



Archdiocese of Birmingham

Section 48 Inspection Report

ST AUGUSTINE'S CATHOLIC ACADEMY

Part of the All Saints Catholic Collegiate
Sandon Road, Meir, Stoke-On-Trent, ST3 7DF

Inspection dates:

6-7 December 2021

Lead Inspector:

Julie-Anne Tallon

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS:

Good

Catholic Life:

Outstanding

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:

- Pupils have a deep respect for all people as created by God regardless of their personal faith background. Pupils appreciate the respect staff model for the dignity of other people and seek to emulate this in their own behaviours.
- Leaders accurately evaluate the provision and outcomes for Religious Education. This enables them to focus improvement plans appropriately.
- Prayer is an integral part of the liturgical rhythm of this Catholic school, consequently pupils show deep reverence and respect during prayer.

It is not yet Outstanding because:

- Leaders and governors must ensure that the required amount of curriculum time is given to Religious Education in each key stage.
- Further development on questioning, to promote deeper understanding within Religious Education, is required in all key stages.
- Further development of the professional development of staff is required, which incorporates liturgical formation and the planning of Collective Worship, to ensure the capacity of pupils to think spiritually and theologically is deepened.

FULL REPORT

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that the required amount of curriculum time is given to Religious Education in each key stage.
- School self-evaluation, based on detailed monitoring, identified a need to develop questioning to promote pupils deeper understanding and personal responses within Religious Education. Work on supporting staff on how to do this now needs to be embedded.
- Develop all pupils' deep understanding of applying Gospel stories to their own lives.

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

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

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

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

- Almost all pupils appreciate, value, and actively participate in the Catholic Life and mission of the school. This is evidenced through a culture of respect and tolerance towards others, visible through exemplary pupil manners and actions. This results in pupils being integral to ensuring the school is a cohesive community which all stakeholders benefit from.
- Pupils demonstrate a deep respect for themselves, and others, as being made in the image and likeness of God. A belief that all individuals are valued and loved, regardless of faith, colour or gender was intrinsic in pupil responses.
- Pupils enthusiastically embrace the demands that being part of a school community entails, this is evidenced through their excellent behaviour in lessons and showing respect to their peers and adults in the classroom.
- Pupils feel confident and comfortable to share their views and opinions in group discussion, they ensure they are alert to the needs of others within and beyond the school community.
- Pupils' feedback in discussion showed that they feel like staff genuinely care for them and their well-being; pupils listed examples where staff support them and give guidance and advice. Pupils feel inspired by school staff who make school 'feel like a comfortable place where you feel safe, you'll be challenged but supported'.

- Pupils appreciate the opportunities that are provided by school and the efforts of staff who make them possible, pupils are aware of the needs of others and valued the opportunity to thank staff and nurture one another's well-being. Through pupil voice meetings, they decided to deliver positive messages and a cupcake to each staff member. Pupils felt proud that they were able to acknowledge kindness through this small, but heartfelt gesture.
- Pupils appreciate examples of care shown to them by school, in particular the link with a local bakery ensuring that each child can access toast each morning.
- Pupil spiritual leaders are proud to lead across the school, other pupils acknowledge and respect their contributions. Mini Vinnies work alongside the pupil leadership team to develop work around caring for God's creation. Pupil voice groups are well supported by use of technology including campaigning VIPs to action for the common good.
- The pupil leadership team passionately shared how they are working on the pope's mission to save the planet: each class has a mission to complete towards achieving this including composting, recycling, and looking at reducing electricity usage. Pupils spoke eloquently about the importance of this mission and the importance of all individuals working together for the common good.
- Classroom Catholic Life folders reflect pupils' thoughts and responses to the Catholic faith and key events in the Liturgical year. There is evidence of understanding the links between the Old Testament, the New Testament and how this can impact everyday life in modern Britain. Pupils need to have their responses challenged and developed further to gain a deeper understanding.
- There is strong outreach to the local community through a variety of pupil group actions, this is welcomed and appreciated by the parish and beyond. As a result of Covid measures preventing the continuation of these face-to-face actions, the school has adapted this outreach to ensure it can still take place using a variety of approaches. For example, creating video presentations for local care homes, using technology to host family prayer sessions, and sending handwritten cards and notes to those who may be lonely in the local community.
- In lieu of face to face opportunities that have historically been enjoyed by pupils, including retreats and sacramental preparation sessions, due to the pandemic, pupils have benefitted from using technology to join other schools from across the archdiocese in a series of online retreats at key points in the liturgical year.
- The school's use of a diocesan approved scheme to support pupils' education in personal relationships has been shared with parents and prepares pupils for the next stage of their physical, emotional, and spiritual development.
- Pupils are supported and encouraged to speak confidently one to one, in small groups and in larger settings, this results in self-assured young people ready to take on challenges.
- All staff are fully committed to the mission of the school. They enthusiastically participate in school activities that reflect its Catholic Life and mission. They are exemplary role models of mutual respect and forgiveness for pupils, this positively influences the behaviours of the pupils.
- A variety of adult stakeholders spoke passionately about their knowledge of the school mission statement through the format of it being turned into a school hymn. Whilst school originally designed this to promote pupil knowledge and understanding of the school mission statement, through sharing at face-to-face events, and primarily through online worship during

partial and full lockdowns, families feel that they too can support their child's understanding of the mission.

- The school has acted on previous advice from diocesan advisors focusing on saints and faiths from across the world ensuring all children and families feel included and represented, this is evidenced through discussions with pupils and 'exploring faith' displays.
- The family support officer co-ordinates pastoral support for children and families around a range of issues ensuring early support is provided and appropriate outreach accessed. This is clearly and robustly monitored and evaluated to ensure families receive the best support available.
- A culture of extensive pastoral support for adults is embedded in the school, this is focused on the teachings found in Matthew 6:4; these supportive actions are carried out privately for the good of individuals and families. Some adults who had received this support spoke to inspectors and were overwhelmingly appreciative of what the school had done, sharing how much these kind thoughts, and importantly practical actions, had supported them in a time of need.
- The school demonstrates a commitment to supporting families who find themselves in circumstances where they need practical help, one example of this is the 'Alice pantry' where parents can access basic food and household provisions. Subsequently, there is an option to contribute to the pantry, by replacing these items and donating others, when you find yourselves in more positive circumstances.
- Staff at school have encountered challenges over the past few years; they shared that they have been held together by a strong passion for their faith. The headteacher feels constantly nurtured in her own faith through the commitment of her staff team and their willingness to look out for and go above and beyond for all within the school community.
- Leaders place high priority on the mental health and well-being of pupils and adults. This is reflected through governors' investment in training a mental health first aider for both children and adults.
- Despite low numbers of Catholic teachers, all staff are committed to the Catholic Life of school. They are given the opportunity to attend the 'journey in faith' programme to develop their own knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith; this has resulted in staff members being welcomed into full communion with the Catholic Church. Staff value the opportunity for retreats and the multi academy company (MAC) spirituality day.
- A variety of nurture groups operate successfully through school, led by internal and external providers. One of these, Lego therapy, is used successfully to support parents and pupils. This and other groups support the school's aims for all children to achieve their very best in all areas of the curriculum and beyond thus becoming the person God has called them to be.
- Pupil engagement in living out the Catholic Pupil Profile Virtues are acknowledged through presentation of values and virtues certificates. Prayer leaders are proud that they are trusted to suggest names of peers who should be commended to their teacher. Prayer leaders then hold the responsibility of stating why this person has been selected and reading this commendation of recognition to the whole key stage in the celebration assembly.
- Staff and pupils maintain a clean and tidy environment, displays in classrooms and around school are of a high quality which demonstrates the school's mission and identity, reflecting its Catholic character.

- The school provides opportunities for pupils' spiritual and moral development; one pupil shared a detailed response about support provided: 'If we fall out with friends, we know how to sort it out, we can go to peer mediators and they will listen and with their partners, on their day of duties, they will sort it out. Peer mediators are available and share messages kindly, they help to solve the problem and calm the situation.'
- Family learning workshops have begun again following disruption caused by the pandemic focusing on the season of Advent, this is beginning to address identified weaknesses in pupils' understanding of the liturgical year.
- The school follows a diocesan endorsed programme to deliver relationship, sex, and health education (RSHE). Parents have been involved in the consultation and implementation through the work of the Religious Education team which involves teachers, teaching assistants, governors, and parents. The school continued to deliver and monitor the delivery of RSHE through local and national lockdowns, ensuring no areas were missed.
- The active Minnie Vinnies and other pupil leadership groups are passionate about the importance of care for our common home and spoke eloquently about the work they have begun on the CAFOD Live Simply award. The school is beginning its journey of incorporating Catholic Social teaching throughout the curriculum.

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

- Monitoring & evaluation is systematic and robust. Monitoring is well planned out and systems are in place to ensure local governing board and MAC directors are informed of findings and planned next steps.
- Leaders and governors are committed to the Catholic Life and character of the school, this is demonstrated through a well-established team of parents, staff and children, working together to improve the Catholic Life of the school community. This group facilitated the redesign of the Mission Statement involving the whole school community, this has been translated into a school song enabling parents and children to share this Mission statement together. Governors are proud that pupils live the mission statement in their everyday lives.
- When asked about the Catholic Life of school, a parent responded: 'the ethos of everyone caring for everyone else at St Augustine's is really special, it is based on open conversations about a love of Jesus which is shared by all'.
- The way adults treat each other and model positive relationships cascades to all pupils resulting in exemplary behaviours, this is based on the staff code of conduct built upon the teachings of Jesus.
- Monitoring of Catholic Life, focusing on pupil understanding of the lives of saints, results in well-targeted and planned improvements including a relaunch of class and house saints resulting in pupils understanding of the saints improving greatly.
- Peer mediators are used in school to support restorative justice; pre-covid, this was used in partnership with peer massage to support pupils. Plans are underway to resurrect this excellent practice.
- Governors are well informed and provide appropriate challenge and support. Link governors are active in their roles and have a good understanding of the school's needs.

- Governors feel that pupils see adults around school being witnesses to their faith and this impacts on their exceptional behaviours. Behaviour management reflects the values of the Gospel.
- New children and staff are welcomed to Catholic Life of the school through an induction programme led by the Catholic Life team.
- Support of all is central to the culture of the school. Staff are supported through investment of time and resources into their formation and development, families are supported in supporting their own children's learning through the 'watch me learn' sessions.
- New staff are welcomed to the Catholic Life of St Augustine's as soon as they are appointed, they follow a planned induction process focused on the requirements and commitments of working in a Catholic school. This is developed at school and MAC level including visits, meetings and partnering opportunities with other MAC schools developing Catholic leadership at all levels.
- Parental views are actively sought both formally and informally. Their suggestions are considered and acted upon.

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	Good
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

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

- Pupils make good progress in Religious Education. Over the last three years, progress has improved because of timely assessments and by increasing the range of types of assessment tasks. Furthermore, teachers interweave opportunities for pupil leadership of Catholic Life into Religious Education lessons which contributes to their confidence and success.
- Overall progress in Key Stage 1 is particularly rapid due to the relatively low starting points of pupils upon entering the school. In Key Stage 2 progress continues to be good because teachers identify barriers to learning and plan lessons accordingly.
- The gap between the progress of boys and girls has fluctuated over the last three years. Girls' progress is generally better than boys', though this is not always the case. Where the gap is smaller, this is because teachers skilfully and regularly create opportunities for mixed gender paired work, though this practice is not embedded throughout the school. Pupils with a special educational needs or disability (SEND) generally make progress as expected, though the progress of disadvantaged pupils with SEND is consistently slower than that of other significant pupil groups.

- Because most teachers are confident in encouraging pupils to apply religious teachings in their own lives, pupils are regularly enabled to think theologically and morally in lessons. However, this provision is not always offered to all pupils in a class.
- The impact of recent efforts to increase the range of teaching strategies used in Religious Education lessons is clear. As a result of the wide range of highly engaging and creative teaching strategies employed by all teachers, pupils' behaviour in lessons is excellent. Learning captures the minds of pupils, who are keen to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding at all times.
- Pupil attainment is good. Most pupils reach or exceed the age-related standards for their age group. This is because teachers plan well to meet the needs of most pupils.
- The quality of pupils' written work is good. Teachers have high expectations regarding written work, which further contributes to the motivation of pupils. Where written work is better than good, it is because teachers have provided feedback to which pupils have responded, enhancing the depth of their responses. Compared to other core subjects, the quality of written work in Religious Education is consistently higher.
- In most instances, teachers plan lessons which are well matched to their assessment of pupils' abilities. Because all teachers skilfully build upon prior learning, pupils are well placed to deepen their learning each lesson. Some teachers sometimes spend too long doing this, resulting in instances of slow progress which subsequently reflects in the lack of depth in written work, particularly for higher ability pupils.
- The vast majority of teachers' subject knowledge is secure. This enables them to competently deal with pupils' questions and, in classrooms where learning is most effective, rapidly move them on to the next level of learning. Where this is not consistently the case, care must be taken to ensure the details of Bible stories are fully understood by teachers, so as not to cause confusion amongst pupils.
- Skilful questioning is used to reinforce key knowledge with pupils before teachers' increase the demand of their questions. This strategy is repeated so that the pupils are engaged with their learning journey, as opposed to being passive learners. Consequently, most pupils are quick to grasp new knowledge.
- Other adults are used very effectively to enhance pupils' learning. Because they are well prepared and secure in their own subject knowledge, teaching assistants make a significant contribution to the learning of pupils, particularly of those with SEND. Their contribution to Religious Education lessons is invaluable.
- Teachers have particularly high expectations of pupils with SEND. More recently, these pupils have been encouraged to demonstrate deeper levels of knowledge and understanding through expert questioning, well planned tasks and effective support when completing written and creative tasks. They are frequently expected to undertake activities which enable them to meet the same learning objectives as most other pupils.
- The quality of teachers' feedback is variable across the school. In the best examples, subject specific comments and questions guide pupils' thinking to a greater depth, enabling them to make even further progress. However, some teachers' written feedback is focussed too heavily on literacy, at the expense of Religious Education, thus some pupils are not always challenged to think at this level.

- Consistent celebration of pupils' achievements by teachers using verbal praise and dojos motivates pupils and inspires them to continue their hard efforts.

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

- The Religious Education curriculum content fully meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales and the additional requirements of the Archbishop of Birmingham.
- In most classes, the provision of Religious Education falls short of the required time allocation. Leaders and governors must ensure that at least 10% of curriculum time is dedicated to the teaching of Religious Education in every classroom.
- Because of their commitment to the Catholic ethos of the school, governors ensure that provision of Religious Education is at least equitable to their provision for the other core subjects, in terms of resources, continuing professional development (CPD) for staff and financial commitment.
- Religious Education is effectively planned to meet the needs of almost all pupils. Through rigorous monitoring, leaders have accurately identified the need to improve the provision for, and outcomes of, more able pupils. These pupils do not always attain as highly as they should because teachers do not consistently plan for pupils to securely demonstrate their mastery of the more challenging learning outcomes.
- Leaders have projected the expected size of some significant pupil groups for the next two years. Challenging targets have been set for the attainment of these pupils, reflecting leaders' commitment to high expectations.
- Governors receive termly reports from the headteacher to update them on the leadership of Religious Education. In addition, the link governor is well informed of progress against improvement plans and shares this information with all governors via their online portal. Consequently, governors can accurately articulate the strengths and areas for development within the subject and leaders' success in securing improvements.
- The subject leader is an inspirational figure within the school. Staff and governors alike hold her in high regard because of the expertise with which she secures her vision for the subject. Because she is approachable and supportive, staff routinely refer to her for support, which is always provided.

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**CW2 The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school**

- Pupils share songs of worship and praise confidently and reverently, resulting in a high standard of communal singing which significantly enhances the communal reverence exhibited in Collective Worship.
- Pupils have a well-developed sense of respect for those of other faiths. This is reflected in the way many pupils participate in prayer and liturgy. One pupil responded: 'I can express myself to God, I know that God will always be there for me, if I make the time to talk to him through prayer, he will be there for me.'
- *Wednesday Word* and *Friday Faithful* opportunities are valued by the pupils as opportunities to share opinions and thoughts about their faith. During discussions, one pupil shared: 'God made us who we are, he sacrificed his son to wash away all sins. I think praying is a good way of showing thanks.'
- Pupil spiritual leaders are proud to lead key responsibilities in the organisation and delivery of key stage prayer; they formally evaluate Collective Worship in line with the school monitoring timetable. Pupils carry out their duties confidently and respectfully.
- Pupils regularly prepare and lead worship with confidence, enthusiasm, and a degree of independence. Their planning reflects the words and actions that would be used in Mass and most pupils show a good understanding of the Church's liturgical year.
- Pupils benefit from the experience of living and working in a faithful, praying community. Collective Worship opportunities include attending the parish church, gospel assemblies, and class-based worship. Pre-pandemic, the school joined the parish weekday Mass to which parents were invited, this included being represented at Sunday Masses throughout the year.
- Prayer is central to the life of the school; this is evidenced through pupils' responses and the displays around school. Individual prayer foci on tables are used during Religious Education lessons and prayer times. Pupils feel that these support their understanding of the liturgical year and help them to concentrate on prayer.
- Collective Worship continued using technology throughout full and partial lockdowns, ensuring that prayer and worship maintained high priority within the school. Throughout virtual and face-to-face sessions, the themes for prayer reflect a good understanding of the liturgical seasons and the Catholic character of the school.

- Leaders ensure staff have a good understanding of the liturgical year, seasons & feasts. This is supported by MAC plans and PowerPoints, ensuring all pupils in the MAC get equitable access to Collective Worship opportunities.
- Staff with a strong understanding of the Church's liturgical year, seasons and feasts willingly support other team members to ensure that pupils have good experiences of the Church's liturgical life.
- Staff have a good understanding of the purpose of Collective Worship and the wide variety of methods and styles of prayer, this is modelled for the pupils who, in turn, lead worship in the same style.
- Prior to covid restrictions, there were many planned opportunities for parents, governors, and parishioners to join instances of prayer and liturgy in school; this invite was welcomed, and attendance was positive.

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

- Governors' monitoring of Collective Worship identifies pupils' involvement and reverence as areas of strength, and particularly identifies pupils' depth of knowledge demonstrated regarding the 'go forth' message. Monitoring is used to identify CPD needs of individuals which is addressed by the subject leader for Religious Education. If patterns are observed, whole staff CPD is planned and subsequently revisited at a later date to ensure its impact is as expected.
- Governors are well informed and are active challenge partners to school leaders, therefore ensuring the very best for all pupils. Termly link governor visits are reported back to the mission and strategy committee, which is then shared with the MAC board.
- Governors have attended Diocesan training on how to successfully write a self-evaluation form (SEF) and felt confident contributing towards the current SEF. Governors feel confident in information shared as it is triangulated with link governor visits, data sharing and joint monitoring in line with the monitoring timetable.
- Parents feel that pupils' spiritual and moral development is nurtured through school and encourages pupils to understand why we pray. This understanding is developed and built upon as pupils get older. Parents are proud of the foundations of faith embedded by the primary school which makes them stand out at secondary school.
- The school has responded to parental suggestion of wanting children to be involved in leading liturgy. Governors and parents have observed this as a positive experience. Some parents shared how their children has then set up a prayer area at home as a result of experiencing this at school.
- Leaders ensure that the subject leader for Religious Education and Early Career Teachers attend appropriate training from the archdiocese; this has resulted in pupils using diocesan resources to take responsibility for planning and delivering their own Collective Worship in the classroom setting.
- Leaders and governors regularly review Collective Worship as part of their robust monitoring schedule. As a result, governors are well-placed to talk confidently about prayer and worship within the school. The school liaises with the parish priest to support the formation of adults and children within the school community.
- The school is fully compliant with the requirements of the Archbishop of Birmingham regarding prayer and liturgy.

SCHOOL DETAILS

Unique reference number	140296
Local authority	Stoke-on-Trent
<i>This inspection was carried out under Canon 806 of Canon Law and under Section 48 of the 2005 Education Act.</i>	
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy
Age range	2-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on roll	205
Appropriate authority	The board of directors
Chair	Anne Middleton-Hill
Headteacher	Rebecca Perkins
Telephone number	01782 319504
Website address	www.staugustinescatholicacademy.org
Email address	office@staca.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	June 2015

INFORMATION ABOUT THIS SCHOOL

- St Augustine's is an average sized Catholic primary school serving the parish of St Augustine's of Canterbury, Meir.
- The percentage of Catholic pupils is currently 30%.
- The percentage of disadvantaged pupils is above the national average.
- The percentage of SEND pupils is broadly in line with the national average.
- The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic origins is below the national average.
- The percentage of pupils with EAL is above the national average.
- Attainment on entry is below average.
- Since the last inspection a new principal, a new vice principal, and a new subject leader for Religious Education have been appointed.

INFORMATION ABOUT THIS INSPECTION

- The inspection was carried out by two Diocesan Inspectors: Julie-Anne Tallon and Ben McArdle
- 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 eight Religious Education lessons to evaluate the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. All these lesson observations were conducted jointly with senior leaders.
- 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 (also a representative of the Board of Directors), the Religious Education link governor, the Catholic Life link governor,

the headteacher, the subject leader for Religious Education, the Catholic Life team, the parish priest, Catholic Senior Executive Leader, parents, and early career teachers.

- The inspectors attended a Key Stage 2 Collective Worship, a classroom Collective Worship, and undertook a learning walk to look at the presentation of the Catholic Life of the school and pupils' behaviour. Inspectors dined with pupils on day one of the inspection.
- The inspectors reviewed a range of documents including the school's self-evaluation, data about pupils' attainment and progress, the school development plan, the Religious Education action plan, Catholic Life action plan, teachers' planning, and Catholic Life journals.