



St Aelred’s Catholic Primary School

(Part of St Margaret Clitherow Catholic Academy Trust), Fifth Avenue, York, YO31 0QQ

School Unique Reference Number: **147416**

Inspection dates:	09 – 10 June 2022		
Lead inspector:	Mr Mark Ryan		
Team inspector:	Mrs Liz King		
Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Select Previous OE Judgement	3
	This inspection:	Select OE Judgement	2
Catholic Life:		Select CL Judgement	2
Collective Worship:		Select CW Judgement	2
Religious Education:		Select RE Judgement	2

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

St Aelred’s Catholic Primary School is a good Catholic school because:

- St. Aelred’s is a very warm, caring school community where all are welcomed. Pupils are clearly cared for and staff are united in their vision to be the best they can for the pupils and the community.
- Significant progress has been made since the previous inspection and leaders, under the direction of the Headteacher of the school, have responded to every recommendation from the previous inspection through strategic planning and robust monitoring.
- The pupils and staff have a strong sense of belonging and are committed to living out their mission and values. Parents speak openly, and with conviction, as to how pupils live out these values at home and they have a genuine sense of pride and appreciation in the Catholic Life of the school.
- Elements of Catholic Social Teaching are evident within the life of the school to benefit the pupils, but there are opportunities to develop this more comprehensively.
- Vulnerable pupils and pupils with additional needs are valued and are clearly supported and guided by committed, caring adults. Pupils benefit greatly from the support they receive. They would benefit from more careful targeting and adaptation of learning tasks.
- Relationships with the parish are a strength of the school. Both the school and the parish mutually benefit from their close working relationship.
- Governors of the school place the highest regard to developing as a Catholic school with its vision at the heart of all it does. They have an accurate view of the school. As a result, they have challenged leaders well and the overall effectiveness of the school has greatly improved.
- Religious Education is good overall. Pupils are generally engaged in lessons and they are well supported by all adults to help them learn. Teaching is not always matched to pupils’ abilities.
- Collective Worship is good at St Aelred’s and pupils have regular opportunities to lead. Children are respectful and engaged in prayer and worship. Opportunities for staff and pupils to lead and experience varying forms of worship is limited.

FULL REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

- St Aelred's is a one-form entry primary school with nursery provision. The Planned Admission Number for the school is 30. Currently there are 176 pupils on roll and 26 pupils attend Nursery. Generally, pupils from the parish of St Aelred's attend the school, but it also appeals to the wider community.
- The numbers of pupils eligible for Free School Meals is higher than the national average. The percentage of pupils with Special Educational Needs is also above the national average. The vast majority of pupils are white British. There are an above average number of pupils within the school with complex needs.
- The school has experienced a period of stability in leadership. The Headteacher has been in post since November 2017 following a period of instability and successive changes in headship.
- The school has strengthened its leadership capacity with a second RE leader since the last inspection. This has brought wider experience and greater capacity to drive the school forward.
- St Aelred's is part of the Margaret Clitherow Multi Academy Trust.
- 41% of the pupils are baptised Catholic.

WHAT DOES THE SCHOOL NEED TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- Improve pupils' contribution to and benefit from the Catholic life of the school by :
 - Widening and developing pupils' participation in evaluating the Catholic life of the school and its future direction.
 - Strategically plan so there is greater impact and commitment to developing Catholic Social Teaching across the school and into the wider curriculum.
- Improve Collective Worship by:
 - Creating more opportunities for staff and pupils to experience and lead worship/prayer in a variety of formats and approaches.
 - Responding to pupil voice to further develop opportunities for daily worship outside of the classroom, including experiencing retreats.
- Improving the teaching of Religious Education by:
 - Improving further the quality of written work for some pupils so there is greater consistency across the school.
 - Improving the consistency of teachers' ability to plan for tasks which clearly match the intended learning outcomes.
 - Create more opportunities for pupils with Special Educational Needs to make progress, by adapting the learning to suit their needs with greater frequency.

CATHOLIC LIFE

THE QUALITY OF THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

2

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

2

1

1

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

- Most pupils understand and value the Catholic mission of the school to be a family of God, living life in all its fullness. Most can, at an age-appropriate level, talk about what this means and how they can contribute to it through their actions. Pupils can speak about how they value each other and how they should respect others as they are taught to do this. Some pupils could relate their mission to the imagery of their school logo and articulate this with understanding and with respect.
- Many pupils live out the values of the school and display clear respect for each other. They know how to forgive and how to seek forgiveness and they are considerate to the needs of others. The involvement of pupils in evaluating the Catholic Life of the school is not yet embedded.
- Most pupils value leading in the Catholic Life of the school and the 'Mini Vinnies' take their role seriously and actively seek to help others in the community less fortunate. There are many examples of their good work in supporting the local St Vincent de Paul Society (SVP). They are very humble and do not seek acclamation, they simply seek ways to help others. The Mini Vinnies group continues to grow and develop within the school under adult leadership and support.
- The involvement and engagement of the pupils extends into the parish community where they feel valued and where they make important contributions with reading, music and singing.

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

- The importance and value of the Catholic Life of the school is promoted throughout the school through beautiful displays. These show the rich range of experiences and opportunities offered to the pupils. The desire to have the mission of the school is reflected and promoted everywhere around the school.
- Families speak highly of the school and its Catholic Life and the impact that this has on their pupils: how they live out important Christian values. They speak with complete support and appreciation of all that the school does to live out its mission.
- Nurture and support offered to the pupils through effective policies and procedures. This high level of care is witnessed across the whole school. This is evidenced in how all staff care for their pupils and how they treat them.
- There is a deep commitment from leaders to the Church's mission in education. The headteacher, with the support of Senior Leaders, has united the staff in their vision to ensure that the school's mission statement and vision statement are lived out by all.

- New staff are developed through careful support and professional development. Use is also made of diocesan Continued Professional Development (CPD) and staff talk with appreciation of the support they have received. Staff receive varying levels of support to develop their ability to contribute to the Catholic Life of the school. They feel listened to and all feel valued.
- The school has embraced parents into the mission of the school. Parents speak openly about how it is reaffirmed their own faith and how for some the school has brought them 'back to church' as they have witnessed the positive impact on their own pupils. This positive view was shared by parents of varying faith and cultural backgrounds.

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

- Since the last inspection they have brought about a positive shift in culture at the school to achieve its mission in being a family of God, living life in all its fullness - playing, learning and growing, together developing friendship, courage and respect within.
- Governors have shown high levels of commitment a strong sense of responsibility for the Catholic Life of the school – they see it as core to their role. They take an active part in it; both in its development and in reviewing the impact of it. They are regularly in school to review its impact so they can effectively challenge and support the school.
- Distributed leadership exists within St Aelred's; this increases the impact across the school of its Catholic Life. Governance has a clear role and offers high levels of involvement. The Senior Leadership Team drives for improvements and act as role models to the teaching and support staff. The Catholic Life is further improved by leadership from teaching assistants and teachers. All of this demonstrates a wide commitment from the school to ensuring its Catholic Life is at the heart of its work.
- Professional development for all staff is planned for by leaders within the school. Staff receive highly effective professional development, both from the Diocese and through supportive in-school support from more experienced staff.
- Clear and robust systems of monitoring ensure that all aspects of Catholic Life are evaluated and considered so the school remains true to its mission. Leaders have a clear vision for the school and this is lived out in its actions.
- The inclusion and development of Catholic social teaching in the wider curriculum needs to be developed further within strategic plans.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

THE QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

2

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

2

2

2

How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship is good.

- Most pupils respond with some reverence and engage with respect in Acts of Worship and prayer. As pupils progress through the school they develop the confidence and ability to lead their own acts of worship. Evidence shows that across the whole school pupils have regular opportunities to lead liturgies and acts of worship.
- Prayer and worship are well established in the early years where pupils joyfully embrace worship and pray and sing with enthusiasm. They consider the messages in the Gospel and what it means to them at an age-appropriate level. Staff skilfully encourage the pupils to reflect on these messages so that pupils begin to live out these values at an early age.
- Singing is beautiful and greatly enhances and enriches worship. This has been developed over time by leaders in the school so the pupils have rich experiences. Pupils learn a mixture of traditional and modern music to enhance worship. Pupils clearly benefit greatly from the music provision and the parish and parents are greatly appreciative of its value to the school and the parish.
- There is a planned structure and sequence of worship and prayer so the pupils have opportunities to respond to adult-lead worship and also to develop the skills and be given the opportunity to lead their own.
- Pupils take the opportunity to regularly worship with their parish community and regular involvement at family Mass, at the parish church, is encouraged by the school and responded to positively by pupils and parents. Parents and parishioners speak with tremendous positivity about the school's role in these Masses and the sense of joy and pride they bring to the parish community.
- Pupils enjoy leading prayer and regularly volunteer to give up their lunchtimes to lead prayer services for younger pupils. They take responsibility for this and feel their role is valued. Pupils value the prayer life of the school.
- The school considers carefully the liturgical year and how the pupils can experience and benefit from it with well planned activities, services and opportunities for the pupils

The quality of provision for Collective Worship is good.

- Collective Worship is good at St Aelred's. There are regular, well planned opportunities for pupils to pray and benefit from worship across the school.
- Staff are able to lead pupils, so the pupils have the skills and knowledge themselves to lead liturgies. Staff have been well supported by leaders of the school and the parish priest. As result of this support, they feel confident and that their contribution to the prayer life of the school is valued. The evidence collected reflects this.
- Evidence collected showed that for the vast majority of the pupils their experience was of a four-part liturgy and the school is ready to explore other forms of worship and prayer to broaden the experiences of the pupils and of staff.
- Sacred spaces across the school, in every classroom, are beautiful areas of focus for the pupils and staff. The investment in them clearly show they are valued and respected.
- Music enhances the provision across the school. It is used thoughtfully to create the appropriate atmosphere for prayer and reflection. This can be simply to listen and reflect to and also through singing to uplift the experience. Staff and leaders recognise its importance and ensure it is used to strengthen the experience for pupils.

How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship is good.

- Leaders have established a clear system for evaluating the provision for Collective Worship. This includes observations and discussions with pupils. As a result, leaders know the quality and can report with confidence and accuracy to Governors.
- Leaders have a good understanding of how to deliver effective and meaningful Collective Worship. They have extended the leadership team so there is a greater depth of experience and knowledge of the Church's liturgical year, its seasons and feasts. As a result, there is a clear drive to ensure they remain a focus throughout the school year
- Leaders proactively model and demonstrate Collective Worship and are witnesses of their commitment to other staff.
- The school seeks meaningful opportunities to promote the spiritual life of the school with parents/carers. Use of the school's social media has helped share how pupils embrace worship and how it is important to the school so parents to feel included and welcome. Many acts of worship are concluded with actions and responses to be taken home to involve parents and to spread the positive messages the pupils receive.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

THE QUALITY OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

2

- 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.

2

2

2

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

- The majority of pupils make good progress over time. Most pupils show engagement in their lessons and a willingness to learn and to respond, improving their knowledge understanding and skills.
- Most pupils work hard in lessons and sustain good levels of focus and concentration. In some classes pupils rely heavily on constant teacher encouragement, and support to remain on task. Teachers provide clear scaffolding and modelling for pupils to help them achieve and make progress. Adults supporting pupils with additional or complex needs, do so sensitively and with great skill.
- When pupils lost focus or didn't have the resilience needed, all adults are skilful in trying to re-engage the pupils in their learning. They often did this with great sensitivity and skill to help the pupils resume learning.
- Where learning was better, the teachers had established clear expectations and a strong work ethic from the pupils so the pupils could concentrate for greater periods of time and work with independence. This has clearly been established for many pupils and they responded well to this.
- In the majority of lessons, the pupils are engaged and they remain on task talking clearly about how they will achieve what is expected of them.

The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education is good.

- Teachers are clear as to expectations and these clearly match the required expectations of the curriculum. Teachers plan with age-related expectations in mind so that pupils learn what is expected of them. At times, some learning tasks are not clearly matched to the intended learning outcome so the pupils could learn better. In some lessons, teachers do not adapt the task and the learning outcome with sufficient frequency to enable more vulnerable learners to achieve more.
- The sense of team work is apparent with the whole staff clearly committed to helping the pupils learn. They communicate well with each other, sharing lesson expectations and discussing progress and achievement of the pupils.
- There were some very good examples of skilful teaching where deeper concepts were built over time with careful questioning and sequenced learning so the pupils were developing deeper thinking and reasoning skills. They are supported with clear models and examples.

- There were some variations in the quality of written work in some classes and for some groups of pupils. The quality of written work is not yet consistently good across the whole school.
- The school has worked on a common approach to 'working walls.' These were very well presented with consistency across the school and used in lessons to enable pupils to understand and remember key concepts. They provided valuable support. Skilled teachers often drew learning back to the learning walls and this has clearly been established as pupils would refer to them to help with their learning.
- The subject knowledge of teachers was strong and in the better lessons, teachers skilfully used prior learning to help pupils build upon it to strengthen new learning. Teachers were good at ensuring pupils had a good understanding and recall of key religious vocabulary and they could draw upon it and express it to make progress in lessons.

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

- Leaders have ensured that the school meets the requirements of the Bishop's conference and that the minimum of 10% of curriculum time is dedicated to the teaching of RE.
- Leaders are committed to improving progress for their pupils within Religious Education and carefully plan for its improvement. This drive is mirrored by the commitment of the whole teaching and support staff. Support is given to all staff by this leadership team. Leaders are committed to high standards and robust monitoring systems are in place to ensure this happens
- The parish priest, who is also a governor, provides the school with challenge and support and this has been maintained and sustained over a long period of time. As a result, the staff and leaders feel supported and challenged and the governing body has a clear knowledge of the school's outcomes.
- Leaders can take pride in the status of RE within the curriculum as it is clearly the core subject and is resourced so staff can teach and support pupils appropriately.

SUMMARY OF INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

HOW EFFECTIVE THE SCHOOL IS IN PROVIDING CATHOLIC EDUCATION:**2****CATHOLIC LIFE:****2**

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

2

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

1

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

1

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP:**2**

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

2

The quality of provision for Collective Worship.

2

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

2

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION:**2**

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

2

The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education.

2

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

2

School details

School name	St Aelred's Catholic Primary School
Unique reference number	147416
Local authority	City of York
This Inspection Report is produced for the Rt Reverend Terence Drainey the Bishop of Middlesbrough under canon 806 of Canon Law. For voluntary aided schools it also fulfils the responsibility the governing body has to inspect the school under s48 of the Education Act 2005.	
Chair of governors	Jen Hurley
Choose School Leadership Type	Headteacher – Suzanne Ulyett
Date of previous school inspection	July 2018
Telephone number	01904 806075
Email address	office@stael.smccat.org