



Archdiocese of Birmingham

Section 48 Inspection Report

ST ALOYSIUS CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Woodstock Road, Oxford, OX2 7PH

Inspection dates:

5-6 October 2021

Lead Inspector:

Andrew Maund

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS:

Good

Catholic Life:

Good

Religious Education:

Good

Collective Worship:

Good

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection:

Good

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

This is a Good Catholic school because:

- All pupils and staff appreciate, fully contribute to, and benefit significantly from, the Catholic Life of the school, which has a generous, robust, and caring ethos at its heart. The values of inclusivity, faith and community are fundamental to the school.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education includes some examples of outstanding practice.
- The reverend and engaged attitude of all pupils and staff towards school Collective Worship demonstrates the fundamental importance of prayer at the heart of the community.

It is not yet Outstanding because:

- Widespread approaches to task setting in Religious Education limit the opportunities of many of the pupils to explore deeper thinking by writing at length.
- The feedback offered by teachers in Religious Education books does not consistently invite further response from pupils; many pupils do not routinely respond to the written feedback which is offered.
- The evaluation and analysis of the provision of Religious Education in the school by the subject leader and governors is not yet sufficiently thorough and rigorous to secure outstanding teaching across the school.
- The pupils do not routinely instigate, plan, or deliver Collective Worship.
- While strong, the Catholic Life of the school is in many ways inward looking.

FULL REPORT**What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Provide more opportunities for all pupils to develop their ideas by writing at length in Religious Education.
- Ensure that teachers offer consistently effective feedback in Religious Education that enables pupils to respond in a meaningful way.
- Develop a clearer and more rigorous and systematic programme of analysis and evaluation of the Religious Education in the school by leaders and governors.
- Provide opportunities for pupils to instigate, plan and deliver Collective Worship routinely and in a wide variety of appropriate ways.
- Find means to engage parents, carers, and the wider community in the Catholic Life of the school.

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

The quality of the Catholic Life of the school	Good
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school	Good
The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school	Good
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor, and evaluate the provision of the Catholic Life of the school	Good

CL1 The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school

- The pupils have a good understanding of the school's motto, "*Be Ambitious for the Higher Gifts*", which has been developed by the acting headteacher as an interim measure while the school's mission statement is reviewed. The pupils clearly know and understand the motto; the impact of this understanding is clear in their behaviour and their appreciation of all aspects of the school and their own vocation. However, pupils have no real understanding of the school's patron.
- Pupils' behaviour is exemplary; they demonstrate support for one another, respect for others and themselves and are most courteous towards each other and towards adults. They listen very well, readily give thanks and express their appreciation for all that the school has to offer. With a very wide range of backgrounds, the school is nevertheless remarkably inclusive, and kindness abounds.
- All pupils accept the responsibilities of living within a Catholic school community and, as a result, are involved in many activities which promote the Catholic Life and mission of the school and the wider community. There is a powerful sense among many pupils of respect for themselves and for others as made in the image and likeness of God.
- There is generally good knowledge among pupils of their class saints. These saints were introduced by a previous priest chaplain in 2018 to cover the six continents of the world, with both male and female saints, and include both contemporary and

historical figures. The class spiritual reflection books, introduced last year by the acting headteacher, record the spiritual journeys of the pupils.

- Pupils and staff clearly value the school's chaplaincy provision very highly indeed. They speak with great appreciation of the centrality of the work of the priest chaplain to all aspects of school life.
- All pupils take full advantage of the opportunities that the school provides for their personal support and spiritual, moral, and ethical development, which is clearly seen in the warmth of the relationships between pupils and staff. The school is described by the pupils as "a nice, small community" as well as helpful, happy, friendly, ambitious, religious, and caring; this ethos is clearly lived out in all aspects of their daily life together. As a result, the pupils are delightful: they are open, honest, inclusive, articulate, thoughtful, kind, keen to accept challenge and have a genuine sense of growing closer to God through the life of the community. They value and respect the Catholic tradition of the school and its links with the parish communities, and they understand the need to recognise and address the needs of others less fortunate than themselves, particularly in the local community.
- Pupils have a clear sense of the meaning of vocation in its widest sense and their own vocational development; this demonstrates that the school has addressed the first recommendation of the most recent monitoring visit in October 2018.

CL2 The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school

- The school motto clearly expresses the educational and vocational mission of the Church.
- Staff are committed to its implementation across the curriculum and wider life of the school. They enthusiastically participate in all school activities which currently reflect the Catholic Life and mission of the school, ranging from individual form prayers to opportunities for staff training and catechesis. Indeed, the school is clearly a force for evangelisation, with evidence of individual members of staff developing a desire to become more actively involved in the faith. For example, one senior and long serving member of staff approached the inspectors on her own initiative to celebrate the fact that she arrived in the school with no faith but became a Catholic because of the faith of the community. There is also clear recognition of the needs of others, which is addressed through such initiatives as supporting the local food bank and providing meals for the vulnerable and underprivileged. However, such previous generosity in charitable giving is not visibly celebrated around the school environment.
- The school is a prayerful community, with prayer forming a central part of the daily staff briefing, school and class assemblies and reinforced by using prayers in lessons, before and after meals and at the end of the day. Pupils and staff are exposed to the full range of the traditional prayers of the church with a focus on different traditional prayers in each year group.
- The school's internal environment clearly reflects its mission and identity through obvious signs of the school's Catholic character. This is clear both in traditional signs and symbols throughout the school and in very attractive artwork and artefacts, such as that on display in the courtyard, produced as part of the Catholic Creative Curriculum, and in the delightful prayer garden, with its recently provided prayer pebbles; this is a place of quiet prayer and contemplation used by pupils in their own free time. The permanent presence of an altar in the school hall and the visible focus on Our Lady in her month of October provide a powerful witness. However, the school's patron saint does not have a prominent presence and the prayer areas, while well maintained, might have a more prominent position in some classrooms.

- There is very little permanent external signage to proclaim the Catholic character of the school to the wider community. The Catholic character and ethos of the school are clear from the school website, however, and there are links from the website to that of the Oxford Oratory and vice versa. The hiring of the school hall to a Polish school on Saturdays is another initiative to bring elements of the local community into the school.
- All members of staff are generous, open, and honest in their behaviour and attitude towards pupils, one another, parents, and visitors. They have a heartfelt affection for and appreciation of the school and all it stands for and are reflective and self-critical. As a result, the school has the highest standards of pastoral care for its pupils. One example of this can be seen in the provision of breakfast and after-school activities.
- The Chaplaincy provision is highly effective in supporting and promoting the Catholic Life of the school, as can be seen in the frequency with which the priest chaplain visits the school. All staff speak with genuine appreciation of the support offered by him in their personal spiritual development. He is clearly treasured by all and provides very considerable moral and spiritual support, inspiration, and example.
- Pastoral programmes and Relationships, Sex and Health Education are carefully planned, well taught and reflect Catholic teachings and principles; a commitment to Catholic social teaching is also clear in all aspects of the curriculum.

CL3 How well leaders and governors promote, monitor, and evaluate the provision of the Catholic Life of the school

- The strength of the Catholic Life of the school is testament to the commitment of the acting headteacher and the governors, who have a clear and ambitious vision for the school and the drive and commitment to realise it.
- School leaders clearly demonstrate a public commitment to the mission of the Church and are well regarded as models of Catholic leadership by both staff and pupils. The governors support the mission of the Church; the caring and inclusive ethos of the school is driven forward by the energy, commitment, and dedication of them and the acting headteacher. A senior member of staff took the initiative to speak to the inspectors to celebrate the acting headteacher's inspirational leadership as a Catholic leader.
- The provision for the Catholic Life of the school is clearly acknowledged as a leadership responsibility; there is evidence of monitoring and evaluation of the Catholic Life of the school by leaders and governors.
- The impact of this is to lead to improvements which have clear impact in developing and maintaining the Catholic Life of the school.
- The school has many plans for engaging with parents and carers to the benefit of pupils. However, while there was careful and thorough consultation with parents over the introduction of the relationships, sex, and health education (RSHE) programme, there was no other evidence that the views of parents on the Catholic Life of the school are regularly or systematically sought, monitored or evaluated. Parental responses to the RSHE consultation were limited in number and tended consist of stronger opinions, in favour or against. Explaining their lack of response, most parents reported that they trusted the school and were happy to leave the decisions to school leaders.
- The school does respond well to diocesan policies and initiatives, for example the understanding and exploration of the Catholic Schools' Pupil Profile by staff and

pupils, and as a result promotes the archbishop's vision for the archdiocese throughout the school.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The quality of Religious Education	Good
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education	Good
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education	Requires Improvement
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor, and evaluate the provision for Religious Education	Good

RE1 How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education

- Pupils are clearly engaged in and enthusiastic about their Religious Education classes. Many start from a low baseline but most from their varied starting points, make progress in each key stage and meet expectations. Discussions with pupils made it clear that they understand and appreciate the wider implications of the Religious Education teaching for their spiritual and moral development.
- Almost all groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs, are also making progress comparable to the progress of other pupils.
- Most pupils, relative to their age and capacity, are religiously literate and are engaged young people; most show genuine interest in the subject and clearly enjoy opportunities provided to discuss and reflect spiritually, ethically, and theologically. There is clear evidence in many observed lessons of some reflection upon the demands of religious commitment upon their everyday lives.
- All pupils concentrate well and have a desire to improve. Pupils enjoy tackling challenging activities and respond well to opportunities which extend their learning, although such opportunities are limited. The impact of this is that behaviour in lessons is, in most cases, exemplary.
- Pupil attainment as indicated by teacher assessment is good and, in many cases, exceeds their achievement in other curriculum areas.
- The quality of pupils' class work is good; their written work is generally well presented and thorough, but they almost never respond in writing to the feedback offered to their work. Standards of presentation in written work are generally on a par in their literacy books with their Religious Education books.

RE2 The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education

- Teachers consistently plan lessons which are linked to the pupils' current level of achievement, although there is little differentiation by task except for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). Furthermore, the tracking of skills within and across year groups is not consistent. As a result, while most pupils are engaged in their lessons and learn well, progress is not as rapid as it might be.
- Teachers are reasonably confident in their subject knowledge and clearly feel very well supported by the subject leader and the priest chaplain; this was felt

particularly strongly by non-Catholic early career teachers and experienced teachers.

- Teachers employ a range of appropriate teaching strategies, engaging most pupils throughout lessons as a result.
- Teachers only involve pupils in a limited way in evaluating how well they are achieving; this inhibits good progress.
- Each lesson and piece of written work is headed with a clear set of learning objectives. Teachers offer some supportive verbal and written feedback and most use the school's assessment tracking procedures to some degree, but this is not consistent. Some of the teachers' feedback reflects a focus on literacy skills, rather than being focussed on improving pupils' achievements in Religious Education.
- Some teachers' management of time requires improvement to ensure good learning and their adaptation of tasks is limited. In most groups, the management of time is weighted heavily towards adult-led work and the pace of learning is subsequently slowed down by tasks that offer insufficient challenge.
- There is limited use of questions in class to develop deeper thinking and understanding. This is also the case in much of the feedback offered in pupils' books; such feedback and response from pupils is inconsistent across the school. While some pupils are given the opportunity to respond, they very rarely do so. The impact of this is that their progress is not as rapid as it might otherwise be.
- Opportunities for developing the deeper thinking and understanding are inconsistent across the school.
- A range of good quality resources is provided and used to improve learning for most pupils.
- In lessons, teachers communicate high expectations about the subject to their pupils, most of whom respond positively.
- Achievement and effort are celebrated, leading to good levels of motivation from most pupils.

RE3 How well leaders and governors promote, monitor, and evaluate the provision for Religious Education

- Leaders ensure that provision for Religious Education, including the required amount of curriculum time, meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference in every respect and in each key stage and has full parity with other core subjects in terms of professional development, resourcing, staffing and accommodation.
- The subject leader and newly appointed governors regularly monitor progress in Religious Education. However, the skills achieved by pupils and their progress year on year is not as clearly tracked as it might be; as a result, evaluation and follow up actions are not as rigorous or focussed as they could be. Nevertheless, governors do have a good understanding of levels of attainment and areas for development, for example, the relative performance of boys against that of girls. However, there is little evidence of strategies being developed to address this.
- The subject leader has a clear and inspiring vision for teaching and learning and a very good level of expertise to enable this vision to be secured. She shows great commitment to the development of her colleagues and their support in the classroom. This results in increased confidence in those colleagues.
- Leaders and governors have identified the issues preventing the school's provision of Religious Education from being good. Carefully planned actions to address them now need to be embedded into the school's day to day teaching of the subject.
- Leaders ensure that Religious Education is planned to meet the general needs of pupils and to secure reasonable coherence across the key stages and phases;

however, closer monitoring of planning for the different needs of specific pupils is needed.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

The quality of Collective Worship	Good
How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship	Good
The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school	Good
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor, and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship	Good

CW1 How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship

- Acts of Collective Worship engage all pupils' interest and inspire a heartfelt response, while also making the message relevant to their own lives. There is genuine enthusiasm from all pupils, who act with great reverence and are keen to participate in school Collective Worship.
- Pupils do not routinely prepare or lead acts of worship. This must become part of the daily fabric of the school's spiritual life.
- Pupils understand the church's liturgical year, its seasons, and feasts.
- The experience of living and working in a faithful, praying community has a very positive impact on the spiritual and moral development of all pupils, irrespective of their ability or faith background. The impact of this can be seen in the way pupils participate enthusiastically in the range of prayer and liturgy that is available and in their inclusive attitude to one another.

CW2 The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school

- Collective Worship is central to the life of the school and prayer is included in all school celebrations. Praying together is part of the daily experience for pupils and staff.
- Collective Worship has a clear purpose, message, and direction, with reference to the liturgical seasons and the Catholic character of the school.
- The planning of Collective Worship is given high priority, as is its resourcing and monitoring by school leaders. This results in an experience for pupils and staff which is almost always engaging and referred to positively by all members of the community.
- Relevant staff have an excellent understanding of the Church's liturgical year, seasons, and feasts, and are enthusiastic about ensuring that pupils have high quality experiences of the Church's liturgical life.
- Opportunities are planned to facilitate attendance by other adults associated with the pupils and school. These have been enthusiastically embraced by parents and leaders are keen to sustain these high levels of engagement post-pandemic.

CW3 How well leaders and governors promote, monitor, and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship

- Leaders clearly know how to plan and deliver quality Collective Worship, having an excellent understanding of the Church's liturgical year, seasons, and feasts.
- Collective Worship is always accessible to the pupils in a contemporary context. Consequently, pupils are highly and reverently engaged.
- Leaders are prominent in the delivery of Collective Worship within the school and appropriate models of good practice for staff and pupils.
- Leaders and governors regularly monitor and evaluate Collective Worship as part of their self-evaluation process.
- All additional requirements of the diocesan Bishop regarding Collective Worship are fully implemented.

SCHOOL DETAILS

Unique reference number	123218
Local authority	Oxfordshire
<i>This inspection was carried out under Canon 806 of Canon Law and under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005.</i>	
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary Aided
Age range	3-11 years
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on roll	199 (including Nursery)
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Pauline Broadway
Headteacher	Hannah Duncan (acting)
Telephone number	01865 311056
Website address	https://staloyusius.net/
Email address	office.3842@st-aloyusius.oxon.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	2-3 June 2015

INFORMATION ABOUT THIS SCHOOL

- The school is of below average size for schools of its type. It has links with the local parishes of The Oxford Oratory Catholic Church of St Aloysius Gonzaga and St Augustine & St Gregory.
- The percentage of Catholic pupils is currently 57%.
- The percentage of disadvantaged pupils is broadly in line with the national average.
- The percentage of SEND pupils is in line with the national average.
- The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic origins is above the national average.
- The percentage of pupils with EAL is above the national average.
- Since the last inspection, in very recent times, there has been a new chair of the governing body, an acting headteacher and two acting deputy headteachers.

INFORMATION ABOUT THIS INSPECTION

- The inspection was carried out by two Diocesan Inspectors: Andrew Maund & Veronica Gosling.
- The focus of the inspection was on the impact, quality, and leadership of the school's provision of Catholic Life, Religious Education and Collective Worship.
- The inspectors observed teaching across six Religious Education lessons evaluate the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.
- All Y6 pupils were on a residential visit throughout the inspection.
- The inspectors completed a work scrutiny and held discussions with pupils to evaluate their understanding of Catholic Life, the impact of Religious Education teaching on their learning over time and their experience of Collective Worship.
- Meetings were held with the chair of governors and three other governors, including the Religious Education link governor, who is also the school priest chaplain; the acting headteacher, who is also the Religious Education subject leader, and several non-Catholic members of staff. Informal discussions also took place with other members of teaching staff, who visited the inspectors on their own initiative to celebrate aspects of the school's Catholic Life.
- The inspectors attended three school assemblies, various acts of class Collective Worship and undertook a learning walk to look at aspects of the presentation of the Catholic Life of the school in the school environment and pupils' behaviour.
- The inspectors reviewed a range of documents including the school's self-evaluation, data about pupils' attainment and progress, school performance data, the school development plan, the Religious Education action plan, governors' minutes and records of the monitoring and evaluation of Catholic Life, Religious Education & Collective Worship.