

## Catholic Schools Inspectorate inspection report for **Our Lady and St Edward's Catholic Primary School**

URN: 105086

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

Date: 2-3 November 2023

Overall effectiveness The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school.....	1
Catholic life and mission (p.3) How faithfully the school responds to the call to live as a Catholic community at the service of the Church's educational mission.....	1
Religious education (p.5) The quality of curriculum religious education.....	1
Collective worship (p.7) The quality and range of liturgy and prayer provided by the school.....	1
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	N/A

### Summary of key findings

#### What the school does well

- In carrying out its daily activities the school is an inspiring example of faith in action
- The senior leadership team is highly effective and dedicated to ensuring that Catholic life and mission are at the core of all decision making
- Senior leaders, the pastoral support team, and all staff work tirelessly for the good of the pupils and their families
- Priority given to the teaching and learning in religious education results in high standards across the school
- Pupils' enthusiasm is evident when praising God with their singing

What the school needs to improve:

- Target specific areas identified in the Catholic school self-evaluation document and plan opportunities for governors to be more actively involved in the evaluation
- Identify regular opportunities for pupils to evaluate their involvement in prayer and liturgy throughout the liturgical year

## 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



'Our school is more than just a building... Hand in hand we journey together with Jesus by our side.' Statements taken from Our Lady and St Edward's mission statement truly reflect the pupils' experiences of how they learn. They know they are respected as individuals by the adults in school and because of this, pupils show a deep respect for each other. Their exemplary behaviour in lessons enables them to flourish in a safe, happy, and inclusive environment. At relevant times during the year, pupils enjoy visiting homes for the elderly. The Mini Vinnies group are proactive in organising litter picking and gardening as well as writing to patients in Arrowe Park hospital. In November, the younger pupils walk to the cenotaph in Birkenhead. These meaningful events help pupils understand that they are living out the Gospel values, which underpin their enthusiastic response to caring for those in the wider community. Responding so enthusiastically to the Duracell Battery Hunt, they demonstrate their own commitment to Catholic social teaching. By engaging with activities provided by Cafod and Merseyside Environmental Advisory Service, pupils learn to live out the teachings of Jesus by showing a deep respect and understanding of their peers' different faiths and cultural traditions.

Our Lady and St Edward's school is 'a welcoming and joyful place where everyone feels happy, safe and protected'. These words from the school's mission statement reflect the atmosphere that permeates daily life. Therefore, inclusivity is an overwhelming feature of the school. Parents spoke of the little things that make a difference and mentioned examples of how everyone shows genuine care for them and their children. When one child joined the school speaking very little English, 'she was warmly welcomed and therefore settled into school life very quickly'. Another parent said, 'this is an inclusive place for my autistic children to be'. Every member of staff shows a deep commitment to supporting the unique needs of each pupil in their care. 'They have a knack here for having time

for every single child' commented one parent. The dedicated pastoral support team and the Sunshine Room provision are strengths of the school. The hard-working team offers a variety of support through many agencies with each one tailored to the needs of individual pupils and families. The weekly Pop-up Pantry is a huge success and is available for parents and parishioners. Provision for relationships, sex and health education meets all statutory and diocesan requirements.

Leaders and governors are totally committed to ensuring Christ is at the heart of daily life in the school. Staff feel nurtured and supported by the inspirational senior leaders and therefore they fully embrace the Catholic life and mission. The headteacher ensures that all relevant staff attend diocesan training and briefings so that all staff are kept up to date with initiatives. Many staff have gained the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies, which is led by the parish priest. This has led to a deepening of their personal faith journey and an enhanced confidence when teaching religious education. The partnership between school, and parents and carers is a strength. Parents told inspectors that they value this. Initiatives to develop further links with the parish resulted in many families attending Carols by Candlelight and Mass on Christmas Eve. Leaders strive for excellence in all areas of school life, but they are mindful of the wellbeing of all. This is appreciated by staff, telling inspectors that they have a voice and feel listened to when contributing their ideas. Leaders are committed to Catholic social teaching and ensure that resources are effectively targeted to live out this mission.

## 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.....

1

### Leadership

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

1



In all lessons observed, pupils' interest and enthusiasm show that they enjoy and value their religious education lessons. Pupils of all ages contribute to activities with confidence and listen to each other so that they are actively involved in their own learning. Behaviour is exemplary and because of this, by upper Key Stage 2, pupils make significant progress in their knowledge and understanding. They can frame their own questions to deepen their understanding and have meaningful discussions about themes such as justice and human rights. Pupils also make positive links between Bible stories and their own lives. They spoke confidently to inspectors about these, including stories from the Old and New Testament to illustrate links. In lower Key Stage 2, pupils enjoy exploring the feelings of Our Lady through studying paintings, and in the youngest classes pupils show interest in learning and talking about new vocabulary, through a range of well-prepared activities. Work in pupils' books demonstrates high standards and depth in the pupils' responses in religious education lessons. In most books seen it is evident that pupils have time to respond to the teachers' feedback, which deepens knowledge and understanding. In all books there is a variety of creative tasks, and opportunities to respond in prayer. Attainment is consistently in line or better than other core subjects.

The commitment of many staff to undertake the Catholic Certificate of Religious Studies means that they have deepened their personal understanding of the subject. Consequently, they have a high level of confidence and high expectations of themselves and pupils. The standard of work seen in books was consistently of a high standard. Staff value the importance of religious education as a vehicle for developing pupils' life skills based on the Gospel values. This is most effective in those lessons where teachers pace the lesson to allow time for reflection and use a range of questions to encourage independent learning. Teachers plan adult support effectively, thus enabling pupils who need guidance when working independently to achieve success in the lesson. Feedback during

lessons and written comments provide opportunities for pupils to further their understanding. Staff provide a variety of tasks to ensure pupils stay engaged and therefore make good or better progress by the end of Key Stage 2. Extended writing opportunities, drama, art, and music contribute to the development of pupils' moral and spiritual development.

The teaching of religious education is of paramount importance in Our Lady and St Edward's school. The religious education curriculum is compliant with the *Religious Education Curriculum Directory* and leaders ensure that the timetabling of religious education goes beyond the requirement of parity with other core subjects. Because of this pupils and staff hold the subject in high regard and this results in high standards in all aspects of school life. As well as annual progress reports, parents are kept well informed about what their children are learning through half termly newsletters from the headteacher. Resources are focused on professional development and the use of good quality artefacts which have been recently updated. The subject leader, who is relatively new to the role, has made a significant impact on the development of religious education. Teachers told inspectors that they feel supported by the inspirational subject leader and her door is always open if they need individual help. She is astute in her evaluation of teaching and learning in lesson observations and is therefore able to identify excellent practice and ways to improve. Governors have some involvement in self-evaluation of the subject and understand the need to plan further opportunities to be more actively involved.

## Collective worship

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

Collective worship key judgement grade:.....

1

### 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 .....

1

### Leadership

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

2

The pattern of prayer is truly part of daily life in school and pupils engage prayerfully through a variety of experiences. From early years pupils respond to these well-planned opportunities. Inspectors observed Key Stage 1 pupils enjoying action prayers, quiet music, and time to talk about God's love for them. They are learning formal prayers such as the sign of the cross and the Hail Mary and respond enthusiastically when invited to pray. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils confidently lead their classes in prayer and are happy to plan independently, but also recognise that their teacher does help them to improve their choices so that their friends have the best time to reflect. They consider this to be an important aspect of their planning. Pupils in all classes respond with enthusiasm when singing and join in responses to prayer confidently. They feel strongly that scripture is important and choose the passages independently. They can relate the scripture to their own lives and have time to reflect on their mission for the week. Pupils told inspectors that they enjoy their half termly attendance at Mass with parishioners, to which parents are invited.

Throughout each week and during the year staff plan a wide range of opportunities for prayer. Because of this it is part of the many gatherings and celebrations that identify Our Lady and St Edward's as a Catholic school. For example, Lenten trails are prepared in the parish church, and each class, including parents, takes part. At Christmas, many families took part in the Carols by Candlelight service and Mass on Christmas Eve. Staff use resources effectively to ensure that scripture passages reflect the liturgical year, and they are committed to providing high quality times for celebration and reflection. Music is a special part of their celebrations and pupils of all ages join in enthusiastically in thanksgiving and praise of God. Each class has a designated prayer space, however more interactive use could be made of these spaces. The closeness of the parish church does mean that each class can access times for quiet reflection. Parents told us that their children

enjoy their prayer times in school, and some choose to write their own prayers at home. Parents value the time given to prayer as they feel it helps children to make the right choices.

Leaders and governors realise the importance of prayer, and this is reflected in the allocation of resources. The staff are supported by the enthusiastic parish priest, who engages with leaders to increase more opportunities for families to take part. There is a carefully planned timetable for celebrating the special times in the liturgical year. Parents look forward to the preparation for the Sacraments of Holy Communion and Reconciliation, which are delivered in partnership between parish and school. They also value the opportunity to attend Mass with their children's class in church. The subject leader has provided staff with resources recommended by the diocese which greatly enhance the pupils' experience of prayer, and since her appointment, she has supported and helped all staff to grow in confidence. In most classes staff create an atmosphere for prayer and reflection. The subject leader is aware of how to further develop the opportunities for liturgical and spontaneous prayer. Equally, she is supported by a highly skilled and dedicated senior leadership team and by all the staff. Leaders and governors nurture the richness of prayer, and by embedding self-evaluation opportunities for themselves and pupils, they continue to enhance meaningful experiences for all.



## Information about the school

Full name of school	Our Lady and St Edward's Catholic Primary
School unique reference number (URN)	105086
Full postal address of the school	Price Street, Birkenhead, CH418DU
School phone number	01516523360
Name of head teacher or principal	Mrs. Elaine McGunigall
Chair of governing board	Stella Elliott
School Website	<a href="http://ourlady-saintedwards.co.uk">http://ourlady-saintedwards.co.uk</a>
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	2-11yrs
Trustees	Diocese of Shrewsbury
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	13 December 2016
Previous denominational inspection grade	Outstanding

## The inspection team

Name of inspector	Lead inspector	Sue Lyonette
Name of inspector	Team inspector	Kevin Toms
Name of inspector	Team inspector	Louise Conlon

## 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