



DIOCESE OF
SHREWSBURY

DENOMINATIONAL INSPECTION REPORT:

**THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL
AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

School: St Martin's Catholic Primary School
Address: St Martin's Lane
Murdishaw
Runcorn
Cheshire
WA7 6HZ

Tel No: 01928 711207

URN: 111380

Headteacher: Mr P Hallman

Chair of Governors: Mr D Littlewood

Date of Inspection: 12 June 2019

Inspectors: Mrs M Bulmer
Mr K Toms
Mrs T Cooke (shadowing)

MISSION STATEMENT

*“At St. Martin's Catholic
Primary School,
the Governors and Staff, in
partnership with the Parents,
aim to help each child
realise their full Spiritual,
Moral, Academic and Social
Potential in a happy, caring,
Catholic Community in
which each member feels
valued”*

SCHOOL: ST MARTIN'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

DATE OF LAST INSPECTION: 19 JUNE 2014

JUDGEMENT FROM PREVIOUS INSPECTION: OUTSTANDING

AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT FROM PREVIOUS INSPECTION

There were no specific areas for improvement from the last Inspection.

PROGRESS MADE WITH AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT FROM THE PREVIOUS INSPECTION

- Although there were no issues raised by the last Section 48 inspection, the school has not been complacent and has continued to self-evaluate all aspects of Catholic Life, Religious Education and Collective Worship.
- The school has continued to deliver high quality standards and outcomes since the last inspection.
- The school has focused on ways to engage new initiatives: the recommendations from the Bishop and outside agencies, including the introduction of the Angelus; providing other Faith developments; assessment and creativity in Religious Education and staff training from the Diocese focused on LGBTQ issues.
- New staff have also been supported and trained in delivering The Way, Truth and the Life Curriculum.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS: how effective is the school in providing Catholic Education.

1

This is an outstanding Catholic school

The above judgement on overall effectiveness is based on all the available evidence following the evaluation of:

CATHOLIC LIFE

1

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

1

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

1

Summary of key findings:

- St Martin's continues to be an outstanding Catholic school, and is a place where everyone is always welcomed reflecting the living faith community.
- The Mission Statement is at the heart of everything the school does in order to ensure each member of the school community feels welcomed. There are strong links between the school, parish and home.
- The inspirational leadership team and Governors are clearly focused and committed to the school's mission with a clear vision of the Catholic Life of the school.
- It is a school that confidently knows its own strengths and areas for development
- All staff are firmly committed to the school's Catholic Mission and ethos, which is clearly evident in all aspects of the school's life and work.
- Pastoral Care and Relationships for all pupils, staff and the whole school community is a great strength of the school. As one pupil said, 'We are always there for each other'.
- There is a strong sense of community and belonging within the school, and this is felt by all stakeholders. Parents are kept well informed about the Catholic Life of the School, as well as developments in Religious Education, and are extremely supportive of the school's work.
- Pupils are confident, energised and animated in their learning and their behaviour is outstanding at all times. They enthusiastically embrace and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school, eagerly taking on roles that help them put their faith into action.
- Religious Education teaching is invariably good and often outstanding with almost all pupils, based on their low starting points, making good and often outstanding progress.
- Collective Acts of Worship are central to the life of the school and are a real strength, reflecting the liturgical year and providing opportunities for the pupils to reflect and grow in their faith.
- Although there were no issues raised by the last S48 Inspection, the school has not been complacent, and has moved forward with commitment and drive.

What the school needs to do to improve further

- Continue to evaluate assessment and monitoring procedures and the impact they have on attainment.
- Develop a more consistent approach for recording and presentation of work to promote high standards.
- Ensure a consistent approach to marking, linked to learning objectives allowing time for pupils to respond to comments made.
- Continue to develop the Relationships and Sex Education, in line with Catholic Education Service guidelines and the emerging national picture.
- Continue to develop opportunities for pupils to take a more active role in leading Collective Worship.

Information about the Inspection

The Inspection of St Martin's Catholic Primary School was carried out under the requirements of the Education Act 2005, and in accordance with the Shrewsbury Diocesan Framework and Schedule for Denominational Inspections approved by the Bishop of Shrewsbury. The inspection reviews and evaluates how effective the school is in providing Catholic education. This process begins with the school's own self-evaluation and the inspection schedule follows the criteria set by the National Board of Religious Inspectors and Advisers (NBRIA 2017).

The inspector reviewed in detail the following aspects:

- 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
- How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education
- How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship
- The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school
- How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education, Collective Worship and the Catholic Life of the school

The inspection was carried out by two inspectors over one day:

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in five classes.
- A range of Collective Worship was observed including a whole school act of worship led by the Head teacher, and Collective Worship in three classrooms. The Angelus was also observed in KS2.

- Discussions were held with the Headteacher, the Religious Education Coordinator, the Deputy Headteacher, the Chair of Governors, two Foundation Governors and the Parish Priest, as well as with groups of pupils.
- A sample of pupils' Religious Education workbooks was scrutinised from every class, along with the Religious Education Coordinator's file and files for Catholic Life of the school, Religious Education and Collective Worship.
- A range of documents was made available and scrutinised including the Diocesan Self Evaluation Form (DSEF), the Religious Education Action Plan, attainment and progress data, school policies and minutes of governing body meetings.
- Tracking Data was scrutinised and discussed with the Religious Education Coordinator.
- Displays around the school and in classrooms were also noted.

Information about this school

- St Martin's is a one form entry Voluntary Aided Catholic primary school, catering for 4-11 year olds. The school has an annual admission number of 30, and there are currently 204 children on roll, 76% of whom are baptised Catholics.
- The school serves the parish of Divine Saviour in Runcorn.
- There have been a number of changes to management since the previous Inspection, including the retirement of the last Deputy Head, and a new appointment to the role, who is currently on Maternity Leave. As a result, the Religious Education Coordinator is Acting Deputy Head and an Acting Assistant Head is also in place, who has returned part-time from Easter. There have also been a number of other changes in staff including the retirement of two staff and the establishment of a new Job Share partnership in Year 3.
- Since the last Section 48 Inspection there have been two changes of Parish Priest.
- Staffing includes a full time equivalent of 8.6 teachers and ten support staff. 60% of the teachers are Catholic. Five teachers hold the Catholic Certificate of Religious Studies (CCRS) and two teachers are studying for this qualification.
- The school is organised into seven single age group classes.

Full report – inspection judgments

CATHOLIC LIFE

The Catholic Life of the school is outstanding

1

The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school	1
The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school	1
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision of the Catholic Life of the school	1

- There is a strong sense of community at all levels, evident in the high quality of relationships that exist between pupils, staff, governors and parents, as one pupil said 'We are always there for each other'.
- Parents are extremely supportive of the school, recognising the strength of its Catholic ethos and the effect this has on their children: 'I would like to inform you how well my little boy is being supported in both his education, confidence and well-being – all staff are amazing, I cannot thank them enough'.
- Pupils are fully appreciative of the Catholic Life of the school and the opportunities it offers them. They actively participate in a wide range of opportunities the school offers and make a great contribution to support agencies such as CAFOD, Mission Together, Mini Vinnies, The Halton Foodbank and the Good Shepherd.
- The school is a joyful place with pastoral support at its heart, as seen through the highly effective 'Team Around the Child' from the school's Pastoral Support Team which contributes to an atmosphere of mutual respect and support for the whole school community.
- The pupils embrace membership of the school and show respect for themselves, their peers and for the environment of the school - their behaviour is outstanding which is a reflection of the exemplary role models of all staff who consistently show mutual respect and forgiveness.
- Pupils value and respect the Catholic tradition of the school and its close links with the parish community. There is strong involvement in parish Masses both in school and in the community. The school hall is shared by the church and all displays are linked in with the wider mission of the church.
- The Mission Statement is a clear and inspiring expression of the school that is lived out daily and frequently reviewed by all to ensure that it remains central to the life and relationships within school.

- Leaders and Governors are deeply committed to the Church's mission in education and are passionate about ensuring that the development of the Catholic Life of the school is at the heart of everything they do.
- Self-Evaluation of the Catholic Life of the school has been effective in identifying strengths and areas for improvement, articulated well by leaders and governors.
- Staff morale is high and they are clearly supportive of each other. All staff feel that the school supports them well and their pastoral needs are met. They take full benefit of the opportunities on offer which embrace their well-being, and feel valued by leaders and governors (as evidenced in the responses in the Staff Questionnaires).
- There has been a good level of continuing professional development offered to staff, provided by outside providers, in-house and training opportunities from the Diocese focusing on the Catholic Life of the school and is well planned and effective.
- The school is enthusiastic in its response to diocesan policies and initiatives and actively promotes the Bishop's vision for the Diocese throughout the school, for example, the school continues to pray the Angelus on a regular basis both formally and informally.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Religious Education is outstanding

1

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education	1
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education	1
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education	2

- Pupils enter the school in the Early Years Foundation Stage with very little knowledge of the Catholic faith and religious figures. During their time in the school almost all pupils make very good or outstanding progress, and outcomes by the end of both KS1 and KS2 are high.
- Pupils' enjoyment of Religious Education lessons is widespread across year groups. When asked, they told inspectors that they love their lessons in Religious Education and one pupil said 'We can be expressive about what we think about our Faith'.
- The vast majority of parents are also very happy with the Religious Education provision as evidenced from the questionnaires: 'My daughter is very engaged with her religious studies. I have been very impressed with the values and beliefs that she has developed. Thank you for your support'.
- Pupils are confident, energised and animated in their responses and learning overall.
- Behaviour in lessons is outstanding and pupils are rarely off task.
- Teaching is consistently good and often outstanding in the school, which results in almost all pupils developing a religious literacy appropriate for their age and capacity to learn. Teaching plans to challenge pupils, and this was demonstrated in the lessons observed.
- Teachers have high expectations and are confident in their subject knowledge in Religious Education lessons. They use a variety of teaching styles to encourage discussion, reflection and questioning to extend pupils' knowledge and understanding.
- Pupils enjoy and value the creativity offered through their lessons in Religious Education and they recognise that teachers challenge them, but also provide support when needed.
- Teaching Assistants are deployed throughout classes during Religious Education lessons. They engage with particular groups or individual pupils with skill and sensitivity. Their prompting and support enables pupils to engage with the lesson and make good progress.
- Staff use the Diocesan recommended scheme 'The Way Truth and the Life' creatively and effectively in lessons.

- Leaders and governors comply with the Bishops' Conference requirements and Religious Education is well resourced, is given parity with other subjects and 10% or more of the timetable is dedicated to the teaching of Religious Education across all year groups.
- Assessment in Religious Education is carried out according to Diocesan guidelines. Data is collected regularly and analysed to identify trends of performance and areas for improvement. This is shared with leaders and governors and informs the Religious Education action plan, which is a priority in School Development planning. The school is continuing to evaluate its assessment procedures and is looking to further develop opportunities for cross school moderation.
- In the lessons seen, high quality feedback is frequent, leading to high levels of engagement, interest, progress and attainment. The majority of teachers' marking is detailed and focused on learning objectives. In some cases, marking which identifies next steps would enable more pupils to understand more clearly what they need to do to improve.
- The school leadership and governing body have ensured that continuing professional development opportunities are used to further improve creativity and enjoyment within Religious Education teaching.
- The Religious Education Coordinator is a knowledgeable, quietly confident and enthusiastic leader, with a passion for the subject. She leads by example, displays high expectations and through careful monitoring and evaluation has correctly identified the strengths of the Religious Education provision and areas in which it might improve.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

Collective Worship is outstanding

1

How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship	1
The quality of provision for Collective Worship	1
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship	1

- The outstanding acts of Collective Worship observed by the inspectors engaged pupils' interest in a variety of ways. They actively participate, demonstrating reverence and respect. Pupils are given time to reflect on scripture and its impact on daily life, as observed in KS2 Collective Worship, where children were very effectively encouraged to explore their understanding and to interpret Jesus' message to be friends to all and how to show this without words.
- During the whole school Act of Collective Worship, there was a genuine enthusiasm in the quality of the pupils' singing, prayerful silence and depth of reverent participation in the times of communal prayer.
- Collective Worship is a strength of the school, reflecting the liturgical year and provides opportunities for pupils to reflect and grow in their faith.
- Collective Worship is central to the life of the school and it has clear purpose, message and direction. The types of Collective Worship across the school both within individual classes or with the whole community celebrate the Church's Year and the Catholic character of the school. Displays in classes and around the school reflect the Church's seasons.
- Collective Worship class books throughout the school are of a high standard, and beautifully presented, showing the importance placed on Collective Worship by the school community.
- Throughout the school pupils are enriched by a variety of types of worship. Careful planning enables them to acquire and develop skills to plan and lead prayer and worship at age appropriate levels. The school needs to continue to develop opportunities for pupils to take a more active role in leading Collective Worship.
- Pupils, irrespective of their own faith background or experience, gain spiritually and morally from their involvement of worship in school. Prayer features strongly throughout the day, and it is central to the daily life of the school for all pupils and staff. Pupils are allowed to be spontaneous in saying their own prayers.
- The school makes use of the Chapel within school for quiet reflection and prayer and continues to strive to encourage more children and families to attend parish Masses and Liturgies voluntarily, especially during Lent, Advent and their Sacramental Preparation.

- Staff have had a wide range of Continuous Professional Development opportunities in order to enhance their own spiritual life, as well as that of the pupils. They have a good understanding of the Liturgical Year and Collective Worship follows the themes of the Church's seasons, and resources provided are of a high quality.
- High priority is placed on Collective Worship with leaders and governors actively promoting this and its centrality to delivering the Catholic Life of the school. Leaders and governors regularly review Collective Worship as part of the school's self-evaluation processes.