

Catholic Schools Inspectorate inspection report for

# St Alphonsus Catholic Primary School

URN: 142367

Carried out on behalf of the Right Rev. Terence Patrick Draine, Bishop of Middlesbrough on:

Date: 08-09 June 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.....

1

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

- Pupils are exemplary, they benefit greatly from the Catholic life of the school, it permeates all areas of the school life and positively effects how pupils relate to staff and their peers. Pupils feel safe and secure, they are loved and valued by all staff and know that they are created in the image and likeness of God.
- The school should be rightly proud of its singing, which is varied, joyful and an extension of prayer.
- All parents support the Catholic life of the school and recognise the positive impact that it has upon their children and families.
- The school is a sanctuary; it is a genuine Christ centred community where all are welcomed. The Headteacher is recognised by all stakeholders as the 'mother of the school'

who has guided pupils and staff to know Christ. She is a compassionate leader for children staff and families. Despite the school being in a highly socially and economically deprived area all staff have high expectations, and this is clearly evident through the high standards of behaviour and attitudes of all members of the school community.

- Prayer and liturgy, in particularly Godly Play, is a strength of the school. The whole community deeply value these encounters with Christ and show a deep reverence that is palpable.

#### What the school needs to improve:

- To create further opportunities for pupils to take on leadership roles within prayer and liturgy at a whole school level.
- Developing teaching practice, ensuring consistency in feedback so that it enables the pupils to know how well they are doing and provides opportunities for challenge and improvement.
- To provide opportunities for the governing body to be involved in more rigorous monitoring and evaluation of the Catholic Life and RE curriculum of the school.

## 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

All pupils within St. Alphonsus' contribute to and benefit greatly from the Catholic life and mission of the school, they all have a strong sense of the school's unique Catholic identity. The school serves a diverse community where all are welcomed. Pupils and parents see the school as a place of sanctuary and safety where they know they are cared for and respected. This is reflected in the School of Sanctuary Award that the school holds. The school has an active Mini Vinnies pupil leadership group who work hard to support local charities and those in need. When a pupil from the school was taken ill and needed a liver transplant the Mini Vinnies group worked tirelessly to support their fellow pupil. Pupils at St. Alphonsus' are passionate about protecting the environment and have a strong understanding of the Pope's encyclical Laudato Si. Pupils work hard to care for and protect their local environment and to raise awareness of key issues such as global warming and plastic pollution. During the inspection pupils joyfully sang their Laudato Si hymn and enthusiastically explained the key message behind it.

The school's mission statement 'Loving, learning, serving with Christ' is central to everything that happens in St. Alphonsus' School. Pupils, staff, and parents regularly referred to the mission statement during the inspection and knew that in serving others they were following Jesus' example. Relationships within the school are exemplary, an example of this is the manner in which all families are warmly greeted by senior leaders at the school gate, each family is known by name and truly valued. It is universally accepted that staff regularly go above and beyond in terms of pastoral support for members of their community.

The school has eight core values that are at the heart of its work, pupils regularly referred to

the values, during the inspection there was a particular focus upon the value of forgiveness. Pupils explained that we are all made in the image and likeness of God, so when we demonstrate forgiveness, we become closer with God. Pupils across the school are provided with regular opportunities to visit the local church and consequently have strong links and relationships with their parish. Provision for relationships, sex, and health education (RSHE) meets all statutory and diocesan requirements. Senior leaders have carefully planned the RSHE curriculum to ensure that it meets the needs of pupils and families within the community. Parents unanimously agree that the school is a compassionate and joyful community which supports the pupils' spiritual and moral development.

Leaders and governors work diligently to ensure that all staff have access to a wide range of training and are inducted into the Catholic life of the school. Staff members speak highly of senior leaders and appreciate both the quality of training that they receive and the trust that they are given in carrying out their roles. The school is well supported by the academy trust and receives regular quality assurance visits which set clear targets on how the school can improve. The school's religious education co-ordinator has a clear vision for the school and supports staff members in developing best practice. School governors regularly visit the school to support senior leaders, they must now develop a more rigorous approach to their visits and provide more challenge for the able senior leadership team.

## 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.....

2

### Leadership

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

2

The school's well planned religious education curriculum ensures that pupils know more, do more and remember more. As a result of this pupils make good progress from their relative starting points. All teachers ensure that there is a major focus upon religious vocabulary during lessons, teachers model vocabulary for their pupils who are extremely religiously literate, as a result of this regular high-quality discussions take place. Teachers are confident in their subject knowledge and tackle key issues such as discrimination, injustice, and global poverty. Pupils can confidently respond to these issues and understand the relevance of Catholic social teaching. In a year 6 lesson the pupils skillfully discussed issues such as disability discrimination and protected characteristics. They explained to inspectors that everyone should be treated with dignity and respect as they are made in the image and likeness of God.

Well planned tasks ensure that pupils' attitudes to learning are exemplary. During the inspection all pupils across the school were fully focused upon their tasks and clearly enjoyed their religious education lessons. Pupil's work is proudly displayed in classrooms, and this clearly helps to develop their self-esteem. The school's early years teacher ensured that the pupils' friendship suncatchers were instantly displayed in the classroom window, which then led on to further learning through pupil-led discussions on light and colour.

Pupils learn about other world faiths and this learning is well supported by a range of visits and expert speakers. The pupils confidently made comparisons between Judaism, Islam, and Christianity during discussion with inspectors.

The subject leader is passionate about her leadership and subject and ensures that it has the highest status within the school. She works extremely well with the school's senior leaders to ensure that all staff have regular opportunities to develop their subject knowledge and practice. Support staff are highly valued in St. Alphonsus' and as a result of this they make a significant contribution to the curriculum. Support staff expertly scaffold teaching and learning during lessons, particularly focusing upon vulnerable pupils to ensure that they can achieve the set learning objectives. New staff at the school explained that they are well inducted and supported by mentors who are established staff members from within the school. Governors regularly monitor the school's provision for religious education and write up their findings in clear and concise reports. There is an extremely positive relationship between the governors and staff at the school. Governors now need to enhance the degree to which they offer challenge to the school, particularly focusing upon the level of challenge that is available for the most able pupils during lessons.

## Collective worship

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

Collective worship key judgement grade:.....

1

### 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 .....

1

### Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for collective worship .....

1



Pupils are provided with a range of opportunities to take part in prayer and liturgy, both individually and as part of the school and parish community. Liturgical experiences have a deep impact on pupils and reflect the Catholic character of the school and the academy trust. Pupils have a range of opportunities to plan and lead prayer and liturgy, this is something that they do with skill, confidence and the greatest of care. The pupils are extremely proud of their Godly Play room, and the area is treated with the greatest of respect. Pupils explained to inspectors that Godly Play is extremely important to the school, they understood that in their earlier years Godly Play was used to help familiarize them with the stories of the Bible and as they have grown in faith, they have further developed their understanding of more complex parts of the Catholic faith. In a Godly play session, Year 6 pupils were considering the makeup of the Holy Trinity and were able to offer deep and meaningful observations on the nature of the Trinity.

Liturgies within St. Alphonsus' school are prepared with a prayerful atmosphere which always gives pupils the time to take part in deep and meaningful reflection. A number of pupils explained to inspectors that liturgy allows them the time and space to develop their relationship with God, and emphasized confidently that their spiritual journey is extremely important to them. As a result of this, reverence and respect permeate all liturgies and captivate pupils' interest; they are inspired to respond with sincerity to questions that are posed. The liturgical singing within the school is truly outstanding. Pupils sing joyfully and enthusiastically; they are all rightly proud of their school hymn which they have written alongside a famous musician.

Pupils recognise prayer as an essential part of school life; they write thoughtful prayers and reflections in their individual prayer books. Pupils can discuss their faith eloquently and articulate their genuine spiritual relationships with God. Pupils evaluate prayer routinely, which helps them to improve their planning of it further. Staff are highly skilled in and confident in sharing their faith with pupils. They provide a range of opportunities for pupils to develop and enhance their spirituality. During one liturgy the staff member explained to the pupils that they were on a spiritual journey that was deeply sacred and personal, she explained that this would be a lifelong journey and the most special relationship that anyone can have.

Opportunities for parents to join prayer and liturgy is regularly planned by the school and something that is greatly valued by the whole school community. Pupils visit the local church each week on a rota basis, where they are warmly welcomed by the congregation, and very much a part of parish life. The strong personal faith of the senior leadership team ensures that they are all outstanding role models for school prayer life; they lead by example, ensuring all staff are confident to support and nurture prayer life in school. This is recognised by parents who commented that their longstanding Headteacher is a foundation of faith within the locality.

School leaders and governors closely and meticulously monitor the school's provision for prayer and liturgy. They regularly quality assure assemblies and liturgies and ensure that best practice is shared across the school. This, coupled with a well-planned approach to staff training, ensures that prayer and liturgy in St. Alphonsus' is truly outstanding.



## Information about the school

Full name of school	St Alphonsus Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	142367
Full postal address of the school	Cadogan Street North Ormesby Middlesbrough TS3 6PX
School phone number	01642 243400
Name of head teacher or principal	Miss Angela McCann - Headteacher
Chair of governing board	Mrs Helen Bell
School Website	<a href="https://stalphonsus.npcat.org.uk/">https://stalphonsus.npcat.org.uk/</a>
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	Nicholas Postgate Catholic Academy Trust
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy
Age-range of pupils	3-11
Trustees	Diocese of Middlesbrough
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	April 2018
Previous denominational inspection grade	2 - Good

## The inspection team

Andrew Krlic	Lead inspector
Angela Phillips	Team inspector
Andrew Gardner	Shadow inspector

## Key to grade judgements

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

