



Catholic Schools Inspectorate inspection report for
St Clare’s Catholic Primary School, Middlesbrough

URN:142370

Carried out on behalf of the **Right Rev. Terence Patrick Drainey, Bishop of Middlesbrough** on:

Date:11 & 12 October 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	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
The school is fully compliant with all requirements of the diocesan bishop	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
The school has responded to the areas for improvement from the last inspection	Fully

Summary of key findings

What the school does well:

- Thanks to the determined and clear vision of the head teacher and other leaders, the distinct Catholic identity of the school and its commitment to Catholic social teaching are proudly and confidently lived out and celebrated.
- Attainment and progress in religious education across the school is of a very high standard.
- Behaviour is exemplary in all year groups and pupils are polite, enthusiastic and keen to learn and contribute positively to the school community and wider world.

- Prayer life, in a variety of forms, is central to the everyday life of the school and is highly valued by staff, parents and pupils.
- The internal and external learning environment is calm, organised, clean, attractive and tangibly proclaims a flourishing Catholic identity.

What the school needs to improve:

- Ensure that religious education lessons provide opportunities for pupils to demonstrate and use their individual knowledge, opinions and abilities to the full.
- Review the RE curriculum across the school, so that Catholic links and content are clearly threaded through other subjects.

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



St Clare's has a distinct and clearly visible identity as a school where Catholic social teaching is embraced and where all pupils feel valued and cared for. During their visit, inspectors lost count of the number of people who told them the school is 'like a family'. Pupils are able to articulate a strong commitment to trying to live lives that fulfil Christ's message of stewardship for the world, our common home and love of our neighbours. A KS2 pupil told inspectors that, 'We look after the world because it is our home, given to us by God. The climate is changing and if we don't look after the world we won't survive, and how will God feel then?'. Pupils regularly undertake litter collections and turn off lights when rooms are empty. They care for chickens, collect waste food at lunchtime to compost, and make sure taps are turned off. The school offers extensive opportunities for pupils to develop leadership responsibilities. They make sure their voices are heard, expressing concerns to local and national politicians, as well as their own teachers. Behaviour across the school is exemplary, even at times when there is only indirect adult supervision.

The mission of the school, 'Walk in the Light', as well as a more detailed statement explaining its implications, is highly visible. It has been set to music by a member of staff and is sung regularly by pupils. It is embraced enthusiastically by them and the staff and is the root expression of everything the school community does. The school makes every possible effort to include, support and welcome the local and wider community, especially those whose circumstances make their lives more challenging. Numerous charitable organisations have been generously supported just in the last year, including the local hospice, food bank and malnutrition advice centre, Cafod, Big Kids, Save the Children and MacMillan Cancer. The school helps to support a missionary worker in the Congo. Staff are exemplary role models in their relationships with each other and with pupils and parents. The school environment is clean, organised, attractive and comfortable, but is also a vibrant physical

witness to its identity and ethos. The reward system is based on the fruits of the holy spirit, such as gentleness, joy, self-control, faithfulness and kindness. Pupils are recognised for showing these virtues with special badges and Marvellous Me messages to home.

All leaders, especially the head teacher and deputy head teacher, supported by governors and officers from the Nicholas Postgate trust, have a clear understanding of the school and its mission within the wider Church. They put Christ at the centre of all decisions taken and are serious about their responsibilities. The school is an active supporter of the diocese and always engages in opportunities that are offered to enhance participation. The school works closely with other schools and has excellent links with its parish communities. Priests based at the Cathedral are almost weekly visitors and are highly valued. The school has numerous ways to communicate with parents and to understand their needs and views. Parents, many of whom are second or even third generation past pupils, are overwhelmingly supportive of the school and appreciate the provision made for their children's religious education, spiritual growth and general well-being. The school's leaders have an accurate understanding of the school and are in a very good position to further improve what it does. The professional development opportunities provided for staff are purposeful and engaging. New members of staff are given effective induction experiences so that they understand the Catholic ethos and expectations of the school.

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 develop an excellent level of religious understanding, appropriate to their age. Almost all pupils make consistent and impressive progress, thanks to teaching which is never less than good. Presentation of work in books is a consistently high quality. Pupils can speak confidently about their learning when given the opportunity. Appropriate to their age, they are able to use religious vocabulary, such as vocation, sacrament, mission, witness and sacrifice. They can comfortably refer to biblical characters and talk about saints such as Mother Teresa, Maximilian Kolbe, St Patrick and of course St Clare and St Francis. One pupil in Y6 told inspectors, 'It is really hard to follow God; it takes commitment, but you can find strength in the stories of saints and hymns such as Follow Me and Take My Hand'. Another explained that, in his written account of Jesus meeting John the Baptist, he had chosen not to include the voice of God, 'because the version of the story I used as my source was from John's Gospel, which doesn't mention it'. The carefully planned chaplaincy provision helps all members of the community to flourish in their spiritual journey and share this with others.

Teachers have good subject knowledge. They are committed to ensuring pupils enjoy their lessons. They make good use of assessment to understand the progress of pupils and plan the next steps in their learning. They work with other schools in the trust, to moderate and validate the quality of pupils' work. They keep parents informed about the content of religious education lessons and children's attainment and progress. Pupils know how to use feedback given to them, to improve their work. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and make good progress, given their starting points. Classroom support staff are used effectively and contribute significantly to the success and happiness of pupils in and out of lessons. Pupils are given time in lessons to retrieve previous learning, and to reflect on it and consider its implications before

moving on to the next topic. Inspectors observed some instances where opportunities to extend learning or where pupils could demonstrate their skills in discussions, were missed, because questioning was not focussed enough and teachers sometimes talked for longer than was necessary. Where learning is most successful lessons include concise instructions and input, high quality open questions and tasks, and lots of creative pupil activity.

The head teacher, who shares the role of subject leader with the deputy head teacher, is as one parent remarked, 'an inspiration, takes her role seriously, and is a great role model'. Along with other leaders, she is committed to ensuring all staff, including those who are early in their careers, have professional development opportunities which enhance their subject knowledge and skills. They also make sure that the well-being and mental health of staff and pupils is a priority. Leaders engage fully and enthusiastically with all opportunities available to them to enhance the experience of pupils. They work with other schools in the trust and diocese to share their expertise and spread good practice. The religious education curriculum is well-planned and organised. Governors and trust officers provide appropriate challenge and have systems in place to monitor and evaluate performance. Pupils are given a leadership voice through a large number of established groups such as the mini-vinnies, school council, eco-councillors, headstarters, house captains and head boy and head girl. The school would benefit from the formal identification of links to other subjects, so that the richness of Catholic contributions to culture, history and thought can enhance pupils' learning experiences.

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

1



Pupils are respectful, engaged, and reflective when they pray. Appropriate to their age, they have a detailed understanding of different forms of prayer. Pupils in even the youngest classes understand how to prepare a prayer space and what simple elements should be included. The oldest pupils are very comfortable planning, leading and evaluating liturgies almost independently of adult support. Pupils' singing is exceptional. The choir takes a lead in many celebrations and liturgies, including the termly family Masses in church. Inspectors loved seeing a very young pupil processing the Bible round a circle of classmates, whilst they sang the Alleluia with gusto and saw a KS2 group break into song spontaneously, during a pupil-led worship at the front of the school. Parents, pupils and staff enjoy walking to the church for weekly class Masses. The regular use of prayer journals is a special activity for pupils. One KS2 pupil told inspectors 'This is your time to be alone with God, Jesus, Mary and Joseph and all the family of God, even our great grandparents who have died. It is your time to be in heaven'. Pupils respond well to a variety of opportunities to pray privately, including in the chapel.

There are a variety of forms of prayer and liturgy used routinely throughout the year. A particularly successful initiative has been the Big Kid sessions at lunchtimes. Pupils told inspectors they enjoyed these very much. The mini-vinnies group join the chaplaincy team to help organise things like the carol service, lenten walk, rosary prayer sessions, and stations of the cross prayer spaces. Staff are exemplary models of practice and participate in prayer and liturgy enthusiastically. They enjoy the opportunities they have for spiritual growth, such as the retreat they undertook to Osmotherly. They confidently help pupils develop skills to take leading roles in prayer liturgy. The school makes imaginative use of the spaces available to it. There is a school chapel, several well-cared for and frequently used prayer tables in the main corridor, a prayer garden which pupils can access at playtime, and a prayer space near the main entrance. Parents and families are included in the prayer

life of the school as much as possible. At key times in the year parents are invited to stay and pray sessions after school and are welcome to attend whole school liturgies such as the harvest celebration, and class and family Masses

The school's policy on prayer and liturgy is reviewed regularly and underpins all planning and provision. Leaders ensure that strategies are in place that help pupils build on their experiences of prayer and liturgy as they move through the school, so that by the time they reach the oldest classes they are completely at ease with participation in prayer. Inspectors were impressed by the recent visits made to Saltburn and Whitby which involved some KS2 pupils praying and singing in public places, much to the astonishment and praise of passers-by. The school's leaders and parish priests have carefully planned activities throughout the liturgical year that allow the whole school community to celebrate significant moments in the Churches life together. These include holy days of obligation, the feast of St Clare, Lent and Advent, Christmas and Easter. Leaders work very closely with the local parish to prepare pupils for the sacraments and provide occasions for them to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation and Eucharist in school. They make sure that Catholic tradition remains part of school life, giving pupils the experience of Benediction, retreats, and processions. Leaders have made the resourcing of liturgy and prayer a priority when setting the budget.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Clare's Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	142370
Full postal address of the school	Trimdon Avenue Acklam Middlesbrough TS5 8RZ
School phone number	01642 815412
Name of head teacher or principal	Mrs Elizabeth Eddies
Acting chair of governing board	Patricia Price
School Website	https://stclares.npcat.org.uk
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	Nicholas Postgate Catholic Academy Trust
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy
Age-range of pupils	4 -11
Trustees	Diocese of Middlesbrough
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	June 2018
Previous denominational inspection grade	1

The inspection team

Mark Brennan	Lead inspector
Angela Phillips	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