assessed pieces of work – this standard of attainment and output now needs to be replicated more readily in work books over time.
- Pupils enjoy learning about other faiths and are respectful of other beliefs. They have a clear understanding of British values and follow the diocesan prescribed RSE curriculum, 'Journey in Love'. Learning environments are engaging and diocesan initiatives such as the use of driver words, key lesson words and the use of the big question are evident and support pupils' learning. The symbols of the head, heart and cloud are used effectively in books and displays to promote the three attainment target foci.
- Pupils are aware of their current level of attainment and how to achieve their next step targets in Religious Education.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education – good

- The quality of teaching is good. The Early Years Foundation Stage provision at St Alban's is a strength and the close work with the increasingly popular nursery provision has established a positive religious understanding and formation for pupils. Adults in the Early Years Foundation Stage model activities and expectations clearly. Core religious teaching and subsequent questioning is appropriately targeted, enabling pupils to articulate and capture their thoughts. In stronger lessons, the diocesan end of year expectations are explicitly used to ensure that questioning is pitched appropriately and that it is age-related.
- Good teacher subject knowledge is clearly evident throughout the school and teachers work collaboratively preparing interesting lessons to engage pupils of all ability levels. Lessons are punctuated with moments of prayer and reflection and music is used effectively to create a calm, learning environment.
- The 'Come and See' Religious Education programme is being used throughout the school effectively. Teachers are creative with the scheme linking the topics to the school environment making the content relevant to the pupil's lives. Teachers incorporate 'heart' and 'wonder' moments within lessons across all year groups. The school uses big questions and driver words to enable pupils to improve their work.
- Teachers are reflective and next day planning is carefully developed. Time is given for extended writing within each topic. Worksheets are used to scaffold answers, however, they can restrict pupils from developing their answers or prevent their full verbal responses being captured. In better lessons, pupils have the opportunity to write without constraint and this allows them to fully capture their thoughts.
- Marking and constructive feedback occurs. There is a mixture of verbal feedback, peer response, highlighting of attainment target and celebratory comments. Where a response or a development to an answer from the teacher is requested, pupils need time to respond. A whole school marking policy needs to be agreed in order to ensure continuity and a clear level of marking expectation.
- Assessment in Religious Education is accurate and is captured on a regular basis. Assessed pieces of work show that the pupils are capable of work of quality and quantity. The school now needs to work towards allowing pupils time to replicate these standards, capturing their knowledge and understanding in as much detail as possible throughout their work on each topic.

The extent to which leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education – good

- The headteacher works closely with the subject leader for Religious Education and senior leadership team. They are reflective practitioners who are eager to continue to develop staff to deliver the curriculum with a knowledge base and confidence. Evaluation of Religious Education in the Catholic SEF is accurate and areas for development are correctly identified through regular, meaningful monitoring activities such as learning walks, individual lesson observations and scrutiny of work.
- The senior leadership team has provided support for staff with planning, pitch and expectation. Systems are in place to check and monitor coverage and output. Expectations are shared and feedback given. Leaders have worked hard to work towards single year group settings. This has helped with parallel planning and moderation in Religious Education.

- Leaders now need to ensure that there is less reliance on worksheets and a greater emphasis on extended writing opportunities to provide sufficient evidence for the assessment of learning over time. There is scope for more independent learning and less structure and scaffolding within some lessons.
- The subject leader for Religious Education has engaged fully in diocesan training. The school has invested time in trialing and developing new initiatives. The subject leader for Religious Education is committed to school improvement and cascades diocesan initiatives at school level. Leaders and local governors ensure that the required amount of curriculum time is given to Religious Education in each key stage.
- The school has a clear understanding of the Church's liturgical year. Feast days are celebrated and incorporated into the day to day curriculum.
- The Religious Education curriculum meets episcopal requirements regarding curriculum time for Religious Education. Leaders have supported staff to embed the 'Come and See' programme and this has been developed in an adequate way focusing on the needs and interests of the pupils. The curriculum provides opportunities for pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

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| THE QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP | 2 |
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- How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship.
- The quality of provision for the Collective Worship.
- How well leaders and governors 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 – good

- Pupil chaplains take pride in their preparation for Collective Worship, planning sheets and evaluation sheets are used effectively to monitor and evaluate the Acts of Worship for the adults and pupils who attend. These are scrutinized by staff and pupils and any suggestions are acted upon.
- At the Act of Worship on the day of inspection, pupils entered the hall with complete reverence and respect and in speaking to some Year 6 pupils following the Act of Worship, it is clear that they have very high expectations of the chaplaincy team. A large majority of the pupils sang with enthusiasm and their melodious voices carried across the hall. The excellent preparation of the Act of Worship was very well received by the parents; this was acknowledged by the comments that they wrote on their evaluation sheets. The powerpoint enabled everyone to feel included in the worship including pupils who are from other world faiths and staff new to a Catholic school.
- The chaplaincy team led an Act of Worship confidently using a child-friendly approach which included all of the required elements; pupils brought the Gospel to life using mime. The pupils were challenged to go forth and live out the message of the Gospel. Their effective leadership now needs to be cascaded through to the rest of the pupils in school. Opportunities for all pupils to lead Collective Worship will strengthen this area.
- Encountering Christ is at the centre of the prayerful life of the school. Pupils are encouraged to reflect upon their practice. This is modelled well by the staff who are proactive and reflective practitioners.
- Pupils enjoy Collective Worship and class worship which is recognised by the responses from the pupils such as, 'I have encountered Jesus a few times by doing good things and by opening my heart up to him', another pupil said, 'I have encountered Jesus this year because I have been more prayerful and felt more of a connection with him'.

The quality of provision for Collective Worship – good

- There is a strategic plan in place for Collective Worship and worship has a clear purpose, message and direction. There are opportunities in the school for pupils to develop their knowledge of traditional prayers and spontaneous prayer which was observed in the Early Years Foundation Stage class; where the majority of pupils were able to respond in personal prayer.
- Collective Worship is well planned and equally well resourced, the entrance area of the school sends a very clear message to visitors that it is a Catholic school with Catholic values. The school opens its doors with a genuine and sincere heart where everyone feels welcomed and included.
- All stakeholders and visitors are very much part of the landscape of worship where their contribution is valued as evidenced by the excellent comments in the monitoring file.
- Under the guidance provided by the parish priest, Sister Susan, the parish team and the lay chaplain, the school will be able to move from good to outstanding in this area relatively quickly. The chaplaincy team has a clear plan for the year and has identified the attributes required of a chaplaincy team which is clearly displayed within the school.
- Staff provide a very clear direction of the liturgical seasons and pupils are very aware of the Church's liturgical year which is evidenced in the classrooms and around the school. As a result, pupils are able to discuss the liturgical year with a good level of knowledge and understanding.
- Staff are able to facilitate opportunities for the majority pupils to use their skills in organising liturgies and Collective Worship.

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship – good

- There is a substantial wealth of expertise within the leadership team and on the local governing body in ensuring that there is good quality Collective Worship within the school. Local governors are regular visitors to the school and not only participate in worship and the Mass but take a leading role in monitoring and evaluating it too.
- The school has good systems in place where all stakeholders evaluate Collective Worship and pupils monitor the quality of the class prayer areas, which include artefacts and resources conducive to worship and prayer.
- The impact of training for Collective Worship is good as the leadership team has facilitated all staff to engage in training on child-led Collective Worship, and Father David has led staff sessions on Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament and the Rosary.
- Pupils are becoming more confident in leading the Mass at St Alban's church with the support of the parish and the recently established pupil/parish ambassadors from the school are developing effective links.
- The subject leader for Religious Education works tirelessly to promote and evaluate Collective Worship within the school with enthusiasm and a determination to enable all pupils to access quality Collective Worship.

SCHOOL DETAILS

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| School Name | St Alban's Catholic Voluntary Academy |
| Unique Reference Number | 146253 |
| CMAT | St Ralph Sherwin Catholic Multi-Academy Trust |

The inspection of this school was carried out on behalf of the Bishop of Nottingham under Canon 806 of Canon Law in accordance with the *Evaluation Schedule (September 2018)* for diocesan canonical inspections in the Diocese of Nottingham. 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 11 Religious Education lessons and 1 Act of Collective Worship.

Meetings were held with the headteacher, the subject leader for Religious Education, the St Ralph Sherwin Multi-Academy Trust Director of Performance and Standards, the parish priest and governors. Discussions were also held with pupils and parents.

The inspectors scrutinised a range of documents including reports of the local governing body, action plans, the school development plan, monitoring forms, assessment information and parental response forms. Inspectors also examined the work in pupils' Religious Education books.

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| Chair of Governors: | Mrs Clare Cuomo |
| Headteacher: | Mr Andrew Monaghan |
| Date of Previous School Inspection: | 4 February 2014 |
| Telephone Number: | 01332 673823 |
| Email Address: | head@stalbans.derby.sch.uk |

WHAT INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS MEAN

Within the report, the following grades are used:

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| 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:

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| 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, and there are aspects that require improvement. There will be a monitoring visit within the next 18 months and the school will be re-inspected within 3 years. |
| Grade 4 | Inadequate | There are features in need of urgent and immediate attention. The school is not meeting the basic minimum requirement for adequacy as a Catholic school. The school will receive an annual monitoring visit and will be re-inspected within 3 years. |