



DIOCESE OF  
**SHREWSBURY**

---

DENOMINATIONAL INSPECTION REPORT:

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

School: St Vincent de Paul Catholic Primary School  
Address: Manor Park South  
Knutsford  
Cheshire  
WA16 8AL

Tel No: 01565 633637

URN: 111358

Headteacher: Mrs G Davies

Chair of Governors: Mr D Grieves

Date of Inspection: 19 March 2019

Inspectors: Mrs J Johnson  
Mrs E Robb



*Mission Statement:*

*“It is the mission of this Catholic School to enable our children to become aware of the world that God has given them and to recognise their vocation and responsibilities within it.”*

**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 Vincent's is an outstanding Catholic school, where all are welcomed warmly, and know that they are loved.
- The Headteacher, most ably assisted by the Deputy Headteacher, who is also the school's Religious Education Coordinator, and Governors, has been unwavering in her quest for the very best Catholic education for the pupils in the school.
- All staff and Governors are firmly committed to the school's Catholic Mission and ethos, which clearly permeates all aspects of the school's life and work.
- The school is currently reviewing its Mission Statement with all stakeholders, and has been taking a measured approach, in order to make sure that the final Statement truly reflects what is at the heart of the school's vision.
- The school is outward facing, and has a strong relationship with the Diocese. The Religious Education Coordinator, as an active member of the Diocese's Primary Curriculum Working Party, has been instrumental in developing Religious Education beyond the school.
- Parents are kept well informed about the Catholic Life of the School, as well as developments in RE, and are extremely supportive of the school's work.
- There is a strong sense of community and belonging within the school, and this is felt by all stakeholders. Or as one pupil put it, 'We call our school a family with our church'.
- Pupils are a joy to be with, and they show high levels of religious literacy. They are able to ponder on deep questions, and show great maturity in dealing with religious issues. Their behaviour is outstanding at all times.
- Although there were no issues raised by the last S48 Inspection, the school has not stood still, and has moved forward with commitment and drive.
- There are strong links between the school, parish and home.

## What the school needs to do to improve further

- Continue to develop the provision for Sex and Relationships Education, in line with Catholic Education Service guidelines and the emerging national picture.
- Review the mechanisms by which the quality of Collective Worship is monitored and evaluated by Leaders and Governors.

## Information about the Inspection

The Inspection of St Vincent'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 inspectors 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:

- The Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 5 classes
- Whole school Collective Worship led by the Headteacher was observed, as well as a voluntary Lenten Prayer Service led by the Deputy Headteacher, held before the school day started, which parents and pupils attended
- Discussions were held with the Headteacher, the Religious Education Coordinator, 4 governors (including the Parish Priest and the Religious Education Link Governor), pupils, parents and five members of staff
- A sample of pupils' Religious Education books 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 School Development Plan (including the Religious Education Action Plan), attainment and progress data, school policies, newsletters 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 Vincent's is a one form entry Voluntary Aided Catholic primary, catering for 4-11 year olds. The school has an annual admission number of 30, and there are currently 208 pupils on roll, 93% of whom are baptised Catholics
- The school serves the parish of St Vincent's in Knutsford
- The Headteacher, who was previously the Deputy Headteacher, has been appointed since the previous Inspection. The Deputy Headteacher, who is also the Religious Education Coordinator, has also been appointed since the last Inspection
- Staffing includes a full time equivalent of seven teachers and seven support staff. Seven teachers and a number of the support staff are Catholic. Four teachers hold the Catholic Certificate of Religious Studies (CCRS) and one is currently undertaking the qualification
- The school is organised into seven single-age 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

- Pupils are fully appreciative of the Catholic Life of the school, and the many and varied opportunities the school offers them. They are rightly proud of their school, and display a great sense of belonging.
- Pupils deeply value and respect the school’s Catholic traditions and ethos, and can give examples of this. One Y6 pupil commented ‘We trust in God that he has a plan for us - if things go wrong then it is for the good of all of us’.
- Pupils demonstrate great respect for themselves and others as being made in the image and likeness of God.
- Older pupils apply for and take on a number of leadership responsibilities with great commitment. One Prayer Leader commented that she wanted to be a Prayer Leader in order to ‘take a step closer to God’.
- Even young pupils know what the school’s badge means - I believe, I trust, I am ready. Older pupils are able to articulate what this means in their lives in school and in the wider community, and can give examples of when Gospel values, for example, compassion, are demonstrated in school.
- Pupils have a strong sense of community, and see the school and the parish as one family. They are also proud of their work with Kasupe School in Malawi, and also for their fundraising for a wide range of charities, including CAFOD, Mission Together, Good Shepherd, and Operation Christmas Child.
- All stakeholders recognise the partnership between home, school and parish as being particularly strong, and this benefits all.
- Pupils are developing a rich religious literacy, and are confident in expressing their faith.
- Pupils feel that their voice is heard by adults in school, and they are starting to evaluate the Catholic Life of the school through regular meetings with the Religious Education Coordinator.
- Relationships at all levels are a real strength of the school, and there is a calm atmosphere in the school which is tangible, and recognised and valued by pupils.
- The Catholic Life of the school is celebrated by stunning works of art that are on display in communal areas. Often these are completed by pupils working with visiting artists, which is evidence of the high priority the school places on the learning environment in a Catholic school.
- Leaders and Governors are deeply committed to the Church’s mission in education, and are passionate about ensuring the school can be the best it can be. They are fully aware that the development of the Catholic Life of the school is one of their core responsibilities.
- Self-evaluation of the Catholic Life is accurate and has been effective in identifying strengths and areas for development, articulated by leaders and governors. Regular

opportunities are given for other stakeholders, for example, parents, to contribute to this.

- One parent commented that they were often inspired by the way faith is encompassed into all aspects of the school and that 'The school is an absolute blessing'.
- Parents are extremely supportive of the school, recognising the strength of its Catholic ethos and the effect this has on their children. One parent commented that the care, guidance and support of the whole team, including the parish, in the Sacramental Programme is 'wonderful. We feel very blessed that our children have this wonderful start and preparation to help understand and deepen their faith'.
- There has been a very good level of continuing professional development offered to staff, provided through outside providers, in-house sessions, and training opportunities offered by the Diocese. Staff are enthusiastic about new developments and feel well supported by Leaders and Governors.
- Staff morale is high, and staff are clearly supportive of each other. They take full benefit of the opportunities on offer which enhance their well-being, and feel valued by Leaders and Governors (as evidenced in the responses in the Staff Questionnaires).
- The school has recently implemented the scheme 'Journey in Love' for its Sex and Relationships Programme, and now needs to embed this, taking into account the emerging national picture, as well as the up to date guidance from the Catholic Education Service.

## 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	1

- When pupils were asked, they told Inspectors that they loved their lessons in Religious Education.
- Pupils make very good progress from their different starting points and outcomes at the end of both KS1 and KS2 are high.
- All pupils were fully engaged in the 5 lessons observed during the Inspection, and more able pupils were challenged very well. Pupils were highly motivated to do well, and were keen to share their work with Inspectors.
- Thanks to the provision offered throughout the school, older pupils can reflect deeply and spiritually, and they can give examples of how the demands of their religious commitment affect their daily lives. One pupil said that the school helps them to understand how to 'live out God's commandments, by living the way God wants, and listening to Jesus' teachings'.
- Behaviour in all lessons observed was exemplary. This means that lessons can move at a fast pace, and no time is wasted.
- Pupils enjoy and value the creativity offered through their lessons in Religious Education, and they recognize that teachers challenge them, but also provide support when needed.
- The quality of pupils' work in books and on display throughout the school is outstanding.
- Teaching is consistently good, and often outstanding in the school. Teachers plan to challenge pupils, and this was demonstrated in the lessons observed and in the pupils' books.
- Teachers have high expectations in Religious Education lessons, and have confident subject knowledge. They are not afraid to ask deep questions, to extend pupils' knowledge and understanding.
- Teaching Assistants enhance the learning of pupils in Religious Education by adapting tasks to meet the needs of the pupils with skill and sensitivity. Open questioning, from teachers and Teaching Assistants, is a strength of the school.
- High quality resources help to maximize learning for all pupils, and the impact of the Continuous Professional Development on Creativity in Religious Education is clearly evident.
- Feedback in Religious Education is generally of a high quality, and pupils are mostly given time to respond to the comments made or questions given by teachers. It focuses on the learning objectives, and the 'driver' words are used to support the assessment against the Bishops' Conference Levels.
- Leaders and Governors ensure that the Religious Education curriculum fully meets the Bishops' Conference requirements, and that 10% of teaching time is given to Religious Education in all three key Stages.



- Religious Education has full parity with other Core Subjects, and as such, a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation plan for Religious Education is carried out. Self-evaluation is accurate.
- The Headteacher and Religious Education Coordinator are united in their vision of outstanding teaching and learning in Religious Education.
- The Religious Education Coordinator is an excellent role model for staff, and she is clearly a reflective practitioner, changing and developing whatever she does in order to maximize the benefits for the school. She regularly reports to the Governing Body.
- Tracking and assessment of individual pupils and groups of pupils in Religious Education is carried out regularly and robustly by the Headteacher and Religious Education Coordinator, and as a result, Governors have an accurate understanding of current standards.

## 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	2

- Even young pupils are extremely skilled in planning and leading high quality Collective Worship themselves, choosing the theme, the related focal point, scripture, hymn and 'Going Forth' activity themselves. Collective Worship Class Books throughout the school are of a particularly high standard, and beautifully presented, showing the importance placed on Collective Worship by the school community.
- Older pupils are challenged to think deeply through Collective Worship, and they are able to reflect on their experiences. Pupils show great reverence and respect during Collective Worship, and are keen and enthusiastic participants. They sing confidently and joyfully, which further enhances their experiences of Collective Worship.
- Pupils are keen to participate in a range of voluntary prayer opportunities and can describe a range of these which are on offer. They particularly value the 'Prayer Chair' and the 'Little Jar of Happiness', and are proud of the Prayer weaving on display in the entrance hall.
- Pupils are able to recite a wide range of traditional prayers from memory, and contemporary prayers, as well as prayer ideas from other faiths and cultures, further enhance school provision.
- Pupils have a deep respect for pupils from other faiths, and this is reflected in the way they plan, prepare and participate in prayer and liturgy.
- Pupils have a good understanding of the Church's Liturgical Year, and beautiful displays in classes and around the school reflect the Church's seasons. Religious artefacts are used to good effect to enhance worship in classes.
- As part of the school's provision for Lent, a communal prayer session, prepared by pupil volunteers, is on offer before school starts daily, and all parents and pupils are invited. On the day of the Inspection, over 50 parents and pupils attended. Y6 and Y5 pupils had prepared the prayer session, linking all aspects, including a 'Going Forth' activity to the day's theme in 'Walk with Me'. In addition, a decade of the Rosary was recited, with small groups of pupils of all ages taking the lead in reciting each 'Hail Mary'.
- Collective Worship clearly forms the heart of every school celebration, and communal prayer is part of the daily experience of pupils and staff alike.
- 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.
- Staff are skilled in teaching pupils from an early age, to plan, prepare and deliver Collective Worship at an age appropriate level.
- Leaders and Governors have a monitoring and evaluation plan for Collective Worship, but as yet, this is not robust enough, as it does not provide for individual feedback for staff, or for regular and full scrutiny by Governors.