

St Augustine's Catholic Primary School

URN: 141980

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Bishop of Shrewsbury

21–22 March 2024

Summary of key findings

Overall effectiveness

The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school

1

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

1

Religious education (p.5)

The quality of curriculum religious education

1

Collective worship (p.7)

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

1

The school is fully compliant with the curriculum requirements laid down by the Bishops' Conference

Yes

The school is fully compliant with all requirements of the diocesan bishop

Yes

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

Fully

What the school does well

- Pastoral care of pupils and their parents is exceptional, therefore pupils' behaviour and engagement is exemplary and they enjoy coming to school.
- From their starting points pupils make excellent progress in religious education and personal development.
- Leaders, governors and staff supported by the trust have an ambitious vision for St Augustine's.
- Prayer plays a central and meaningful part in the life of the school, placing Christ at the centre of all they do.
- Leaders and governors provide excellent training opportunities for staff to develop their own expertise.

What the school needs to improve

- Develop a programme for Catholic social teaching that encompasses the whole curriculum, and the wider Catholic life of the school, so that pupils understand why they support those in greatest need.
- Ensure written tasks provide opportunities for pupils to express themselves in a way that reflects the rich and varied discussions they have in lessons.
- Develop a clear progression for prayer across the school to ensure that pupils' roles in planning and leading prayer is strengthened.

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

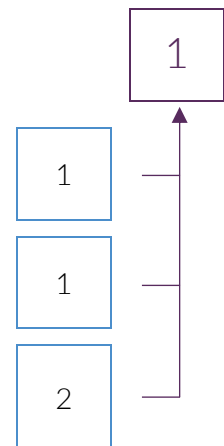
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

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' exemplary behaviour and their active participation in all that is offered to them at St Augustine's allows pupils to live out their mission 'Let your light shine', which is taken from the Gospel of St Matthew (5.16). Pupils know they are 'all different but loved by God' and this gives them a sense of their own worth. They confidently articulate this knowing their voice is listened to and considered by adults. They know the school rules and understand that these rules, 'Be ready. Show respect. Aim high.' make the school a happy place to learn and flourish in as they develop their own moral values. If wrong choices are made, pupils understand the need to forgive. They understand and articulate how they can follow the Gospel values and have a caring attitude towards each other, as well as eagerly supporting fundraising activities for those in greater need. The recent visit from Cafod helps pupils to understand why we all have personal responsibility to look after each other in God's world.

After some instability in school, the interim leadership has re-energised the school community's commitment to its Catholic mission. As a result, this has had a tangible impact on the life of the school. Parents know 'staff go above and beyond' to provide for their children. It is evident that all staff have played an integral part in shaping the Catholic mission of the school by ensuring it permeates through all they do. A parent of a child with special needs believes 'this school changes lives'. Christ is truly in the hearts of all the staff at St Augustine's. They believe 'the common ground is their focus on the children'. Therefore, parents trust them to do their best. Because of this trust, the pastoral care team and special educational needs and disability coordinator can support families as well as pupils, and this is a major strength. School is developing a reputation for being a welcoming community and this is evidenced by the increased numbers in recent years. The meaningful displays around the school reflect its Catholic mission.

When talking about what makes St Augustine's special, pupils know it helps them 'connect with Jesus'. Relationship and sex education is rooted in scripture and follows all the directives from the diocese.

Despite the changes the school has had in recent years, the whole community is passionate about providing a safe and caring environment in which all pupils flourish. This is possible because of the strong network of support between the staff themselves, the expertise of the interim senior leaders and the support from the academy trust. Leaders and governors ensure that Christ is at the heart of all they do for families and pupils. They recently enabled staff, pupils, and governors to reflect on this, which the whole community agrees has re-energised their already passionate commitment to the Catholic mission of St Augustine's. Leaders and governors are committed to the positive wellbeing of staff and prioritise ongoing support in school. Leaders also value the expertise that the academy trust provides. Engagement with the diocese is a strength and leaders ensure that all staff take advantage of courses offered. Governors work hard to strengthen links with the parish and therefore every opportunity is taken to engage pupils with the parish community. Leaders ensure that there are many opportunities for pupils to organise support for those in greatest need, however Catholic social teaching and self-evaluation procedures are not yet developed across all areas of the Catholic life of the school. The interim leaders understand how to strengthen these areas and they are making a considerable and positive impact on the Catholic mission of the school.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

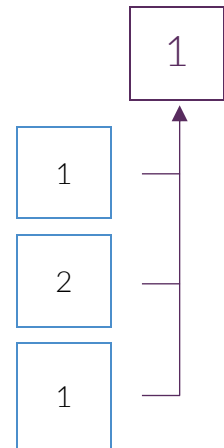
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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’ knowledge and understanding of the religious education curriculum is a strength at St Augustine’s. The excellent progress pupils make from Early Years to the end of Key Stage 2 is clearly evident in lessons. Pupils confidently express their views and contribute to lessons in a respectful and thoughtful way. Their high level of religious vocabulary helps them to articulate and ask questions about what they learn and this helps to deepen their understanding. From an early age pupils develop an interest and curiosity which encourages them to ask questions. Their learning is closely linked to their lived experiences, so they know more and remember more. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils debate confidently and express personal views about topics. Pupils of all abilities are fully engaged and eager to participate in their own learning. Behaviour is exemplary in all lessons, so pupils concentrate exceptionally well. They respond with enthusiasm to all tasks set, but do not have enough opportunities to take the initiative in how to record the excellent learning that takes place during lessons. Work is of a consistently high standard and data from the past 3 years shows attainment is improving. Pupils clearly value their religious education books and take pride in the work they produce.

St Augustine’s has a committed and enthusiastic staff, and because they recognise the importance of religious education in the lives of pupils, they have high expectations of pupils. They are keen to further develop their subject knowledge and therefore they readily undertake all training that senior leaders provide. In all classes teachers use effective questioning to further pupils’ understanding and learning. In the best lessons teachers skilfully provide explanations and activities to enable pupils to consolidate their learning. All staff provide praise and encouragement. However senior leaders are further developing ways of providing more effective feedback to pupils. Because teachers recognise the positive impact religious education can have on the pupils’ moral and spiritual development, they provide time for reflection in

lessons. However, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to express themselves in a way that more fully reflects the rich and varied discussions they have in lessons.

St Augustine's is experiencing a transitional time with leadership. However, the interim leadership team, which is led by the dedicated executive headteacher, ensures that the curriculum and resources planned for religious education meet the demands of the religious education curriculum directory. Standards in teaching and learning continue to improve. Professional development is a key priority for leaders and governors, and this is having a positive impact on teaching and learning in religious education. This means pupils make significant progress by the end of Key Stage 2. Leaders ensure all diocesan courses are accessed, as well as providing training through staff meetings, modelling, and coaching. The inspirational subject leader shares her high level of expertise and understanding of outstanding teaching and learning. Staff value and respond positively to this support, which creates a supportive learning culture within the school. Leaders are mindful of the needs of all pupils and they are committed to providing support in a variety of ways to ensure all pupils make progress. Parents spoke of how their children and families are supported saying 'staff go above and beyond'.

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 of all abilities actively participate in daily prayer, celebrations of the word, weekly school assemblies and liturgies throughout the year. For some pupils with special needs there is a feeling of being included and supported so that gradually they too can lead parts of the celebrations. Pupils know and confidently say their responses in liturgies and at times of prayer. They know a range of formal prayers including St Augustine's prayer which is loved by the pupils. They also enjoy writing and sharing their own prayers. Pupils' confidence in leading prayer in class and for whole school assemblies is growing, so now they are keen to participate and lead these times. Pupils understand how their prayer influences their actions, and they freely share how praying helps them 'to think differently and follow Jesus's values'. They appreciate that they 'can pray anywhere'. Pupils, including those with complex needs, also have quiet spaces to go when they 'are feeling anxious'. Pupils clearly value these times and know praying helps them 'feel calm and happy'.

Prayer is central to daily life at St Augustine's, and this is demonstrated daily throughout the liturgical year. Together with the parish priest, the staff provide a wide range of experiences, for example the Lenten walk, Rosary, and May procession, as well as celebrating significant feasts at other times. Scripture used in celebrations of the word is well established and this, together with scripture at weekly Gospel assemblies, means that pupils understand liturgical themes during the year. The length and complexity of scripture passages does mean pupils do not always understand the Gospel message. Senior leaders are aware of this and understand there is a need for a progression of prayer that is consistently followed. Teachers and teaching assistants work hard to provide enjoyable and meaningful experiences of prayer and therefore they welcome the support of the experienced subject leader. One example of creative prayer is the use of the forest school to enhance the awe and wonder of God's world. Staff regularly use

power point images and artefacts to help focus pupils' thoughts. Parents are invited to attend the weekly Mass in church, but there are limited opportunities for them to participate in more informal times of prayer with their children.

The subject leader is highly skilled when leading celebrations of the word. She knows how to develop the skills of relevant staff and provides a variety of training and support, so that staff, particularly less experienced members of staff, are growing in confidence. Senior leaders model celebrations of the word and times of prayer in the classroom and because they are passionate about developing staff confidence they model prayer in a variety of ways. The new prayer and liturgy policy has clear principles for good quality prayer, however it does not provide clear expectations for progression of prayer specifically for St Augustine's. The interim leaders are fully aware of this. Together with the parish priest and other local parishes and schools, leaders plan opportunities to celebrate Eucharist and reconciliation. The reflection and prayer at the start of meetings is valued by staff as it gives them 'a moment to settle and ground' themselves. Interim leaders and governors recognise that prayer and reflection time is the foundation that enables pupils to think about themselves, and how their actions can make their world a better place for all. The prayerful school community, supported by the academy trust, means that St Augustine's is a happy and safe place for pupils to grow in confidence, in love for God and in love for each other.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Augustine's Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	141980
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	8762002
Full postal address of the school	St Augustine's Catholic Primary School, Conwy Court, Castlefields, Runcorn, WA7 2JJ
School phone number	01928568936
Headteacher	Nedra Sothern
Interim Executive Headteacher	John Marciniak
Chair of Governors/Trustees	Antonia Woodhead
School Website	http://www.st-augustines.halton.sch.uk/
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	Holy Family Catholic Multi Academy Trust
Phase	Primary
Type of school	Academy
Admissions policy	N/A
Age-range of pupils	3-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	21 March 2017
Previous denominational inspection grade	2

The inspection team

Susan Lyonette
Stephen Walsh

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

