

St Werburgh's & St Columba's Catholic Primary School

URN: 111384

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Bishop of Shrewsbury

30 April –01 May 2025

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

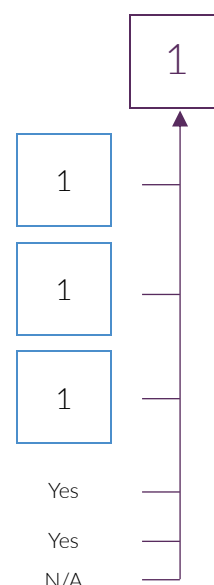
Collective worship (p.7)

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

The school is fully compliant with the general norms for religious education laid down by the Bishops' Conference

The school is fully compliant with any additional requirements of the diocesan bishop

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



Compliance statement

- Ten percent of teaching time is dedicated to religious education. The school is implementing the Vine and Branches in Years 1,2,3 and 4 to deliver the new *Religious Education Directory*. Early Years Foundation and upper Key Stage 2 currently use The Way the Truth and the Life.

- The school fulfils diocesan requirements to teach relationships, sex and health education and uses the Life to the Full Plus scheme. The personal, social, health and economic education is delivered through a Catholic lens.
- There were no areas for improvement.

What the school does well

- Supportive relationships guided by the mission statement to 'follow in the footsteps of Jesus to love, learn and laugh' means pupils' behaviour is exemplary at St Werburgh's and St Columba's primary school.
- Pastoral care and an overwhelmingly positive parental partnership ensure pupils' spiritual, emotional and physical development is nurtured so that pupils develop a sense of worth and respect for others.
- Skilful and challenging questioning during religious education lessons leads to religiously literate pupils from an early age so that pupils of all abilities make good progress during their time at school.
- Pupils willingly engage in and enjoy the prayer and liturgy opportunities offered during the year.
- The commitment of the headteacher, subject leaders, staff and governors to live out their school mission every day provides a spiritual, nurturing and inclusive community, where everyone is welcome and valued.

What the school needs to improve

- Ensure that feedback and assessment procedures are consistent throughout the school.
- Develop links with other local Catholic schools to ensure that moderation and assessment is in line with other outstanding schools in the diocese for religious education and prayer and liturgy.
- Implement a policy that clearly identifies how pupils' skills of planning and leading prayer are developed progressively.

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

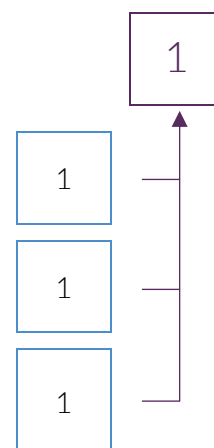
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

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



Pupils confidently talk about how they live out their mission to 'follow in the footsteps of Jesus to love, learn and laugh'. From an early age they learn that they are part of God's family and demonstrate how they 'love, learn and laugh' during lessons, playtimes and by actively participating in all aspects of school life. 'Love': pupils know that God loves each one of them and recognise they are all unique individuals who show respect to each other, staff and visitors. 'Learn': behaviour of all pupils is exemplary; therefore, they maximise the learning opportunities to deepen their understanding of what it means to follow in the footsteps of Jesus. 'Laugh': school is a happy, safe environment and because of this they readily greet their friends and adults in and around school with a smile. Pupils accept their responsibility to care for the needs of the more vulnerable by enthusiastically supporting the Mini Vinnies group who lead fund raising activities such as lucky dip, making bracelets and odd socks. Charities they support include Cafod, Good Shepherd, the local hospice, foodbank, and Make a Wish. Mini Vinnies visit care homes and write to Members of Parliament and supermarkets about food waste. Pupils are proud of their diverse community, and they appreciate the opportunities to learn about the faith and culture of others in their school.

The mission statement is understood and lived out daily in St Werburgh's and St Columba's. Governors believe 'staff and children walk in the footsteps of Jesus'. As a result, they are inspirational witnesses to the Gospel values that guide all aspects of school life. Staff willingly embrace the mission statement and contribute to activities in the wider community and parishes. They go above and beyond to ensure parents feel welcome and part of the school family. Staff support pupils preparing for the sacraments of Reconciliation and Holy Communion as well as attending Mass in the parish during the year. Parents and staff speak highly of

supportive relationships that underpin daily life. Parents know that staff are excellent role models for their children. Parental responses describe the school as 'a warm, nurturing, and inclusive environment', 'where children live and breathe the Catholic values of the school'. The pastoral team works effectively, providing care and support for the emotional and educational development of pupils with individual needs. This is carried out daily in school as well as accessing outside agencies, for example SPACE – for sensory play and support, and art therapists. Links to the parish St Vincent de Paul group provide other support and governors' policies ensure all pupils can take part in school trips.

Governors are fully engaged in all that happens in school and their commitment to the Church's mission in education guides all their decisions. They speak enthusiastically about the Catholicity of daily life and are frequent visitors to school. This means governors know the staff and ensure all policies and procedures take the wellbeing of staff into consideration. The Catholic character committee meets each term to discuss their learning walks, pupil voice and book looks. Governors and leaders attend diocesan training and readily update staff on new initiatives. There are strong and meaningful links with both parishes and parents. Parents' responses, discussion with the parish priest, and annual plans indicate a range of ways this partnership has a positive impact in the community. Governors embrace their role of supporting parents and appreciate the overwhelming support parents give to school. St Werburgh's and St Columba's is held in high regard in the local community, not just for its academic achievements but for the Catholic environment in which the pupils 'love, learn and laugh'.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

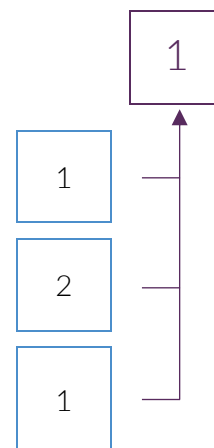
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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 enjoy their religious education lessons and confidently express their understanding of what they learn. They know that by following in the footsteps of Jesus they can make a positive difference to their daily life. For example, they make the link between the parable of forgiveness and the need to forgive others in their own lives. Parents' responses to the questionnaires also support this as 'children are excited to tell us about what they are learning' and 'often discuss what they have learned in religious lessons'. During times of sadness, parents recognise the positive impact faith has in supporting children. From their starting points in Reception classes, tracking records, assessments and written work show that pupils make good progress through the school. They know and remember previous learning, which enables them to make links to new concepts, and because of the well-planned curriculum, pupils of all abilities achieve the best possible outcomes across the school. Children confidently use religious vocabulary to answer challenging questions. For example, in Key Stage 1, 'I think Jesus is the one with yellow round him because he is the light of the world' and Jesus's message to his friends would be 'I will guide you through your life'. Pupils in lower Key Stage 2 explain 'Jesus is God in human form'. Most pupils understand how well they are doing and, in most classes, teachers use the feedback policy to ensure they have time to correct misconceptions. Pupils achieve similar standards in school assessments and when compared to national data in other core subjects. Pupils are highly motivated and committed to doing their best.

Teachers have worked hard to ensure that they have confidence when teaching religious education and use highly effective teaching methods to engage pupils in their learning. Teachers understand the importance of this subject and are deeply committed to communicating this to their pupils. Teachers are highly skilled at asking effective questions, which ensures pupils are engaged in their learning. They also use more challenging questions and adapt explanations to

help pupils further their understanding of the topic. Pupils are encouraged to ask their own questions, such as 'Why wasn't Joseph Jesus's father?' Planning is closely linked to pupils' level of understanding because informal assessment takes place during lessons and more formally at the end of each topic. Teachers provide feedback and praise to pupils throughout lessons. For example, highlighting good examples from pupils' written work to motivate and help those needing extra encouragement. However, this is not consistent across the school and is identified as an area to develop during the implementation of the new *Religious Education Directory*.

Leaders have a deep commitment to ensuring religious education is given high priority in the curriculum and the head teacher, subject leaders, and learning support staff have the expertise to strive for continual improvement. Therefore, teaching is consistently good or outstanding. Teachers use a range of effective strategies implemented by subject leaders, so pupils know what they need to do to improve. For example, 'steps for success' is a guide through each topic. End of topic quizzes, and bridging back, ensures previous learning is consolidated. Pupils of all abilities engage and enjoy their lessons and make good progress. Leaders and governors have a well-planned programme for self-evaluation. Because of this, governors know the school and are involved with regular and robust monitoring in a variety of *ways*. The Catholic character committee meets termly to ensure that they are fully involved in strategic plans, which lead to at least good, and some outstanding outcomes in the quality of teaching, learning and pupil progress.

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

1

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

1

1

Pupils regularly experience times of reflection and there is a calm and joyful atmosphere in school. Pupils participate reverently and enjoy a range of prayer and liturgy that is meaningful to them. They can articulate why these times make a difference to their lives. Evaluation of class prayer takes place regularly and pupils confidently share what makes these times special. They comment that they 'feel calm' and 'feel like God is with me'. Pupils enthusiastically share the importance of faith in their lives by explaining, 'having faith is when you believe even when you don't see'. They also recognise that others have different faiths and cultures, and they respect this. A wide variety of worship enables pupils to develop an understanding of the liturgical year as they progress through the school. Key Stage 2 pupils lead Stations of the Cross during Lent, and with the help of staff Key Stage 1 pupils lead the Palm Sunday celebration, which includes prayer, music and a re-enactment of the scripture. Older pupils welcome their responsibility to support younger pupils during the celebrations of feasts and liturgies throughout the year. The school mission team meets to discuss ways of providing more opportunities for prayer. There is a class prayer book in each classroom for pupils' spontaneous prayers.

Weekly scripture passages linked to the liturgical year help pupils to understand how these teachings influence their lives. Staff embrace the training provided by leaders to ensure they know how to provide times of prayer and reflection that is age appropriate. However, in some classes the scripture reading is too long, and pupils lose focus. By upper Key Stage 2 pupils are encouraged to choose their own scripture passages, but younger pupils do not have enough opportunities to build up these skills. Staff are building up a range of ways of praying, and have accessed Diocesan training, but they rely heavily on prior training from an external resource, therefore individual creativity in class worship is limited. Pupils do plan and lead prayer and liturgy, however the progression document does not give enough detail to provide appropriate

opportunities for younger pupils to develop these skills. Although space is limited in class, each room has a prayer table that is clearly linked to the liturgical year. Designs by visiting artists and pupils for the prayer garden provides a quiet space for classes to gather and has significant meaning for the community.

The prayer and liturgy policy is reviewed by staff and governors and is a useful reference for staff. Leaders and governors have an authentic appreciation of the importance of prayer, and this has a positive impact on the quality of prayer and liturgy offered in school this year. They continue to prioritise this to develop staff confidence and understanding of prayer and liturgy. With the support of the parish priests, staff and pupils are developing their ability to participate and carry out ministries of reading and leading prayer with ease. An annual plan agreed with the parish priests and leaders ensures Mass is celebrated throughout the year in a variety of contexts. These are well supported by families and nourish the spiritual life of the school. There are also opportunities for pupils to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation during the school year. Regular pupil discussions with governors and leaders ensure pupils have a voice in evaluating prayer and liturgy. These are formally recorded and reported in governing board meetings. Governors prioritise budget funding for training and resources so subject leaders are kept informed of diocesan initiatives.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Werburgh's & St Columba's Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	111384
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	8963641
Full postal address of the school	St Werburgh's & St Columba's Catholic Primary School, Lightfoot Street, Hoole, Chester, CH2 3AD
School phone number	01244478968
Headteacher	Kathryn Oates
Chair of governors	Sharon Daltrey
School Website	www.lovelearnlaugh.org.uk
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	N/A
Phase	Primary
Type of school	Voluntary Aided School
Admissions policy	Non-selective
Age-range of pupils	5-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	14 March 2018
Previous denominational inspection grade	1

The inspection team

Susan Lyonette
Julie Littler-Shire

Lead
Team

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