



Catholic Schools Inspectorate inspection report for St Gerard's Catholic Primary And Nursery School

URN: 111391

Carried out on behalf of the Most Rev. Malcolm McMahon, Archbishop of Liverpool on:

Date: 28th - 29th June 2023

Overall effectiveness The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school.....	1
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.....	1
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	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
The school is fully compliant with all requirements of the diocesan bishop	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
The school has responded to the areas for improvement from the last inspection	Fully

Summary of key findings

What the school does well

- The school resources its religious education, Catholic life and mission, and collective worship extremely well.
- Links between the parish priest and school are strong and well established, which benefits the whole school community.
- Leadership of the school and subject is strong because its Catholic vision is clear and driven by the headteacher.
- Questioning within lessons is strong and supports the children's deepening of their knowledge and understanding of religious education.
- Relationships are key to the success of the school and help to create the love, awe and wonder that is shared with pupils and staff each day.

This Catholic Schools Inspectorate inspection was carried out under canons 804 & 806 of the code of canon law. For maintained schools and academies in England it fulfils the statutory requirements of s.48 of the Education Act 2005. For maintained schools and academies in Wales it fulfils the statutory requirements of s.50 of the Education Act 2005.

What the school needs to improve:

- The programme for relationships, sex and health education should be further enriched by a process that supports pupils in confidently articulating what they have learnt.
- Continue to reinforce the structures in place for recording evidence of pupils' progress in Religious Education.
- Further enrich the existing opportunities for pupils in the lower year groups to take a leadership role in the planning and delivery of prayer and liturgy.

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

1



At St Gerard's all pupils fully embrace their Catholic faith and values. This permeates everything they do each day for their school community. One can feel the sense of strong community and love throughout each part of the school from the moment of arrival. Pupils express that they are cared for, loved and unique in the image and likeness of God. Pupils' strong sense of respect for their teachers and each other shows a bond of trust rooted in faith. Their behaviour is exemplary and shows a deep understanding of each-others' needs, together with respect for other faiths and religions, and the wider community. The pupils put their faith and gospel values into action through the living of the mission statement and in response to Catholic social teaching, through their vast amount of fund raising for local and global charities, including CAFOD, Nugent Care and the local foodbank. These are coordinated by the school's Pupil Parliament and Eco Warriors, ably supported by staff. In a religious education lesson, a pupil was able to make links to Pope Francis' call to look after our world, so showing an understanding of the call to care for the common good and serve those in need.

There is a lived sense of community in the quality of the relationships between leadership and staff as well as between staff and pupils. This was observed in Breakfast Club where older pupils showed younger members of the school community how to play and share, by taking care of their school and each other. Staff are exemplary at modelling what is meant by mutual respect. Staff and pupils clearly bond as a family. Staff fully-embrace and live out the mission statement in their teaching across the whole school curriculum. Their dedication and commitment to the wider school day and events in church are to be admired. Christ is at the centre of all that the school does for its community. The school environment clearly reflects the Catholic mission and values of the school's mission statement to "love, hope, dream and achieve". One pupil commented, "our headteacher

gets us things that we cannot have at home". The pastoral care from all staff, and specifically the family support worker, is vital in supporting both pupils and staff in their well-being. The parish priest is a pivotal figure within the school, supporting the pupils' journeys in faith and leading sacramental programmes for the community. He is a strong presence within the lives of pupils and staff. He commented that "the staff readily turn up for the families and the pupils". The concise policy for relationships, sex and health education, together with its detailed supporting programme of study is fully compliant with archdiocesan requirements. This programme should be further enriched by a process that supports pupils in confidently articulating what they have learnt.

Leadership and governors ensure that clear policies and procedures are fully in place, which prioritise Catholic life and mission. This is fastidiously led by the headteacher and facilitated by the subject leader. All leaders promote the archbishop's vision to ensure that Christ is always at the heart of everything they do. This is reflected in their strong engagement with the diocese and partnership with the parish priest. Leaders of the school are successful in their promotion and commitment in involving parents and carers for the good of the pupils and community. This is achieved through communication in newsletters, parent sessions in school and through meetings for supporting pupils. Governors are strong advocates of the staff and leadership, offering support as well as challenge when required. The whole school curriculum reflects the school's mission by ensuring that all lessons and needs of pupils are taken into consideration. Leaders and governors, know their school very well. They have high expectations and aspirations and are proactive and reflective when changes need to be made. Pupils are empowered to be involved in all aspects of school life and share in the management of change. One pupil commented, "everybody deserves to be heard because everybody's words and ideas count and matter".

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade:.....

1

Pupil outcomes

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

1

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.....

1

A consistent and well-planned curriculum enables pupils to develop their knowledge and understanding of religious education. Pupils thoroughly enjoy their lessons. Pupils can articulate understanding through their ability to know more, remember more and do more. One pupil commented, "our lessons are fun, but we still learn." Pupils in a key stage two lesson were able to explain how their decisions impact on the wider world and how we as Christians can help to support and provide for others. In another lesson, pupils could talk accurately and confidently, linking religious vocabulary to their chosen special place. Secondary questions were also asked by the teacher to deepen the pupils learning, which enabled good discussion amongst the class. This was ably supported by the class teacher in developing the pupils understanding of those special places. Pupils want to know more and take their love of learning for religious education beyond the classroom. This shows they are curious and inquisitive about learning more. They have become followers of Christ and are spreading His good news. Exercise books and displays in the school environment are exemplary in their presentation and showcase the hard work of pupils. This leads to a high engagement within all lessons observed. Pupils are given opportunities to revisit their prior learning through teachers' comments and challenging questions. Lessons also reflect on what they have learned in previous lessons and topics. Pupils' achievement is in line with other core subjects, which is shown in the high standards in books and in compared data.

Teachers are confident and have high expectations of all pupils. This is communicated through their effective marking and feedback in books. Teachers' use of progress questions enables pupils to carefully reflect and gain a deeper understanding of what they have learnt. Pupils commented that they value the "p for progress" questions posed by their teachers and recognise how they are supported in making that progress. Pupils therefore know how to improve their work. Teachers have a good subject knowledge and frequently share their plans and good practice with each other.

This is supported by the subject leader who challenges through a process of monitoring and evaluation that ensures all teaching is never less than good. Religious education lessons are well-planned and structured to enable pupils to respond skilfully to questions posed. Consequently, they are enabled to extend their learning and maximise knowledge and understanding, so reaching their full potential. The school has heavily invested in providing outstanding, quality resources for teaching and learning. These are well deployed by staff.

Leaders and governors ensure that the Religious Education Curriculum Directory is well-resourced, which leads to a creative delivery for pupils. Religious education has full parity with other core subjects and is a key driver in leading the curriculum across the school. All subjects are linked through the school's mission statement. Opportunities for continuous professional development are systematically built-in as annual school priorities. This leads to well targeted improvements in teachers' knowledge and understanding. Consequently, staff are confident in their delivery of religious education. The subject leader has a clear vision for teaching and learning and is passionate about making a difference for both staff and children. Staff have said, "she is very supportive, leads well and is always there to help". The carefully planned and structured religious education curriculum meets the differing needs of all pupils. The inspiring Catholic environment of the school enables all pupils to flourish and aspire. Through excellent pastoral care, the school provides a wide range of enrichment activities which supports pupil development within religious education. The school's own self-evaluation is highly reflective and evaluative of where it needs to improve. The subject leader has a clear vision for future planning, which is supported by the headteacher and governors.

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 experience a wide variety of opportunities to participate in well-resourced prayer and liturgy each day. Pupils commented that they highly value the quality of resources because they can choose from a wide range to support them in their worship. For example, pupils are provided with an assortment of prayers from staff and the parish priest at different times in the liturgical year. Reflective music is also used to create a reverent and respectful atmosphere within worship. This allows pupils time to think and reflect together and individually. They can articulate the value of resources provided for their use and know their worth. Younger pupils work alongside their teachers to plan and deliver meaningful worship experiences for their peers. In upper year groups the pupils are given the opportunity to work collaboratively with others to plan and prepare acts of worship, based around themes given by the subject leader. During these acts of worship, they take on a variety of roles.

When you enter the school grounds there is an atmosphere of spirituality and you see, hear and witness this in the surroundings, both internally and externally. Everyone in the school shares responsibility for prayer and worship. The subject leader has thoroughly mapped out across each key stage, relevant and age-appropriate prayers which are used and embedded across different times of the day. The ongoing work of the excellent subject leader, through carefully and thoughtfully chosen scripture passages, ensures that all staff are fully equipped and confident in their planning and delivery of well-structured liturgies. Staff use of music, artwork, creative displays, focus areas and visual imagery in class and around the school, provide the pupils with innovative and engaging acts of prayer and liturgy. The wide range of high-quality resources are utilised in a creatively to enhance the experiences for all by staff. The school fully involves its parental community through thoughtfully planned stay and pray sessions for all year groups. Partnership

with the parish is fully established. Mass is held regularly in school. Parents are invited to attend. Pupils experience a sense of “Church” whilst in school.

Leaders thoughtfully use the liturgical calendar to plan prayer and liturgy. This is undertaken in partnership with the parish priest, resulting in the delivery of acts of worship that are age appropriate. The school’s partnership with parents has been tailored to meet the needs of the community. This has resulted in an increase in the number of pupils receiving the sacraments and parents attending school prayer sessions. Leaders have a thorough understanding of the relationships needed between home, school and parish, and how important these are in the development of the pupils. Continued professional development for staff and leaders, including governors, occurs frequently at various points during the school year. This enables further enrichment of the existing quality of prayer and liturgy. Leaders monitor provision through regular learning-walks which leads to well-planned actions. All stakeholders can contribute to the self-evaluations of prayer and liturgy. The pupils are at the heart of every decision made, including areas identified for continued improvement.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Gerard's Catholic Primary and Nursery School
School unique reference number (URN)	111391
Full postal address of the school	Lugsdale Road, Widnes, WA8 6DD
School phone number	0151 424 2879
Name of head teacher or principal	Mr Karl Landrum
Chair of governing board	Mr David Chambers
School Website	https://www.st-gerards.halton.sch.uk/
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	N/A
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary Aided
Age-range of pupils	3-11
Trustees	Archdiocese of Liverpool
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	June 2015
Previous denominational inspection grade	Outstanding

The inspection team

Sarah-Jane Carroll

Lead Inspector

Claire Dwerryhouse

Team 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