



Catholic Schools Inspectorate inspection report for
St Albert The Great Catholic Primary School

URN: 117471

Carried out on behalf of the His Eminence Cardinal Vincent Nichols, Archbishop of Westminster on:

Date: 8-9 June 2023

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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 have a deep understanding of the mission statement and how to grow closer to God.
- There is a wide range of opportunities for prayer and liturgy.
- Pupils and their families are provided with a high level of pastoral care in a nurturing environment.
- Excellent pupil knowledge and recall in religious education over time.
- Good relationships are fostered throughout the school which results in a positive, faith-filled learning environment.

What the school needs to improve:

- Ensure that high levels of expectation are consistent across the school to enable pupils of all abilities to achieve success in their learning and make better progress.
- Continue to support pupils in developing a fluent understanding of the principles underpinning Catholic Social Teaching.
- Ensure that appropriate challenge is offered to pupils so that they develop into inquisitive, confident and independent learners.

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:.....

2

Pupil outcomes

The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

2

Provision

The quality of provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school

2

Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school

2

Pupils at the school are happy, confident and secure. They are respectful and kind to each other and behave well in lessons and throughout the school. They speak enthusiastically about their learning about other faiths. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 eagerly apply to join the Friends in Faith group to lead whole-school liturgies and to help younger pupils learn to pray the rosary during the month of May. Older pupils are happy to support the younger pupils as buddies in the playground. When children in Nursery and Reception were learning about friendship, Year 6 pupils helped them to make friendship bracelets. As a result of all the opportunities pupils are given to participate in helping others, the school enables them to actively live out their faith. Pupils are able to express an understanding of the mission statement, 'The more I learn about the world in which I live, the closer I grow to God.' They proudly recite the statement as an important part of their daily prayers. Inspired by the example of St Albert as scientist and theologian, they are encouraged to develop a curiosity about the world around them, and to respect and look after it. The Forest School provision enables the pupils to experience the awe and wonder of God's world, and to appreciate the beauty of God's creation. Prayer and reflection are included as important parts of each Forest School session. Catholic Social Teaching themes are interwoven through the religious education curriculum so that even the younger pupils can explain the importance of stewardship and their responsibility to care for the world.

The school is a welcoming community with Christ at its centre. Staff are positive role models for pupils. One staff member commented, 'God is at the centre of our daily lives at school, in every task we perform, with every person or child we interact with.' The highest level of

pastoral care is provided through nurture groups, staff and pupil wellbeing ambassadors and counselling provision. Pupils speak proudly of the 'worry boxes' which enable pupils to express their feelings and obtain support. The school's culture of welcome extends to all, as evidenced by the welcome sign in a wide variety of languages, and the display board in the school hall which declares, 'We are all different, but we are all joined by God's love.' Pupils engage in service to the local community by participating in the annual harvest tea for the older members of the parish. Each term there is a local, national or international focus to raise money, as part of pupils' understanding of the preferential option for the poor. Funds have been raised for the local food bank, the Catholic Children's Society and Cafod. The school has implemented a programme for relationships, sex and health education which meets statutory requirements and contributes to the school's commitment to their pupils' human flourishing in faith.

Governors rightly see the school as a source of inspiration for the community and are highly ambitious about its contribution to the lives of the people it serves. They fully support school leaders in the school's core mission and ensure that policies and procedures demonstrate its Catholic identity. As part of their belief in the preferential option for the poor, leaders and governors find a number of ways to support their community, for example, through financial support for uniform, school trips, enrichment activities and the provision of food hampers. Governors are committed to the professional development of leaders and staff and have prioritised resources so that the executive head teacher and head of school were able to complete the EducareM National School of Formation programme. As a result, school leaders have used their deepening understanding of the Catholic mission in education, and their own role as ministers of the Gospel in action, to influence school planning and the development of Catholic life. Leaders and governors are proud of the school's links with the parish. The religious education subject leader and the parish priest meet to plan Masses and liturgies throughout the academic year. Parents are invited to attend all school Masses and other liturgical events, such as the Lenten stations of the cross liturgy. Weekly newsletters to parents prioritise information about the Catholic life of the school.

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

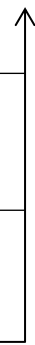
The quality of teaching, learning, and assessment in religious education.....

2

Leadership

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

2



Most pupils are able to make good progress in religious education. They behave well during lessons and are competent learners as a result. Each lesson starts with a focus on prior learning so that, over time, pupils know more and remember more, and are able to apply their existing knowledge to new learning in the subject. Pupils are interested and enthusiastic about their learning in religious education and can speak with confidence about what they have learned. Pupils demonstrate good religious literacy by enthusiastically participating in class discussions centred on their learning topic. Opportunities to work creatively through art, drawing, music, and drama contribute to pupils' enjoyment of the subject. Access to key concepts and subject-specific vocabulary during lessons results in written work which is well-presented. Pupils regularly respond to developmental marking to improve their work. They achieve average attainment when compared with other core curriculum subjects and against national data. In the best lessons, pupils are given work which is carefully adapted to their ability. However, greater clarity and detail is needed in the planning for those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities to enable them to make better progress and achieve better outcomes. In addition, more opportunities for challenge are needed so that all pupils are given the opportunity to develop as inquisitive, confident, and independent learners.

Teachers are confident in their subject knowledge and they use questioning effectively during lessons to check pupils' understanding. Their subject knowledge is aided by in-school training provided by senior leaders, and resources provided by the diocese ('Catholicism Unpacked') so that their knowledge is developed over time. Teachers show a commitment to the value of religious education and are fully aware that it forms the core of the curriculum. Teaching assistants are deployed to optimise learning for pupils who need support. Opportunities for reflection during lessons attest to the fact that teachers recognise the impact religious education has on the moral and spiritual development of pupils. In learning about the Sacrament of the Sick, a Year 6 pupil observed, 'God is in the people who help others.' Dedicated spaces for reflection and prayer, available throughout the school and in the school grounds, promote pupils' independent reflection. Pupils' achievements are celebrated in the marking of work and in the electronic programme in which points are awarded. Achievements are shared with parents in the newsletter, in assemblies, and in weekly notification of awarded points. However, teachers' feedback to pupils in marking often lacks the detail needed to ensure that pupils understand how to improve their work and accelerate progress.

Leaders and governors ensure that the curriculum for religious education is well-planned and sequential, interwoven with the principles of Catholic Social Teaching. The curriculum is faithful to the requirements set out in the Religious Education Directory. The religious education subject leader has a clear vision for securing good teaching and learning in the subject. Staff feel well-supported by the coaching and direction which the subject leader willingly provides. They regularly draw upon her expertise to improve standards in religious education. Time is given to pass on important information from the diocese and to explain concepts in the planning of lessons. Staff spoke of the support given by the subject leader in modelling pupil-led worship sessions. As a result, pupils and teachers are now very confident in delivering the sessions in class. Teachers also benefit from professional development opportunities provided by the diocese. The link governor for religious education is newly appointed. The subject leader offered a presentation to all governors sharing her vision for improvement in the subject. This has enabled the link governor and subject leader to begin to work on a better understanding of the strengths of the school's provision and outcomes. Although the subject leader works closely with senior leaders to monitor and evaluate provision, leaders and governors now need to take strategic action to improve standards so that all groups of pupils achieve their potential by providing a curriculum which is effectively planned to meet the needs of different groups of pupils.

Collective worship

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

Collective worship key judgement grade:.....

2

Pupil outcomes

How well pupils participate in and respond to the school's collective worship

2

Provision

The quality of collective worship provided by the school

2

Leadership

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

2



Pupils participate fully in prayer and liturgy and are able to respond enthusiastically to themes, such as forgiveness, truth and happiness. They can relate important messages in liturgy to their own lives and describe how they are inspired to action. Scripture is central to prayer, as it is used meaningfully to deepen pupils' experience of prayer. Pupils engage reverently during daily prayer times and in moments of quiet reflection. A range of ways of praying are offered to pupils, including meditation, silence, reflection, and traditional prayer. Appropriate liturgical music is chosen during liturgies to provide atmosphere and enhance the sacredness of the setting. Pupils can joyfully sing a repertoire of seasonally appropriate hymns. Prayer spaces are provided in the classrooms and corridors. A sculpture, designed by pupils in the outdoor prayer garden, is symbolic of the Trinity. It acts as a focal point for prayer and draws pupils to visit, reflect, and grow closer to God. Throughout the year, pupils participate in prayer linked to the liturgical year. School and parish plan together to ensure that Mass is celebrated termly for each year group and on holydays and feast days. Pupils willingly undertake liturgical ministries in the school led by the Friends in Faith.

The school is a prayerful community. Prayer supports and nourishes all members of the school. A member of staff commented, 'I love that every morning, every lunch and every goodbye is led with prayer.' Staff, including senior leaders, model full participation in prayer and worship. Pupil-led worship is embedded in the prayer life of the school. Pupils regularly evaluate their experience of prayer. The Friends in Faith support children in the early years to set up a prayer focus area and learn about child-led prayer. The school community works hard to recognise the wider Church family and, through its prayer life, helps pupils to develop a deeper understanding of the Gospel message and the call to serve. In attending Mass, pupils

are willing volunteers, preparing the scripture readings, prayers of the faithful and the offertory procession. The stations of the cross, created by the pupils and blessed by the parish priest, now form a focus for a prayer area in the school. During Lent, the Friends in Faith use the images to organise and facilitate the stations of the cross liturgy for the school.

Leaders and governors ensure that pupils in the school are offered a wide range of high-quality, meaningful experiences of prayer and worship. Leaders support staff to lead appropriate prayer and worship through clear guidance, using diocesan resources to plan and prepare liturgies. Leaders and governors ensure that the school calendar reflects significant dates in the liturgical calendar, resulting in a wealth of opportunities for pupils to celebrate the Eucharist. Each class, from Early Years Foundation Stage to Year 6, is given the opportunity to attend Mass once a term, which their parents are welcome to attend. The Sacrament of Reconciliation is offered at key times in the liturgical year, during the seasons of Advent and Lent. Governors allocate a generous budget for resources, for developing prayer areas, and for providing professional development for all staff. Leaders and governors prioritise the formation of staff. Staff are given the opportunity to attend relevant diocesan courses. As a result, staff are competent in supporting prayer and liturgy in the classroom and in whole-school worship. Staff are skilled in providing for their pupils an engaging and meaningful prayer experience. They are aided by a policy for prayer and liturgy which is reviewed annually. Leaders, including governors, regularly monitor and review the quality of prayer and liturgy as part of the school's self-evaluation, which includes the views of pupils. Monitoring and review are then used for strategic improvement planning for worship throughout the school.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Albert Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	117471
Full postal address of the school	Acorn Road, Hemel Hempstead HP3 8DW
School phone number	01442 264 835
Name of head teacher or principal	Kathy Little (Executive Headteacher)
Chair of governing board	Alison Spice
School Website	https://albertthegreat.herts.sch.uk
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	Click or tap here to enter text.
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age-range of pupils	3-11
Trustees	Click or tap here to enter text.
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	November 2016
Previous denominational inspection grade	Good

The inspection team

Norah Flatley	Lead inspector
Linda McDonald	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