



Catholic Schools Inspectorate inspection report for

St Ethelbert's RC Primary School

URN: 105222

Carried out on behalf of the Right Rev. John Arnold, Bishop of Salford on:

Date: 5th and 6th October 2023

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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

Summary of key findings

What the school does well

- The headteacher is committed and passionate about her role in school and is supported well by other senior leaders who demonstrate skill and expertise.
- The culture of welcome ensures that all, including new staff, visitors and families feel included and valued in their roles.
- The use of music and singing inspires the whole school community and ensures this is inclusive to all.
- There is a clear commitment to supporting vulnerable families through resource, support and highly skilled staff.

What the school needs to improve:

- Develop the use of self-evaluation with staff, governors and pupils to improve provision and outcomes across school.
- To consistently provide more challenge in religious education ensuring there are higher expectations and aspirations for pupils.
- Develop the use of assessment and feedback across school to enable pupils to become more confident in knowing what they need to do to improve.

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:.....

2

Pupil outcomes

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

2

Provision

The quality of provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school

1

Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school

2



Pupils understand the identity of St Ethelbert's as a Catholic community and actively participate in all aspects including work as a Growing in Faith Together (GIFT) team, development of the prayer life of school and efforts to help others. Interactions and relationship across school indicate children clearly feel valued, safe and cared for. They are supported to understand and value the Catholic ethos of the school. During the inspection, a child in Reception stated quite emphatically, "God is everywhere, even in our dreams". Through discussions with children, they clearly understand the school community is committed to following the teachings and example of Christ, irrespective of their own beliefs and backgrounds. Staff and pupils talk about this being a fundamental principal of life within the school. Whilst they do not explicitly reference this to Catholic social teaching, this clearly underpins the mission of the school, with staff and pupils talking confidently about what they do to help those less fortunate locally and nationally; for example, 'Wear it Blue' was celebrated during the inspection to raise money for Mary's Meals and clothing collections are regularly arranged to support the local community. There is a strong sense of respect for all within the school community and it is a fully inclusive school family where everyone feels welcomed and cared for. As a result of this, behaviour of all children is good and there is an ethos of compassion and acceptance. The children talk enthusiastically about the contributions towards chaplaincy provision and value this opportunity.

The mission statement is clearly central to school life, and this is referenced consistently and meaningfully. The staff talk with enthusiasm about their roles in school, their membership of a school family and the deep connection they have with the mission of the school. There is a strong culture of welcome throughout the school. Pupils and staff greet visitors with smiles and words of welcome and there is a joyful atmosphere wherever you go. Parents and grandparents talk about

being supported when times are difficult and staff are committed to supporting those who are most vulnerable in whatever way they can, including accessing additional services, support with housing and social needs and developing ways of communicating for those who have recently arrived from overseas. Parishioners and staff talk about how those with different faiths or none are supported to understand the Catholic ethos, including the prayer life of school, making meaningful connections with their own experiences. Staff with expertise work closely with new parents to overcome barriers, be it language, communication, experience, or additional needs. Staff are exemplary role models for one another and for the pupils. New staff are supported well to succeed and develop. Relationship and health education meets statutory and diocesan requirements and celebrates a holistic vision of the human person through *'The Journey of Love'* and relationship education is of a high quality.

The senior leadership team work well together to promote the Catholic life and mission of the school. Policies and procedures have been developed well to reflect this. Governors are supportive of leaders in school and are committed to developing the Catholic life and mission. They currently have limited understanding and involvement with self-evaluation at different levels but show an enthusiasm and willingness to further develop this. The school, particularly the headteacher, works well with the diocese, to develop and improve the school with consideration for outreach. The relationship between the school and the parish is a particular strength and is based on mutual respect and hard work of all, including parishioners, parish priest and staff, who are all committed to the Catholic life and mission of the school for all members, including those of the Catholic faith, those of other faiths and those of none. The staff work well with parents and seek ways to overcome barriers, including using expertise amongst staff, translation tools, open communication strategies and a consistent culture of welcome. There is a clear commitment to the dignity of employees. They feel valued and supported at all levels.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade:.....

3

Pupil outcomes

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education.....

3

Provision

The quality of teaching, learning, and assessment in religious education.....

3

Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor, and evaluate the provision for religious education.....

3



There is a commitment from all to develop secure knowledge, understanding and skills through ‘Come and See’ but this is currently inconsistent across school, resulting in many pupils making limited progress as they struggle to know more and remember more. During the inspection, many pupils found it difficult to talk about what they had learnt, although there was evidence of increasing religious literacy in some classes. Pupils work independently but, in some cases, have limited opportunities for this. They show, through discussion, considerable potential and an enthusiasm to develop this which is currently not being recognised or harnessed consistently. Whilst pupils take pride in the work they produce, the opportunities are limited in their range which limits their potential to know and respond at a deeper level. As pupils have a limited experience of strategies for promoting response and reflection, they cannot talk about what they are learning or what they need to do to improve. Children show considerable confidence, understanding and enthusiasm during collective worship which can be used to further develop consistent practice in religious education.

Whilst some teachers are confident in their subject knowledge, this is not consistent across school and in some cases, there is an over-reliance on the scheme which limits creativity and rich learning opportunities. Teachers do value religious education and are committed to promoting this but need further support and training to do this more effectively and consistently. There is a lack of opportunity for assessment which limits teachers’ ability to link their planning to what the children already know and need to know next. Teachers use questioning well in some classes, but this is not consistent across school. The school has shown a commitment to promoting creativity to enable children to respond in a variety of ways but in many cases, this is misunderstood by staff. The current focus on oracy, whilst successfully promoting children’s speaking and listening skills, detracts from the teaching of religious education which results in children being unable to

understand what they are learning and leads to gaps in knowledge. Adults are used very well in classes to support the wide range of needs in the classroom. The role of teaching assistants and their contribution is valued by all.

Using the current scheme, *Come and See*, there is a faithful expression of the *Religious Education Curriculum Directory*, however, through work scrutiny it is evident that religious education is not comparable to other core subjects. Expectations are not as high, and children do not value it as they do English, for example. Presentation, broader opportunities and marking and feedback need review and development to help raise the profile of religious education across school. There has been significant commitment to training and development for all, but this currently has limited impact across school. There was some evidence of adaptive teaching strategies being used in religious education across school and there is a clear commitment to support children for whom English is an additional language but sometimes the activities provided did not consider different groups and needs. Whilst the subject leader for religious education has a clear vision and the expertise to secure this she is limited in opportunity to secure the best outcomes, due to the time required and all her other commitments. The governors, whilst receiving reports on the Catholic life of school and the curriculum, do not currently have a strong enough link between the monitoring evidence and how this contributes to the self-evaluation and therefore are not able to challenge effectively.

Collective worship

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

Collective worship key judgement grade:.....

2

Pupil outcomes

How well pupils participate in and respond to the school's collective worship

2

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

2



Pupils respond well to experiences of prayer and liturgy and engage fully and enthusiastically in opportunities provided, in most cases across school. Reflection, when used, is purposeful and reverent. Less experienced staff would benefit from observing skilled colleagues leading reflection to help embed this across school as this is valued by the children and clearly encourages the development of their own ideas and personal experience of faith. Singing is a strength of the school community, valued by all and is used effectively to engage the children in liturgy. There is reference to the liturgical year in school planning and children were able to talk about this with confidence. There is evidence of use of scripture, meditation and liturgical music in class-based prayer and liturgy opportunities. In many classes, children undertake liturgical ministries and work with staff in class to prepare these with increasing confidence and independence. They show an aptitude and interest in doing this and should now be trusted to further develop this across school, reflecting and evaluating on the impact they have had.

Prayer and liturgy are central to the life of the school and form part of daily routines. There is a daily pattern of prayer and there are a variety of ways of praying that are part of the Catholic tradition, including Mass, responses to the Gospel penitential rite, Glory Be, Our Father and Hail Mary. These are welcomed and valued by all. Seasonally appropriate scripture is used and is central to the prayer life of school. Staff are models of good practice, and some staff are skilled in helping pupils to plan independently. These staff should now support those less confident to ensure there is consistency and progression across school. Music is valued by all and used very effectively across school. The singing worship at the end of inspection was a joy to behold! The school makes good use of spaces available, including a chapel which is looked after with great pride by the Growing In Faith Together team. Children use the chapel respectfully and reverently. Class teachers have developed

meaningful prayer spaces within their classrooms which are used effectively and meaningfully. There is a richness being developed in the prayer life of school that families would benefit from sharing further as they value the partnership with school.

The headteacher is enthusiastic and committed to developing the prayer life of school. Other senior leaders are also skilled and should be used to further strengthen practice across the school. There is a clear skill strategy, but this is most well embedded where it is understood fully by staff. Occasionally there are examples where children could contribute more, and independence be promoted. Sacraments, holy days of obligation and other significant days are recognised and celebrated both in school and in church. The school is very well resourced to ensure that prayer and liturgy is valued by all. Whilst governors receive reports of the prayer life of school and fully support leaders' efforts, they should now be further included in evaluating the impact of monitoring and measures taken.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Ethelbert's RC Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	105222
Full postal address of the school	Melbourne Road, Deane, Bolton, BL3 5RL
School phone number	01204 333036
Name of head teacher or principal	Mandy Messham
Chair of governing board	Jane Townley
School Website	www.st-ethelberts.bolton.sch.uk
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age-range of pupils	3-11
Trustees	Click or tap here to enter text.
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	2.12.2015
Previous denominational inspection grade	Good

The inspection team

Sinead Colbeck	Lead inspector
Danielle Ellison	Team inspector
Name of inspector	Lead/team
Name of inspector	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