

Catholic Schools Inspectorate inspection report for St Werburgh's Catholic Primary School, Birkenhead

URN: 105091

Carried out on behalf of the Right Rev. Mark Davies, Bishop of Shrewsbury on:

Date: 7–8 December 2023

Overall effectiveness The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school.....	2
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Collective worship (p.7) The quality and range of liturgy and prayer provided by the school.....	2
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

- St Werburgh's is a diverse community where all are welcome, and differences are celebrated.
- Catholic life and mission are vibrant and lived out daily by every member of the community.
- Pupils make excellent progress in religious education from when they join St Werburgh's to when they leave at the end of Key Stage 2.
- There is a wide variety of opportunities for pupils to participate in prayer and liturgy throughout the liturgical year.
- The school community recognises that everyone is made in the image and likeness of God and therefore leaders, governors and staff work tirelessly to provide outstanding pastoral care for pupils and their families.

What the school needs to improve:

- Ensure there is a progression of skills in prayer so that all staff understand how prayer develops, with clear expectations for each year group to support pupils when planning times of prayer in their own classrooms.
- Implement a formal system of monitoring so that the provision of prayer and liturgy is monitored effectively to ensure all pupils regularly plan and lead prayer in their own classroom.

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

Pupils truly welcome all and live out the school's mission statement: 'Welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you'. Pupils say that they welcome everybody because 'we learn about the teachings of Jesus' and 'we trust in God'. All pupils understand the simple school rules of 'Be safe, be respectful and be ready to learn'. As a result, there is a joyful and friendly atmosphere that pervades every aspect of school life. One pupil who finds 'making friends hard,' says he has friends in school who help him. They respect each other's differences and enjoy hearing about their friends' different faiths and cultures. Those pupils enjoy sharing their traditions at relevant times during the year. Pupils know they are valued and respected, and therefore enjoy taking on responsibilities in school, including roles as school councillors, Mini Vinnies, and class monitors. All Year 6 pupils are prefects and by formulating questions, some were engaged in the recruitment process for a new deputy headteacher. They are aware that families in other parts of the world need their help and eagerly support Mary's Meals and Cafod. Nearer home they support local charities such as Caritas and the Charles Thompson Mission. Sensitive to their own community, pupils learn that an important way to help is through prayer, rather than always trying to raise money. Links are made to curriculum areas to highlight God's world and our responsibility to look after it. This leads pupils to organise the recycling of Christmas jumpers and collecting plastic bottle tops.

The Shrewsbury Youth Mission team led the staff, governors, and pupils in a meaningful review of the mission statement, which re-energised the commitment of all to ensure that Gospel values underpin their daily activities. Relationships between all members of the community are outstanding and staff believe this is because Christ is at the centre of all they do. Staff, governors, and parents say that they feel part of a family, where everyone is listened to, and individual needs are catered for in a sensitive and empathetic way. Parents appreciate the range of support services

offered to pupils with social, emotional, and learning needs, and this is evident in all the positive responses to the parental survey. Staff regularly attend events outside school, including celebrations in church during the year, and they give willingly of their time to ensure that all pupils have a wide range of extracurricular activities to enjoy and experience each week.

At the heart of St Werburgh's is the belief that everyone is unique in the eyes of God, and therefore everyone in the community is treated with dignity and respect. Leaders and governors work tirelessly to ensure that all policies are based on this and are lived out daily. They attend relevant diocesan courses, so that they are up to date with all initiatives and are fully committed to implementing all diocesan policies. The partnership between school, parents, and parish creates a family feel rather than three separate parts of a community. The parish priest is instrumental in this flourishing partnership and staff, pupils, and parents speak of his commitment to welcome and include everyone in celebrations at school and in church. As a result, many families attend Mass on Sundays and special celebrations throughout the year. Leaders are mindful of the wellbeing of staff. Staff feel well supported and know they can turn to leaders for help if needed. Governors make a significant contribution to the Catholic life and mission of the school, and they ensure that they have systems in place to fully evaluate this important area of school life.

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.....

2

Leadership

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

1



Pupils enjoy their religious education lessons because they 'can give their own views'. From an early age the children learn and use religious vocabulary appropriately. The youngest pupils talk confidently about how Mary felt when she had nowhere to stay in Bethlehem and by Key Stage 2 pupils express themselves in meaningful discussions. For example, Lower Key Stage 2 pupils discuss the Trinity and older pupils debate the trust that Zechariah and Abraham had in God. In all lessons pupils are fully engaged, enthusiastic and ready to learn, enabling them to make significant progress from their starting points. They recall previous learning, which helps them build on their knowledge and this is a feature of all lessons. Pupils can work with partners in groups and independently. They respect each other's diversity and listen with interest, so behaviour in lessons is excellent. Written work in books shows that pupils value their lessons and enjoy responding in a wide variety of ways. The school marking policy, which is now fully implemented, helps pupils to understand how well they are doing. Teachers give verbal feedback in all lessons and pupils understand the symbols written in books.

Teachers are undertaking training, so they are now confident in their subject knowledge of religious education. They demonstrate a deep commitment to developing these skills and have high expectations of all pupils. They provide engaging and creative tasks so pupils of all faiths and none develop an understanding of how religious education relates to daily life. Planning is linked to assessment of pupils' work and support is used skilfully to enable all children to access resources which enhance their progress. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils confidently use Bibles to find scripture passages to compare, which are linked to their topics. Teachers use questions and artefacts appropriate to the pupils' age to develop understanding. In Early Years pupils react with awe to the star of Bethlehem but sigh when realising the baby has to sleep in a manger. In class and in the weekly awards assembly staff use a variety of ways to feedback and celebrate the pupils'

achievements. Since September, teachers' successful embedding of discern questions helps to deepen pupils' understanding and curiosity. Evidence in books shows that this is starting to have a positive impact on attainment.

Leaders and governors are deeply committed to providing a quality religious education curriculum that meets all diocesan requirements. They are fully aware of the importance of this curriculum in pupils' lives, so they allocate a significant amount from the budget to support the social, emotional, and learning needs of the pupils. St Werburgh's has an effective school team of leaders who work with agencies and families, to ensure that pupils are ready to learn in their religious education lessons. This is one reason all groups of pupils make significant progress by the end of Key Stage 2. Staff say, 'We are proud to make a difference'. Religious education is treated as the core subject, which underpins all other subjects, and leaders provide diocesan and other quality training for relevant staff. Staff value the support of the dedicated religious education subject leader and the inspirational head teacher. Monitoring is comprehensive and there is a detailed plan, which includes learning walks, book reviews, lesson observations, pupil voice and one day each year to focus on strengths and areas for development in religious education. The subject lead works closely with the link religious education governor, who reports back to the governing board.

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

1

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

All pupils welcome opportunities for prayer and they respond reverently to each aspect of celebrations of the word. They are involved in the preparation of the weekly whole school Gospel assembly, and they embrace opportunities to prepare the prayer table, write their own prayers, and lead school reflections. It is evident to inspectors, when joining pupils for prayer in classes, that pupils of all faiths and none understand the reverence with which Catholics hold the Bible. Pupils have opportunities for quiet reflection and articulate how they can show kindness and forgiveness in their everyday lives. They are given time and space to reflect, which helps pupils understand that they can make a positive difference to the world around them. They experience the Catholic traditions of prayer and celebration throughout the liturgical year in school and in church and respect the traditions of those who have different ways of celebrating. Together with teachers and the parish priest pupils enthusiastically plan, lead, and participate in a range of different celebrations. For example, the 'Stay and Pray' sessions, retreat days, voluntary Masses at lunch time in Lent and Advent, and many other Masses throughout the year. Most pupils also have these opportunities in their own classrooms.

Celebrations of the word are central to the life of St Werburgh's. Staff provide a range of meaningful experiences and there is a rich daily pattern of prayer, both traditional and spontaneous. Teachers are becoming more confident when leading prayer in the classroom and good practice is modelled by senior leaders and the parish priest on a regular basis. The school provides good quality resources, and staff use art, music, and artefacts to enrich the quality of prayerful experiences. There is an identified room for voluntary Mass at lunchtimes, and plans are in place to develop this as a permanent space for quiet reflection and celebration. The school regularly invites families to stay and pray, and staff link these themes to the religious education topic, which enriches the pupils learning. All these times help to create a real sense of family described by some as 'an oasis of

peace'. When celebrating the word in classrooms, linking scripture passages to the gospel of the day helps to identify the Church's liturgical journey during the year. The parish team supports parents and staff to prepare pupils for the first sacraments and these occasions are celebrated with great joy by the whole community.

Leaders and governors carefully plan the liturgical year so that holy days and significant feasts are celebrated with pupils, staff, parents, and parishioners. Together with the parish priest, leaders provide opportunities that improve pupils' understanding of how to plan and lead prayer and liturgy for a variety of celebrations. The school assemblies, 'Stay and Pray', retreats, and voluntary Masses are well-planned and led by pupils with support from leaders. The Shrewsbury Youth Mission team have provided quality training for staff and pupils to develop these skills. Leaders provide resources from The Mark 10 Mission, which enhance experience of prayer at different times during the year. In most classes pupils are developing the skills needed to plan and lead prayer, however this is an area that leaders are developing further. The subject leader has produced and implemented a policy, which helps new staff recognise the importance of prayer and liturgy and it clearly identifies the progression of formal prayer expected. However, there is no clear expectation of the progression of skills needed to deepen pupils' individual prayer, therefore the quality of class prayer across the school is inconsistent. More regular and well-planned monitoring of prayer and liturgy is needed to improve this.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Werburgh's Catholic Primary
School unique reference number (URN)	105091
Full postal address of the school	Park Grove CH41 2TD Birkenhead
School phone number	0151 647 8404
Name of head teacher or principal	Mrs Sarah Murphy
Chair of governing board	Mr Keith Powell
School Website	Stwerburghs.wirral.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	2-11
Trustees	Diocese of Shrewsbury
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	2 March 2016
Previous denominational inspection grade	Outstanding

The inspection team

Sue Lyonette	Lead inspector
Siobhan Casey	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