

## Catholic Schools Inspectorate inspection report for St Clare's Catholic Primary School, Chester

URN: 111311

Carried out on behalf of the Right Rev. Mark Davies, Bishop of Shrewsbury on:

Date: 4 - 5 May 2023

### Overall effectiveness

The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school.....

2

### 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.....

2

### Collective worship (p.7)

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

2

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

✓

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

✓

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

Fully

## Summary of key findings

### What the school does well

- The mission and values are a real strength
- Relationships at all levels are exemplary
- There is a strong sense of welcome extended to all
- Behaviour throughout is outstanding
- There is a real sense of shared vision from a committed and dedicated staff

### What the school needs to improve:

- Involve the pupils in evaluating the prayer and liturgy that they lead
- Ensure that leaders and governors are fully involved in the promotion, monitoring and self-evaluation of all aspects of Catholic life and mission, including RHE



## 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:.....

1

### Pupil outcomes

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

1

### 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 at St. Clare's are immensely proud of belonging to this much-loved primary school, regardless of their different personal faith backgrounds. This is evident in the way they articulate their feelings and express their understanding. They know the school's distinctive identity, they embrace its mission, and know how it impacts on themselves and others. As one pupil comments, 'God made us to be like Him'. The pupils talk with ease and confidence about how the school's Value Statement of 'Faith, Respect, Honesty, and Perseverance' informs their actions and the way they treat each other. Respecting the dignity of all is at the core of all relationships and reflected in such comments as, 'our school accepts everyone'. As a result, almost all pupils feel safe and flourish. Pupils' behaviour is excellent throughout the school. They make direct links between their learning and how they care for each other. The strong Catholic ethos impacts on all relationships. The pupils relish the many opportunities they have in developing their roles as leaders. The Mini Vinnies is a vibrant group, constantly seeking ways to help the marginalised both locally and globally. This is reflected in the way support is given to Missio and Cafod, and exemplified in the fund raising for the parish Saint Vincent de Paul (SVP) holiday chalet. Playground Ambassadors are exemplary in their roles, for example, caring for others at lunchtime.

The Mission Statement, 'Following in the Footsteps of Jesus', has a direct impact on the quality of welcome in the school. It is regularly reviewed by all, including the pupils, who embrace it and talk about how it informs all their actions. It is rooted in Catholic tradition and displayed with pride around the school. Displays featuring the life of St. Clare, caring for God's creation, and celebrating our faith, speak powerfully of the joy and pride taken in the traditions of the

Catholic faith. They are shared for all to celebrate. All staff embrace this sense of mission and are excellent role models. The pupils themselves say, 'they are like Jesus, they guide us along the right path.' Pastoral care is outstanding with all staff and leaders who make it a high priority. Parents speak highly of the school, saying how welcomed they feel and that every member of staff contributes to this ethos. The recent pandemic has strengthened this ethos highlighting how the staff go the extra mile to support all families. Strategies to support the well-being of pupils such as emotional literacy and 'Trauma Informed Practice' impact hugely on the pastoral care of the pupils and the outstanding ethos of St. Clare's.

All leaders and governors know their school well. The governors are to be commended, ensuring the ethos continues to be the driving force of the school, especially during a period of considerable change. The highest priority is given to the recruitment of staff, always keeping the Catholic mission of the school a focus of all appointments. This is reflected in the appointment of the new leadership team, especially the headteacher, whose vision and dedication have such a positive impact on the morale and direction of the school. Professional development and formation are key elements of the support given by leaders, and all staff speak of how well they are supported. Many displays show the practical work undertaken within the parish community. A programme of Relationships and Health Education effectively uses Ten Ten 'Life to the Full' resources. However, all leaders and governors now need to be fully involved in its evaluation. Policies are in line with Diocesan guidelines.

## Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade:.....

2

### Pupil outcomes

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

2

### Provision

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

1

### Leadership

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

2



Pupils say they love their religious education lessons. This is demonstrated in the way they respond with enthusiasm and show a good recall of prior learning in their lessons. They talk confidently about their work, make good links to scripture, and have a good understanding of their work. Pupils make excellent responses in their lessons, 'we learn how much compassion Jesus has for us.' The pupils say they enjoy the creative approaches to their lessons and the opportunities to consolidate and enhance their learning through art, drama, discussions, and debates. Freeze framing and drama is used particularly effectively as seen in lessons in which they explored the feelings of the disciples following the death of Jesus. The exemplary behaviour of the pupils is a real strength of the school and ensures that all pupils are engaged and keen to learn in their lessons. They take immense pride in their work, and this is evident in the presentation of all workbooks through the school. Pupil progress is good overall, and the school rightly identifies vulnerable groups and good strategies are in place to give them further help and support. This support is in its early stages and the progress of these vulnerable groups is yet to match that of other groups.

The inspirational leadership of the headteacher and religious education lead teacher ensures high expectations are made of all pupils. Team working is a real strength of the school. It is collaborative and supportive and draws on the skills of all. As a result, it achieves consistency of approach through the school, reflecting a shared vision of all teaching and support staff. Good questioning skills are evident in all classes with support from assistants who are very effective in targeting pupils with extra help and encouragement. A more targeted approach by the religious education lead teacher, checking learning before and after tasks is having a positive impact and helping staff to monitor and assess teaching and learning more effectively.

The local cluster group is also using this approach following the work here at St. Clare's. Excellent use is made of resources so that all lessons support and celebrate this learning. Class 'Words of Wisdom' books are a real celebration of pupil learning. They reflect the deep thinking and reflection within each class.

Evaluation and monitoring of religious education is accurate. This new leadership team is dynamic and enthusiastic, building on past successes and having a real impact on the direction of the school. As a result, staff morale is high and transformational in its outlook. All staff speak of the support they have and the joy they get being at St. Clare's. The website reflects the leadership's commitment to supporting parents as the first educators and regular newsletters also reflect how they can support religious education teaching at home. There is a close partnership with the parish. They work very effectively to support all in and beyond the local community. The reenergised leadership team is impacting immensely, raising the morale of the whole community. The senior leadership team is totally focussed on allowing all groups of learners to be the best they can in religious education by the extra support given to them. However, time is needed to embed these to impact fully on their progress. As a result, leadership in the provision for religious education is good rather than outstanding.

## 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 .....

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 .....

2

Pupils at St. Clare's are deeply engaged and responsive to the prayer life of the school. This is demonstrated by the pupils themselves who respectfully gather and participate in moments of prayer and reflection. Pupils confidently share their own thoughts and understanding of scripture. A good example of this being a very thoughtful liturgical prayer led by the headteacher in which Jesus asks his disciples to put their trust in Him. Pupils know that trusting in things they cannot see is difficult and know, however, that they can place their trust in God and people they love. They are also enthusiastic and confident about their own roles as prayer leaders. In discussions they give examples of how they undertake planning and leading prayers. They say they are encouraged to take on more responsibilities, gaining further independence at different stages through school. They know traditional prayers and enjoy composing their own. Each class has its own prayer and liturgy book reflecting the prayer life, celebrations, and meditative moments they share together. These books reflect the pupils' humbling and heartfelt responses. Great pride is taken in the presentation of the books, and they are used by the pupils as a source of inspiration.

Planning for liturgical prayer is thorough and reflects the liturgical year. There is a daily pattern of prayer throughout the school. A prayer and liturgy policy outlines the school's approach. All classes can celebrate Mass in school as well as other celebrations such as the Sacrament of Reconciliation in Lent, stations of the cross and praying the rosary together. Pupil involvement is much appreciated by parishioners who speak of the joy they bring to celebrations. All leaders and staff are good role models bringing prayer and reflections into the class daily routines. As a staff they regularly share good practice. They work very effectively with the parish priest, catechists, and parents in preparing pupils for the sacraments. As a result, more

parents are enrolling their children for the sacramental programme. Prayer spaces in every class and throughout the school emphasise the centrality it has in the daily life of the whole community. An impressive courtyard is given over to prayer and reflection and incorporates the four saints of the houses the pupils belong to. They talk of how it is a special place to pause and think of others. A memorial to a much-loved governor is to be found here. Pupil self evaluation of the lead they take in prayer and liturgy can be developed further. It is good but not yet outstanding.

The newly formed senior leadership team is ambitious for the future. They show visionary leadership skills focused on helping all to be the best they can and to access appropriate training to strengthen their leadership skills in supporting the prayer life of the school. Together with the governing body they drive forward opportunities for professional development offered by the diocese and in their own cluster and staff inset days. They are enthusiastic and dedicated in developing strategies to strengthen liturgical prayer. It is, however, good rather than outstanding as these strategies need time to embed through the school.



## Information about the school

Full name of school	St. Clare's Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	111311
Full postal address of the school	Hawthorn Road, Lache, Chester CH4 8HX
School phone number	01244445266
Name of head teacher or principal	Mrs Lucy Ward
Chair of governing board	Mr Michael Axon
School Website	<a href="http://www.stclares.cheshire.sch.uk">www.stclares.cheshire.sch.uk</a>
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	N/A
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age-range of pupils	4-11
Trustees	Diocese of Shrewsbury
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	15 <sup>th</sup> June 2016
Previous denominational inspection grade	Good

## The inspection team

K Toms	Lead inspector
M Glynn	Team inspector
Name of inspector	Lead/team
Name of inspector	Lead/team

## Key to grade judgements

Grade	England	Wales
<b>1</b>	Outstanding	Excellent
<b>2</b>	Good	Good
<b>3</b>	Requires improvement	Adequate and requires improvement
<b>4</b>	Inadequate	Unsatisfactory and in need of urgent improvement