



DIOCESE OF Arundel and Brighton

DENOMINATIONAL (S48) INSPECTION REPORT

St Alban's Catholic Primary School

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School Unique Reference Number: 125239

Headteacher:	Mr M. Brannigan
Chair of Governors:	Mrs M. Stannard
Lead Inspector:	Mrs A. Oddy
Associate Inspector:	Mrs A. Ireland
Inspection date:	13 th June 2016

Overall Effectiveness	Previous Inspection: 2
	This inspection: 1

Catholic Life:	1
Collective Worship:	1
Religious Education:	1

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

St Alban's is an outstanding Catholic school because:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ It offers an exceptionally high standard of Catholic education. ▪ The school is a warm and welcoming inclusive community where the mission statement and the school's Catholic ethos pervade all aspects of school life. ▪ The headteacher provides inspirational leadership. He is ably supported by a strong governing body and a cohesive staff team who share his vision of excellence in Catholic education. ▪ Pupils are justly proud of their school. They are polite and caring. They are exceptional ambassadors for their school, welcoming visitors and eager to share their experiences of school life. Behaviour is exemplary. ▪ Parents are appreciative of the school and value the Catholic education it offers. Parents of other Christian denominations and other faiths feel welcome and valued. ▪ Governors are committed and conscientious in their role. They fulfil their role of support and challenge. They know their school well and play an active part in the school community. ▪ A range of comprehensive policies form support and structure for the school and are firmly rooted in its mission statement. ▪ School self-evaluation is accurate and reflective and is strongly evidence based. It is focused on continuing improvement and raising standards across the school. School development planning is well structured and comprehensive. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The school has a vibrant Catholic life valued by all members of the school community. This supports pupils academically and spiritually and fosters their sense of vocation. ▪ The mission statement is known by all and reflects the Church's mission in education. It is at the heart of school life. ▪ Beautiful displays and high quality religious artefacts reflect the school's Catholic identity and enrich the learning environment. ▪ The school's behaviour policy and excellent systems of pastoral support help to promote a harmonious community.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The school offers a wide range of prayer and worship opportunities. These reflect the traditions of the Catholic church and encourage pupils to deepen their relationship with God. ▪ Pupils are very much involved in the prayer life of the school and are skilled in helping to prepare and lead worship. They are familiar with a range of prayer forms including the traditional prayers of the Church and can compose their own prayers. ▪ Beautiful prayer focus areas in every classroom are well used and relevant. Prayer boxes enable pupils to contribute their own prayers and prayer intentions. ▪ Staff and parents are part of the school's prayer life. Before school prayer sessions in Advent and Lent are well attended by parents and pupils. Staff meetings and governors' meetings start and end with prayer. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The standard of religious education offered by the school is outstanding. ▪ High quality teaching and learning ensures that all pupils achieve their full potential. All groups of pupils achieve well. Standards of attainment are high. ▪ Pupils enjoy their religious education lessons. They are interested and attentive and keen to do well. Work in pupils' books is excellent and demonstrates their considerable pride in their work. ▪ Comprehensive systems of assessment in religious education ensure pupils make good progress and receive appropriate levels of support and challenge. ▪ Leaders and managers provide effective monitoring and evaluation of religious education to maintain and develop the school's high standards.

FULL REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Alban's Catholic Primary School is a two form entry voluntary aided Catholic Primary School in the Weybridge deanery of the Diocese of Arundel and Brighton. It is currently maintained by Surrey Local Authority but will become part of the new Xavier Catholic Educational Trust in September. The principal parish which the school serves is St Barnabas, East Molesey. The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholics is 67%. The average weekly proportion of curriculum time given to religious education is 10% in all key stages.

The school takes pupils from 4 to 11 years. The number of pupils currently on roll is 229. In September 2015 the school expanded to two forms of entry. The attainment of pupils on entry to the school is broadly average. The proportion of pupils for whom pupil premium funding is received is 8% which is well below the national average. 7.5% of pupils have a special educational need or disability and receive support in class, this is well below the national average. An above average number of pupils speak English as an additional language. The majority of pupils at the school are of White British heritage, approximately 35% of pupils belong to a range of minority ethnic groups.

WHAT DOES THE SCHOOL NEED TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- Continue to develop and embed the recently introduced systems of assessment and pupil tracking in religious education in order to continue to raise standards and enable the school to analyse progress over time.

CATHOLIC LIFE

THE QUALITY OF THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

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

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

- Pupils are fully involved in the vibrant Catholic life of the school. They are aware of the school mission statement and know it is at the heart of their school. Pupils have been involved in adapting the mission statement to make it more child friendly. Together with the mission statement song it is part of daily life at school as demonstrated in the meaningful assembly observed as part of this inspection.
- The inclusive nature of the school welcomes all pupils and their families, regardless of their faith background. Pupils have a great sense of community. They know that the beliefs and practices of other faiths and cultures should be respected and that all are welcome in their school family. An example of this is the school's provision of a prayer space to enable a Muslim pupil to pray during the day.
- Pupils play a significant part in shaping the Catholic life of the school. A religious education council of pupils work with the subject leader to plan and help lead events in the Catholic life of the school. Examples include introducing new fund raising activities and producing a newsletter for parents. The religious education council pupils see their role as 'making the school a holier and more harmonious place'.
- The behaviour of pupils is exemplary. During this inspection they were exceptionally polite, thoughtful and courteous in lessons and around the school. They are kind and considerate to each other. They know the importance of forgiveness and employ the school's 'Saying Sorry' strategy when it is needed. A parent was pleased to report that it extended to her child's behaviour at home.
- The school offers pupils many opportunities to take responsibility. Pupils are conscientious in these roles, seeing them as an opportunity to serve their school community and as part of their sense of vocation. Older pupils exercise great care in looking after younger pupils, accompanying them to Mass and as part of the school 'buddy' system.

- Pupils are proud of their school and its Catholic traditions. They speak confidently of the Church's feasts and seasons and how they enjoy celebrating these in school. An example of this was the recent Reconciliation service for years 5 and 6.
- Parish links are strong. The parish priest visits the school and is a member of the governing body. Members of staff are active members of the local parishes, serving as catechists and Eucharistic ministers.
- Pupils take part in events with other Catholic schools, fostering their sense of belonging to a wider Catholic community.
- Links with the local Catholic secondary school are well developed and provide a smooth transition for pupils transferring at the end of year 6. The link governor for religious education is also a member of staff at the secondary school, providing a valued link between the schools.
- The school's Catholic life provides a wide range of activities to nurture pupils' spiritual growth including a retreat day for year 6 pupils. The introduction of Lectio Divina has had a significant impact on the spiritual development of the school community.
- The strong supportive nature of the school community ensures every individual is valued, encouraged and enabled to achieve their full potential both academically and spiritually. All groups of pupils make very good progress and achieve well. Academic results are excellent.

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

- The school mission statement has been reviewed and explored by pupils, parents, staff and governors to ensure that it is central to the school community and reflected in all aspects of school life. This is immediately apparent in the school.
- There is a great sense of community in the school. Relationships between members of the school community are supportive and caring. A parent wrote 'All the staff at the school from the caretaker to the headteacher are so enthusiastic, courteous, diligent and engaged. The Catholic ethos surrounds and envelops all they do and this is beautifully reflected in all our children.'
- The attractive and very well kept learning environment reflects the school's Catholic identity. Prayer areas and displays invite prayer and reflection as well as celebrating the liturgical seasons of the Church and the school's mission. This has been contributed to by the Religious Education Council, who have chosen resources to augment this.

- The school has good systems of pastoral care for pupils and their families and for staff. A member of staff is a trained counsellor, offering support to pupils where appropriate.
- Personal, Social and Health Education and Relationship and Sex Education policies are in place. The school uses the 'Journey in Love' scheme and teaching is in line with principles of the Catholic church.
- Staff and governors are committed to the Catholic life of the school. Meetings commence with prayer and all play a full part in events relating to the school's Catholic life. In May staff organise a lunchtime Rosary prayer session for pupils and staff, this was spoken of appreciatively by pupils.
- The school provides every opportunity for its community to celebrate the liturgical feasts and seasons. These events often include parents, who value these occasions to join the school and to keep the traditions of the Church.
- The school behaviour policy reflects its ethos, promoting a harmonious community of mutual respect and forgiveness.
- The school helps pupils to develop their awareness of moral and ethical issues. This was demonstrated by the assembly observed which was based on the words of Pope Francis in his encyclical 'Laudato Si'.

How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life of the school.

- The school's leadership is whole heartedly committed to the Church's mission in education. Leaders are excellent role models and have created a cohesive staff team with a strong sense of Christian community and the importance of the traditions of the Catholic Church.
- The Catholic life of the school is a high priority for school leaders. The governing body is well informed, with regular reports from the headteacher on the school's Catholic life. Governors attend events and celebrations as part of their monitoring role and as part of the school community.
- Leaders and managers have a clear understanding of the mission of the Catholic school and its commitment to developing each child as a whole person. This includes academic achievement as well as the child's relationship with God and responsibility to others. The school achieves this very successfully. A parent commented 'We are very happy with the Catholic education they receive and the lovely atmosphere at St Alban's and believe it is crucial to their academic success.'

- The school includes parents and carers in its Catholic life. They are invited to events and celebrations and to participate in its prayer life, particularly at special times such as Advent and Lent.
- Parents have very positive attitudes towards their children's education at St Alban's. A large number of questionnaires were returned as part of this inspection. The great majority were overwhelmingly positive. A parent wrote 'My husband and I could not be more delighted with St Alban's Primary School.'
- Induction of new staff, in service training, deanery and diocesan courses help staff and governors to strengthen and inspire provision for the school's Catholic life.
- School self-evaluation is accurate and strongly evidence based. It informs development planning, which is comprehensive and has clear timescales and lines of responsibility.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP AND PRAYER LIFE

- How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship and Prayer Life.
- The quality of provision for Collective Worship and Prayer Life.
- How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship and Prayer Life.

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

- St Alban's provides a wide range of collective worship and prayer opportunities. Pupils value these and respond very positively.
- In the act of collective worship observed, pupils were engaged and enthusiastic. They acted with reverence and respect, sang joyfully and clearly enjoyed being part of their school worshipping community. They were able to use stillness for reflection and prayer. Reception pupils joyfully conveyed an important message and how it could be lived on a daily basis.
- Pupils are very much involved in planning and leading worship. They choose artefacts, music, prayers and readings with care. They consider how best they can convey the scripture message and its relevance to daily life and how they can present this to their peers imaginatively and creatively. They demonstrate an impressive level of understanding.
- Pupils have a sense of respect for other faiths and know the importance of including all members of their school community. This is valued and commented on by parents and pupils.
- Pupils recognise the importance of prayer in their lives. They are familiar with the traditional prayers of the Church and also confident in composing and contributing their own prayers. They know that prayer can help them and others who need our prayers. They welcome the opportunity to contribute prayer intentions at class Masses and class prayer sessions. Prayer focus areas include a prayer box, which children evidently use and value.
- Pupils are able to engage in a variety of prayer forms including reflection, Lectio Divina and Stations of the Cross. A growing number of pupils participate in a weekly Prayer Club led by the Religious Education Council and a member of staff.

The quality of provision for Collective Worship and Prayer Life.

- Prayer and collective worship are central to the life of the school and provision is of a very high standard.
- Prayer is woven into the fabric of the school's daily life. Pupils and staff start and end the day with prayer, staff and governors' meetings always include prayer and the many attractive displays and prayer focus areas encourage and enrich reflection and prayer. The newly established Prayer Room provides the opportunity for pupils to create a sacred space and come together in prayers.
- Pupils play an active part in collective worship and school prayer. They are involved in planning and preparing liturgies, leading assemblies and prayers and know they are taking responsibility in contributing to an important part of school life.
- The school has introduced Lectio Divina and pupils have benefited from this opportunity for prayer and meditation on the scriptures. Older pupils are now leading the sessions.
- Acts of collective worship are well resourced and planned, with careful choices made to interest and engage pupils.
- Worship themes reflect the liturgical calendar, religious education topics and current events and issues. A programme of liturgical celebrations is planned and agreed with the parish priest at the beginning of each year.
- Good opportunities exist for voluntary prayer, including lunchtime Rosary sessions, early morning prayer services in Advent and Lent and the Prayer Club.
- Parents value the emphasis on the importance of prayer in the school. Many parents commented on how pupils continue this at home. 'She encourages us as a family to pray together as taught in school. Very impressive!'
- The school supports pupils preparing for First Holy Communion by prayer and the recognition that this is a special time for them. This was celebrated in a lovely display within the school.

How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship and Prayer Life.

- Leaders and managers are committed to high quality provision for collective worship and prayer. Careful planning and a wealth of appropriate resources help to ensure a rich and meaningful programme to nurture pupils' spiritual development and strengthen the school community, uniting it in prayer.
- School leaders model high quality examples and support other staff in delivering prayer and worship opportunities, thus building a competent and committed team.

- School newsletters and the website keep parents and carers informed and involved regarding school liturgical celebrations and warmly invite them to participate.
- The subject leader and headteacher monitor and evaluate collective worship, providing individual feedback to staff and discussing and sharing best practice at staff meetings.
- Governors attend Masses at school and at the church as part of their monitoring role as well as participating as members of the school community.
- The school is committed to continued improvement and uses monitoring, evaluation, sharing best practice and training to achieve this. The subject leader has attended diocesan training on leading collective worship. Staff meeting time is allocated for discussion and suggestions regarding improvement to collective worship opportunities.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

THE QUALITY OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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

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How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education.

- Pupils enjoy religious education lessons and appreciate its importance to their daily lives. They show excellent knowledge and understanding and a high standard of religious literacy across all age groups.
- Behaviour for learning is excellent. In the lessons observed, pupils were attentive, interested and worked very well together.
- Pupil interviews conducted as part of this inspection indicated that pupils enjoy their religious education lessons.
- Standards in religious education are in line with those in mathematics and English, which are high. However, pupils felt that religious education was often more challenging and thought provoking. One said, 'In mathematics and English there is

often just one right answer, but in religious education we have to think about things a lot more.'

- All groups of pupils achieve well, with significant numbers of pupils attaining the higher levels. Pupils are appropriately supported and challenged. Standards of attainment have been high over the last three years.
- Pupils demonstrate good subject knowledge, talk confidently about their learning and are able to reflect on what they have learned.
- Parents are encouraged to support their children's learning. A regular religious education newsletter and the Wednesday Word help to keep them informed and involved. This has been very positively received by parents, particularly those from other faith backgrounds.
- Work in books is of an exceptionally high standard. Pupils are able to record in a variety of ways including diagrams, extended writing and the use of IT. They are encouraged to become independent learners and conduct their own research. They take a pride in their work and treat their religious education books as special books.

The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education.

- Standards in teaching and learning are exceptionally high.
- School monitoring of lessons indicates that all lessons observed were good or better, with the great majority outstanding or good with outstanding features. This is in line with lessons observed as part of this inspection.
- Teaching and learning observed during this inspection was of a very high standard. Four lessons were observed across three key stages. Lessons showed careful preparation, good pace and interesting content. A range of teaching strategies and styles were used effectively to enthuse and motivate learners.
- Lessons successfully built on previous learning, incorporated probing questioning and provided evidence of progress within the lesson. Teachers showed good subject knowledge and had high expectations of their pupils.
- Stimulating and thought provoking lessons and excellent behaviour for learning create a productive atmosphere in classrooms. Pupils are keen to work hard and to reflect on their learning. They are eager to ask questions to further explore their understanding.
- Pupils enjoy their religious education lessons. The teaching of religious education is effectively enriched by cross curricular links, particularly with the creative arts.
- Differentiation is well planned, with appropriate levels of challenge and support provided for all pupils. Other adults in the classroom provide effective and sensitive support for pupils with special educational needs or disabilities. Support assistants are involved in the planning of lessons and have a positive impact on pupils' learning.
- Marking is developmental and affirmative. At Key Stage 2 it also shows a productive dialogue between teacher and pupil and includes targets to move pupils to the next stage in their learning.
- Assessment in religious education is comprehensive. Assessment tasks are used termly. Moderation of these takes place within school and external moderation at deanery and diocesan level validates these judgements.
- Pupil tracking ensures that all pupils make expected or better progress, with support for pupils as necessary.
- Assessment systems currently in place for religious education are relatively new. As these are further developed and embedded they will provide more data to provide a clearer picture of progress and attainment over time. The school has accurately identified this as an area for development.
- Teachers have a high level of confidence, subject knowledge and expertise. This is supplemented by school inset and diocesan training. The school benefits from the expertise of its link governor, who supports the teaching of religious education in the school. Together with the subject leader this enriches provision and support for the religious education curriculum.
- Systems of self-assessment and peer assessment are in place and valued by pupils as helping them to participate in their learning and that of others.

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

- Leadership and management of religious education is excellent. Very high standards of teaching and learning, together with effective systems of assessment and pupil tracking contribute to the very high standards of attainment in religious education across the school. Standards of attainment have risen steadily over time.
- A comprehensive system of monitoring, including lesson observations, learning walks, book scrutiny and planning scrutiny is used to raise standards and ensure consistency.
- School self-evaluation is accurate and makes very good use of monitoring data to plan targeted school improvement.
- Religious education is extremely well resourced and compares well with other core subjects in terms of budget allocation. The school follows the 'Come and See' programme of religious education and meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference fully in terms of provision and time allocation.
- Religious education is very ably led by the subject leader. She has a high level of expertise and a clear focus on achieving excellence in teaching and learning for all pupils and across the school. Best practice is shared with colleagues to raise standards and create a skilled team. Support is provided for staff to ensure that all are able to deliver the high standards of religious education expected by St Alban's.
- Governors have a clear understanding of provision and standards in religious education. They take part in monitoring activities and visit the school frequently. They receive regular reports from the headteacher, subject leader and link governor and are confident in their role of support and challenge.
- The teaching of other faiths is well established throughout the school.
- Areas for development identified by the last inspection have been fully addressed.

Summary of Inspection Judgements

How effective the school is in providing Catholic Education.

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Catholic Life

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

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

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

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Collective Worship and Prayer Life

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How well pupils respond to and participate in the schools' Collective Worship and Prayer Life.

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The quality of provision for Collective Worship and Prayer Life.

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How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship and Prayer Life.

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Religious Education

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How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education.

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The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education.

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How well leaders and managers monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education.

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