



Archdiocese of Birmingham

Section 48 Inspection Report

ST WULSTAN'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Part of The Christ The King Catholic Collegiate

Church Lane, Wolstanton, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffordshire, ST5 0EF

Inspection dates:

17th & 18th September 2018

Lead Inspector:

Mr T J Hughes

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS:**Good**

Catholic Life:

Good

Religious Education:

Good

Collective Worship:

Outstanding

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection:

Good

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

This is a Good Catholic school because:

- The Catholic Life provided inspires the pupils to live out the school motto everyday.
- The school has evolved as a nurturing and faithful community, as a result of the dedication of the headteacher and deputy headteachers.
- The teaching of Religious Education captivates the pupils and gives them the confidence to discuss and develop their spirituality in a mature way.
- All members of the school family are united and passionate about celebrating their faith through prayer, Mass and liturgies.

It is not yet outstanding because:

- The monitoring of Religious Education is not sufficiently rigorous.
- The quality of the pupils' Religious Education work in their books is not yet as high as the standards in English.

FULL REPORT

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that the issues arising from work scrutinies, data analysis and the observation of teaching are shared and acted upon quickly to improve standards.
- Ensure the quality and quantity of pupils' work in Religious Education is consistently high in all classes.

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

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| 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. | Outstanding |
| 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 |

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

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

- St Wulstan's Catholic Primary School is united by its motto: -
Love, learn and share in the light of Jesus
- Every pupil at St Wulstan's Catholic Primary School knows that they are loved, valued and made in the image of God.
- Relationships at all levels are sincere, mutually respectful and provide the platform for success in the pupils' work and play.
- Pupils have become increasingly thoughtful about how faith impacts on their lives.
- When discussing their vocations, pupils speak of every aspect of their lives as being a vocation where God is leading them to a particular person.
- Pupils deeply value the mission of the school and, as a result, relish the opportunities they have to help one another, both in practical and emotional ways. For example, they recognise when another pupil is isolated and will befriend them; equally they will offer support in daily encounters and will assist with the likes of first aid or administration tasks.
- The ethos of the school has a marked impact on the pupils' behaviour. The pupils are very well behaved and keen to share their skills and aspirations with one another. Older pupils act as robust role models, assisting younger members of the school with their learning and play.
- The consistent strength of this very good behaviour has come about from the way the school staff manage the emotional needs of the pupils. Any individuals needing support are always treated with compassion and a recognition of their dignity.
- Pupils have embraced the virtues shared as part of the experience of the Catholic Schools' Pupil Profile (CSPP). They have gradually developed a good understanding of these virtues and can identify what they mean for each of them individually. As a result, pupils are ready to forgive one another and they recognise the different strengths and qualities of all people.
- Pupils are proud that their achievements are helping them grow in the image of God. This is seen in the celebration assembly each week, where pupils are recognised for times when they have demonstrated the CSPP virtues.
- Pupil faith and prayer leaders complement and contribute towards the Catholic Life, ensuring that prayer areas are set up and Mass preparations are in place. They take on responsible roles in promoting the ethos of the school, such as reading during Mass, singing in the choir in church and serving refreshments to the congregation after Mass.
- The pupils play a part in monitoring the Catholic Life of the school. Their recent feedback has indicated that prayer areas are well used, with pupils having the opportunity to develop their spirituality through writing their own prayers.

- The pupils have developed a strong sense of self awareness and the impact their actions have on others. The working week begins with a Gospel assembly, in which a 'Go Forth' task is presented. The pupils embrace this challenge and then reflect the message of the Gospel throughout the week.
- The journey of faith, experienced by the pupils through sacramental preparation, has had a significant impact on the school. The pupils grow spiritually and appreciate what the parish priest, parishioners and school staff are providing, as part of their preparation for the Sacraments of Reconciliation, First Holy Communion and Confirmation.
- Pupils talk of the sacraments as being 'God's greatest gift to them'.
- The older pupils' perception of being called by God has been heightened by experiencing a vocation day, as part of the Confirmation programme.
- The dedicated school staff ensure that the pupils' best interests are of paramount importance. They design and deliver a broad curriculum, which promotes active learning and in turn supports the formation of faith in each pupil. Creative Fridays have been developed to provide a range of activities that consolidate the Catholic Life by encouraging debate, empathy for others and the recognition of spirituality across all aspects of academic life.
- The school staff are leaders of faith and promoters of the school mission. They influence the very good behaviour of the pupils and support the enrichment of the pupils' faith. Their influence has led to three families and one member of staff being received into the Catholic Church during the past year.
- The school is mindful of the needs of vulnerable pupils and has a mentor to counsel individual pupils with social and emotional needs.
- The staff and pupils have a strong sense of community and support families in need. Regular family conferences support vulnerable families through offering a variety of support options, including Care Club during school holidays or after school, access to foodbanks, uniform banks and close liaison with support workers and other agencies.
- Nurture is provided at lunch and playtime to support vulnerable pupils, enabling them to play alongside others in safe and structured environments. The school is fully inclusive, with a signing teacher providing pupils with signs to support each Monday assembly theme. Signing choir enables hearing impaired pupils to access hymn lyrics. The choir regularly provides high quality singing for school Masses.
- The needs of the staff are also at the heart of the programmes of support offered by the school. Members of staff are given time, training and empathy to help them grow and develop as confident practitioners.
- The school site is undergoing building work to improve accommodation for its growing pupil role. In planning the developments, school leaders are providing an environment that is rich in spirituality. The corridors, classrooms and shared spaces reflect the faith in the school with liturgical artefacts, affirmation of the values and visual evidence of how the school grows as a worshipping community.
- The work and influence of the more recently arrived parish priest is significant in the contribution it makes to the Catholic Life. He has built up the liturgical and social activities to increase the involvement of the pupils and their families. As a result, the pupils are secure and more confident in their faith and in sharing celebrations with their families and the parish.
- The commitment of the headteacher and all staff to the spiritual life of the pupils, both in school and in the parish, is praiseworthy. The headteacher works closely with the parish priest and their shared vision for the consolidation of the Catholic

Life of the school family has resulted in a community, which is respectful, committed and aspirational in its desire to spread the Gospel message.

- The school weaves its aspiration for social concern through its thoughtful curriculum. Pupils appreciate and understand other world faiths through planned lessons, where different year groups engage in detailed study of a particular faith. This has resulted in pupils recognising and respecting how deeply held beliefs shape lives and communities.
- School leaders and the parish encourage the pupils to take pride in the help they give to others. Through extensive fundraising and charity work, they see their sense of purpose and are encouraged to compare their lives with those in need.
- The motivation for and the range of charities supported is wide and in some cases personal to members of the school. Fundraising events have included the Rotary Club Shoe Box appeal, in which pupils are encouraged to think of Christmas gifts to support children in Romania. The Leukaemia fundraising initiative has been motivated by the support pupils wish to give to a pupil in the school. Furthermore, fund raising has led to a wheelchair being purchased for a child in the infants.
- Support has been enthusiastically given to the Good Shepherd Appeal, CAFOD, Sport Relief, the British Heart Foundation and St Mary's Educational Trust - a school in India, where the parish priest is a patron.
- Year 4 pupils developed a link to the Alzheimer's Society charity through first-hand knowledge from a family member. Pupils understand that helping others is what God wants them to do.
- The pupils' very good understanding of loving relationships and sexual development are well supported using the 'All that I Am' and the 'Growing in Love' schemes and with the involvement of sensitive visiting staff from the health sector. The school is seeking to improve this work further by initiating additional activities.

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

- In the past three years the headteacher and deputy headteachers have incrementally improved the Catholic Life. Their sincere faith, energy and ability to unite the school family in its mission has resulted in a school where pupils are loved, valued and are confident in their relationship with God.
- The relatively new Religious Education leader has worked well with the senior staff to establish an effective programme for self-evaluation. This involves senior school staff, governors and MAC directors.
- Governors visit the school regularly, both to have a presence in the community and to keep up to date with any developments. These leaders routinely view, evaluate and consider the quality of the Catholic Life. A development plan, based on monitoring, is in place, which sets out actions for improvement.
- The governors can easily cite examples of how their self-evaluation has had a positive impact on the school, including: the improvement of the school environment to reflect its Catholic Faith; the deepening of liturgical knowledge amongst the staff team; the greater involvement of the school in the life of the parish and the stronger links with parents over matters of faith.
- The governors' determination to maintain a strong Catholic Life in the school is also reflected in their appointment and succession planning for staff. They are conscientious and thorough in recruiting staff who will uphold the mission of the school and also bring new ingredients of spirituality to broaden the pupils' experience.

- The detail of the Catholic Life provision is comprehensively shared with governors by the headteacher in her reports and frequent discussions. The MAC directors are well informed and have a high level of confidence in the headteacher and deputy headteachers.
- The headteacher has ensured that the staff team are secure about the aspirations she has had for rapid improvement. Training has taken place to develop the teachers' competency to deliver activities based on the Catholic Schools' Pupil Profile. This has resulted in pupils demonstrating deep understanding of how they can recognise and make manifest Christian values in their lives.
- The Christ the King Catholic Collegiate has also played a part in coaching governors and staff. Training sessions have enabled school leaders to define the strengths and weaknesses of the school, informing the direction for progress.
- School leaders have seen a growth in parent engagement, as a result of a more direct sharing of the Catholic Life between home and school. This is evident in the greater number of parent and family members attending Masses, assemblies and supporting pupil trips. The headteacher and governors are presiding over a gradual growth in parental confidence in the school as a Catholic community.
- The school communicates with parents in a variety of ways but communication about the spiritual direction of the school and the impact of the liturgical year on the lives of the pupils would be improved with more regular information and the updating of the school's website.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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| 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 |

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education. The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education.

- The quality of Religious Education at St Wulstan's school is good.
- Assessment data provides a picture of the progress made by pupils in Religious Education as they move through the school. On entry to the school, children's attainment in Religious Education is low. Nearly a third of all pupils fail to achieve an expected level in their Reception assessments of Religious Education. However, by the time they reach the end of Year 2, the majority of pupils achieve the expected level, with nearly half of the pupils exceeding this level. The picture is similar at the end of juniors in Year 6. Most pupils leave the school having made good progress, across their primary school career, in their knowledge and understanding of Religious Education.
- Progress in Religious Education is broadly consistent with the other core subjects of English and maths.
- There are some small differences in the achievement of specific groups, which are being addressed by interventions. For example, teaching assistants work closely with pupils with special educational needs to support their understanding of Religious Education and to develop their use of Religious language.

- Analysis of data matched with the evidence in pupils' Religious Education books at the end of last academic year indicated a slowing of progress in key stage 1. Leaders used this analysis to inform the deployment of staff for the new academic year, so that the particular cohort would benefit from the input of a more experienced teacher.
- Pupils sincerely enjoy their learning in Religious Education lessons. To each new lesson they bring sound prior learning, which gives them a basis for extending their knowledge and skills.
- Most pupils' work in Religious Education is good. They listen, reflect and respond well, using their comprehensive knowledge of Gospel stories and liturgical themes. They are able to make sincere and meaningful links between everyday family events and the message of the Gospels. Pupils can talk about how their faith strengthens their ability to respond to the needs of others or challenges that they might face.
- Most of the work produced in their Religious Education books and journals is good. It is neat and carefully presented, well-illustrated and bears witness to the depth of pupils' spiritual thinking.
- In some year groups the quality and the amount of work undertaken is not as high as in others. Higher expectations and a review of the coverage and timetable for Religious Education would lead to improvements in this area.
- Some work in pupils' Religious Education books is not of an equally high standard to that seen in their English books. The extension work in some Religious Education books is not as advanced as in English.
- Pupils are clear about how to improve in Religious Education. They understand the school's marking policy and respond to the prompts used by their class teachers. They are motivated by 'thinking man' questions, which help to deepen their understanding of the spiritual issues in hand. They respond well to the questions posed by their teachers when marking their exercise books. Pupils' answers demonstrate that they have thought carefully about the elements of faith taught in a particular lesson.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons is very good. They have become accustomed to purposeful routines, which help them focus, but also allows them independence in their learning.
- This positive atmosphere for learning supports deep personal discussion and the sharing of spiritual ideas and values. This was well illustrated when a Year 1 class were sensitively talking about the aspects of creation that they were thankful for. Pupils were sincere when exchanging their feelings about what enriches their lives.
- Pupils respond very well in lessons to the sense of God's purpose, which teachers explore. They recognise and are able to define that God has a plan for them and they have an important part to play in sharing his love.
- The quality of teaching in Religious Education is good.
- The best teaching is delivered by teachers who fully utilise their voice, energy, personal witness and subject knowledge to very effectively engage and instruct their pupils. These teachers are clear about the learning that they wish to impart. They know what the pupils should experience, so that almost all pupils make progress in the lesson. At all stages of a lesson, the best teachers will check that their pupils are understanding the task and model the next steps in learning, when required.
- Religious Education lessons provide a range of well-planned content, ideas and emotions, which are delivered through careful questioning, taking account of different pupils' needs. For example, in a Year 6 lesson the teacher inspired the pupils to discuss the challenges that they face and made a realistic link with the lives of the disciples, who were challenged when following Jesus.

- Good teamwork between classroom staff, at the school, is a key ingredient to successful lessons.
- Teachers use assessments effectively to plan activities for their pupils. Differentiated tasks, which are supported by teaching assistants, help most pupils achieve well in Religious Education lessons.
- Some lessons, and the resulting work in pupils' books, are not as consistently good over time. Where teaching is less strong, pupils are not clear about the learning intentions. Teachers modelling tasks for pupils, having higher expectations of work and ensuring that all pupils are involved in the discussion about issues of faith could improve this.

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

- The governors, the headteacher and deputy headteachers recognise the importance of Religious Education in the curriculum.
- Through planned and regular monitoring activities, reports in committee meetings and analysis of assessment data, the school leaders have gained a detailed knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of progress and attainment in each year group.
- The coaching of teaching, sharing of strategies in staff meetings and targets in teachers' performance management all add to the drive to improve teaching and learning in Religious Education.
- The more recently appointed Religious Education leader has quickly identified areas for improvement in the delivery of teaching and learning. She has met with individual staff to support the development of good practice across all year groups.
- Where teachers are new to Catholic education, training has been organised to strengthen their understanding of the syllabus and how they can help pupils to understand and reflect on the message of the Gospels.
- The governors have challenged the senior staff to address any identified weaknesses. As a result, governors have clear expectations for the deployment of staff and the need for close monitoring of groups that have been identified as under-performing.
- The Headteacher and leadership team have designed the curriculum which inspires, meets the needs of all pupils and is rich in liturgical content. The leadership team have developed a strong coaching culture, which supports teachers in capacity to improve, managing workload and enabling time to fully plan their activities.
- Teaching staff, who have joined the team more recently, confirmed their appreciation of the support they have received in building their subject knowledge and creating strategies for effective teaching.
- Whilst the Religious Education leader has a good grasp of the curriculum and how it might be delivered, an overview of assessment data, combined with lesson observations and work scrutinies, is yet to be formed. Once a full analysis is determined the planning of Religious Education will be more effective.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

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

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

The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school.

- Collective Worship at St Wulstan's School is outstanding.
- Collective Worship in the school absorbs all and has a most positive devotional benefit.
- When experiencing the celebration of Mass with the parish, the Go Forth Gospel assembly, class prayer or class liturgy, it is evident that the pupils and staff are closer to God and one another through their shared worship.
- Pupils understand what worship is about and are comfortable when praying. They say community prayers with passion, pride and reverence. They reflect silently and thoughtfully.
- The pupils appreciate that singing is a form of prayer and their high vocal quality contributes to uplifting, prayerful celebrations.
- Collective Worship is well organised and skilfully delivered and includes doctrinal knowledge alongside the devotional experience. For example, during the Go Forth assembly, led by the headteacher or deputy headteachers, the theme from the recent Sunday Gospel is explored and linked to Catholic values or the mission of the school. The pupils are encouraged to live out the Gospel message throughout the week and incorporate the values in to their daily interaction with others. Furthermore, a Go Forth area of reflection has been created at the front of the school, where pupils can pause for a moment to write a prayer and offer an intercession.
- A significant development in the provision of Collective Worship in the school is that pupils of all ages are fully involved in designing, shaping and delivering worship. The headteacher and her team have initiated 'Creative Fridays' for all pupils. The timetable allows for the pupils to plan and develop liturgies of their own during their independent activities on Fridays.
- For the seasons of Lent and Advent class groups will select their themes, write prayers, organise artefacts and visual presentations and then lead a class liturgy or school assembly utilising their own skills and inspired from their personal faith.
- Collective Worship at St Wulstan's is inclusive. The staff are inspirational leaders of prayer and older pupils will act as role models to younger members of the school through their witness and reverence.
- The signing choir provides a powerful example of the range and depth of Collective Worship. This choir is the result of the support offered for hearing impaired pupils. Many pupils from across the age groups are led by a skilled teacher in presenting hymns through sign language. The words of the hymn and the depth of the experience are made sacred through this movement.
- Each class prayer area contains a class prayer book. Pupils are invited as prayer leaders for the day to write a prayer, which they will then read as part of the daily prayer cycle. These prayers reflect the varied aspirations, intentions and hopes of

the pupils. The respect shown for these prayers, by all the members of the class, is a testament to the value pupils place on prayer.

- Prayer intentions for the needs of the wider world are shared in a meaningful way, helping the pupils to understand and empathise with their global family.

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

- Staff members, with the sensitive support of the parish priest, lead liturgy in an absorbing and devotional manner.
- Leaders and governors have an excellent knowledge of the liturgical year and are committed to providing every opportunity for quality Collective Worship, to navigate the school family through the seasons of the Church.
- The regular evaluations of Collective Worship, undertaken by school leaders, have led to an increase in the frequency of Mass, a revised timetable for assemblies and a growth in the number of celebrations for important feast days.
- Governors regularly attend Collective Worship, including school and class Masses and class liturgies. They bring back their impressions and evaluations to their meetings. By working together with the school and the parish priest, they have been very pleased to acknowledge the growing depth of prayer amongst the pupils and the greater attendance at Mass at the weekend in the parish.
- The 'Creative Fridays' initiative, where almost all pupils prepare worship, has come about as a direct result of the leaders' evaluations of monitoring. The impact on pupils has been powerful, in terms of the ownership of prayer and the sincerity generated in their hearts.
- Furthermore, these evaluations have resulted in improved opportunities for parental involvement and engagement of members of the parish community.
- When planning Collective Worship, the headteacher and staff ensure that the content is relevant to the lives of the pupils. For example, in the midst of a Year 1 lesson, where pupils were writing prayers of thanks for God's gifts of creation, the teacher prompted pupils to reflect and discuss their own blessings. Their conversations were animated and supportive and there was a sincere belief amongst the pupils that God was listening.
- Training for all stakeholders has taken many forms. Newer staff have been coached in the delivery of Collective Worship; governors and leaders have been inspired by training and spiritual discussion at MAC level. The Christ the King Catholic Collegiate have establish a routine for shared Collective Worship at specially arranged Masses. Pupils and students from within the MAC pray together and share their approaches to Collective Worship. This then uplifts the quality and spirituality of Collective Worship for all.
- The pupils, staff and governors are well supported in their planning of Collective Worship by the parish priest, who is eager to continue the growth of the school family through prayer and reflection. This partnership is paying dividends, so that when the school celebrate Mass together the elements of learning and sharing in God's love are witnessed by all.

SCHOOL DETAILS

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| Unique reference number | 143352 |
| Local authority | Staffordshire |
| <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 | Multi Academy Company |
| Age range | 3 – 11 years |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on roll | 441 |
| Appropriate authority | The board of directors |
| Chair of the board of directors | David O'Leary |
| Chair of governors | Sharon Brammeld |
| Principal | Joanne Kirkham |
| Telephone number | 01782 973722 |
| Website address | www.st-wulstans.staffs.sch.uk |
| Email address | office@stwulstansprimary.co.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | December 2013 |

INFORMATION ABOUT THIS SCHOOL

- St Wulstan's Primary School has 441 pupils on roll. 55% of pupils are Catholic.
- The school serves the parish of St Wulstan's in Wolstanton, Staffordshire.
- The percentage of disadvantaged pupils is in line with the national average.
- The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average.
- The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic origins is above the national average.
- The percentage of pupils with English as an additional language is below the national average.
- Attainment on entry is broadly in line with the national average.
- Since the last inspection there have been significant changes in the school's leadership, which include a new headteacher and new Religious Education subject leaders.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION

- The inspection was carried out by two Diocesan Inspectors - Tim Hughes and Victoria Brickley.
- 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 twelve Religious Education lessons to evaluate the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. All of 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, the MAC Accounting Officer, the headteacher and deputy headteachers, the Religious Education subject leader and the parish priest.
- The inspectors attended a school Mass in the parish church and undertook a learning walk to look at aspects of learning and teaching in Religious Education, the presentation of the Catholic Life of the school and pupils' behaviour.
- The inspectors reviewed a range of documents including the school's self-evaluation, data about pupils' attainment and progress, Analyse School Performance (ASP) data, the school development plan, the Religious Education action plan, teachers' planning and learning journals.