

# PARISH OF BLESSED JAMES BELL

*Serving St Benedict's, St Mary's & St Oswald's, Warrington*

Rev Canon Dave Heywood  
Telephone: 01925 630127  
Email: [frdave@rcaol.org.uk](mailto:frdave@rcaol.org.uk)  
Office: [blessedjamesbell@rcaol.org.uk](mailto:blessedjamesbell@rcaol.org.uk)

St Benedict's Priory  
Rhodes Street  
Warrington  
WA2 7QE

28 February 2024

Dear Parents and Carers,

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION INSPECTION

As I'm sure you know, St Oswald's Catholic Primary School was subject to a Section 48 religious inspection by the Catholic Schools Inspectorate on Wednesday 24 & Thursday 25 January 2024.

I am delighted to enclose a copy of the report and to inform you that the inspection team judged our school to be outstanding in every category.

The report shows that the inspectors truly experienced St Oswald's Catholic Primary School as we know it is and acknowledged this in their grading: a special community, where everyone is valued, welcomed, supported and nurtured; where pupils thrive and receive the very best care and education to prepare them for high school and adult life.

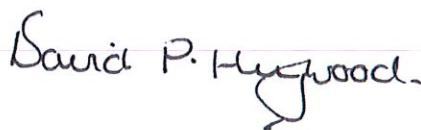
I know you will join me in congratulating and thanking our Head Teacher Ms Lennon, our Religious Education Coordinators Mrs Orwin (Assistant Head Teacher) and Miss Morris (Senior Teacher) and all our wonderful staff, both Teaching and non-Teaching, in achieving this result. It is a testament to the great love, commitment and dedication they have for our school and for every child in their care.

I would also like to thank our Governors – both past and present – who voluntarily give their time, expertise and talents to help make St Oswald's the school we all want it to be.

May I also thank you, both parents and carers, not only for the trust you place in us by sending your child to St Oswald's, but for the support you give to school throughout the year. It is greatly appreciated.

Finally, I would like to say a big 'Thank You' to the children. As Parish Priest and Chair of Governors, I am in the privileged position of meeting with the children on a regular basis. I always leave school feeling uplifted because their manner and care for each other, their love and their goodness, give me great hope today and for the future.

With my thanks and every good wish,



Rev Canon Dave Heywood  
Chair of Governors



## St. Oswald's Catholic Primary School

URN: 111369

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Archbishop of Liverpool

24–25 January 2024

### Summary of key findings

#### 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

### What the school does well

- The school has strong links with the parish and the local community.
- Relationships are nurtured and valued, and all members of the school community feel safe, loved and respected.
- The mission statement is central and at the core of all that the school does.
- The teachings of Jesus are at the heart of St. Oswald's and pupils understand how these have meaning in their lives.
- Practice within Early Years gives pupils the best start in their journey of faith.

### What the school needs to improve

- Provide pupils with strategies to reflect on their learning, with a particular link to their written feedback and how they can improve their work.
- Increase questioning opportunities during lessons to enable teachers to expect deep responses and therefore elicit incisive questions from the children.

- 
- Encourage more pupils to produce work of a consistently high-quality including excellence in presentation.

## 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

**Pupil outcomes**

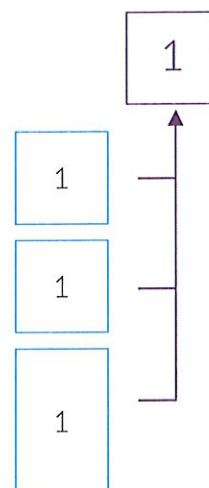
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

**Provision**

The quality of provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school

**Leadership**

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school



The Catholic life and mission at St. Oswald's is evident in all aspects of school life from the moment you enter the school. Positive relationships at all levels are built on mutual respect and love. Parents believe that every part of school life has a strong thread of religion, thoughtfulness and care for each other. There is a strong commitment to Catholic Social Teaching. Pupils recognise that they are following in the footsteps of Jesus and can reflect on this in their relationships, attitudes, and behaviour. The pupils are at the heart of the community, and they accept the responsibility to fulfil their Catholic mission. They support the parish through growing fruit and vegetables, which are donated to the church each year for parishioners to enjoy. Pupils organise afternoon tea for parishioners. They also produce prayer reflections for use at church. Their love and the care towards others is tangible throughout the school. Pupils work together to support Mary's Meals, Operation Christmas Child, Good Shepherd, and the local foodbank. Pupils speak enthusiastically of the actions taken in working towards the *LiveSimply* Award and speak about how to live sustainably and support the poor communities around the world. They demonstrate a respect for themselves and the faiths and beliefs of other pupils.

The school's mission, "Together we love, learn, respect and appreciate" is rooted in the ethos of the school. Pupils can articulate what it means to them and how to live it out in their lives. The entire school environment is a showcase of its mission and values. The inspiring gardens, which include a prayer and peace garden are unique to St. Oswald's and provide opportunities for prayer and reflection. These areas are also a source for welcoming the community into the school. The quality of the prayers, photographs and religious artwork in corridors and shared areas, contribute positively to the formation of the pupils, providing a continual sign of the Catholic character of the school. Leaders and governors have a shared vision that permeates all aspects of school life as they continually strive to be active participants in the formation of the

Catholic life. The Headteacher ensures that staff well-being is given the highest priority and the level of care and support offered by leaders is appreciated by staff. The provision of relationships, sex and health education is thoroughly planned and reflective of archdiocesan policy. Parents are informed of the content of the programme and are encouraged to review the content of the programme at regular intervals throughout the year.

Leaders and governors are deeply committed to ensuring that Christ is at the centre of all their work and to developing the Catholic faith life of the pupils in their care. Governors are actively involved in the school life and are ambitious for the school. They visit regularly and the link governor meets with the subject leader ensuring that the subject remains at the core of the school. Leaders and governors engage with the archdiocese, participating in the services they offer. Staff have worked hard to promote strong links with other schools and with the parish. The parish priest offers great support and is valued highly by all stakeholders. The school fully embraces the principle of parents as first educators and actively supports them in living out the mission with their children. One parent commented, "My child is so enthusiastic to tell me about the school's mission and understands how they contribute to the school community. It is so encouraging as a parent to see my child grow with these values." Cross curricular links are made with religious education in personal, social and health education. Policies and practices are fully in place, which prioritise Catholic life and mission.

## Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

### Religious education key judgement grade

**Pupil outcomes**

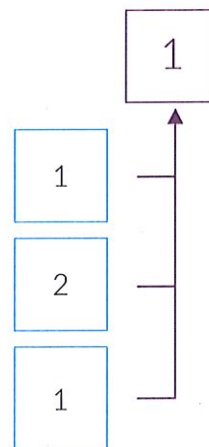
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

**Provision**

The quality of teaching, learning, and assessment in religious education

**Leadership**

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



Pupils are developing excellent knowledge, understanding and skills. They make good progress, which is in line with other core subjects. They are actively engaged in their lessons and enjoy learning. Pupils talk enthusiastically about their lessons. They work well both in collaboration and independently. One pupil said that their religious education lessons help them to become closer to Jesus; another said that the different activities in the lessons help them with learning about their own faith as well as the faiths of others. Pupils also receive support from additional adults so that they reach their full potential. This is a particular strength for those pupils with additional needs. Members of the *Mini Vinnies* speak confidently about their work beyond the curriculum, giving examples of their recent tasks, which focused on environmental issues and reaching out to those in need. Learning behaviour of the pupils throughout the school is strong, which enables them to learn and to work creatively. In one lesson, the Scripture was brought to life because teachers scaffolded opportunities for pupils to become immersed in their learning. This motivated them to become curious and they enjoyed the challenge of learning.

Teachers are committed to religious education, and most are confident in their subject knowledge. They celebrate effort and achievement and provide pupils with opportunities to present learning in a variety of ways. Planning is linked to pupils' assessment so that pupils learn well. There are good examples of pupil knowledge being challenged and extended across key stage two with reference to the use of Scripture and its relevance to their lives. Where teachers use questioning skilfully, pupils thrive, and their learning is maximised within lessons and across units of work. Effort and achievement are celebrated, and staff clearly communicate the high priority placed on religious education. The emphasis on spiritual and moral development is strong. Pupils produce good work that is well presented, but this needs to be of a consistently high quality to reflect the teaching and key activities outlined. Pupils understand how well they

are doing but need to articulate fully how they have made progress. They need to be provided with additional opportunities to reflect on their learning through written feedback. The strong leadership and the commitment of the staff will ensure that this happens and becomes a priority.

Leaders ensure that the school curriculum reflects the expectations of the current Religious Education Curriculum Directory and that all classes cover the required content. Leaders and governors ensure religious education is comparable with other core subjects in terms of resourcing, timetabling and staffing. The curriculum is well-designed, appropriately resourced and is planned in line with the requirements of the new Religious Education Directory. Consequently, religious education is clearly a priority at the school. The new Religious Education Directory has been implemented in the Early Years. St. Oswald's takes full advantage of training from the archdiocese and works strongly with the Warrington cluster schools on a variety of religious education activities particularly in planning and moderation. The leadership of religious education is effective. The religious education leaders are fully committed to the role and approach their responsibilities with flair and drive. Staff have said that they feel supported by the subject leaders who provide strategic vision and are always there to help. Through excellent pastoral care, the school provides a wide range of enrichment activities that support pupil development within religious education. As one staff commented, "No child is left out at St. Oswald's." The school's own self-evaluation is highly reflective and evaluative of where it needs to improve.

## Collective worship

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

### Collective worship key judgement grade

**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

1

Pupils are deeply engaged in all experiences of prayer and liturgy. They are reverent with Scripture, attentive and value the opportunities that the school provides to develop their understanding and participation in a wide variety of prayer. The use of Scripture throughout the school helps pupils to understand how prayer plays a central part in their lives. From the early years, pupils are provided with a variety of opportunities to interact with prayer. Prayer and liturgy are threaded into all aspects of school life and is celebrated. One parent stated that prayer and liturgy within the school has brought herself closer to Church again. She appreciates how the school helps her in guiding her child's faith in a way she cannot do at home. Staff are skilled in helping pupils to plan and to guide prayer. From an early age, pupils work independently to set up their own prayer and liturgy spaces. These are places where they can reflect on the experience of prayer and how it is relevant in their own lives. They are also able to speak with confidence when discussing how they select which prayers and hymns to use during these special times.

The school offers a range of liturgical celebrations throughout the year and these experiences reflect the prayer life of the Church. The strong links between the Church and the parish community enables plenty of opportunities to bring the community together for special occasions. The relationship that the school has with the priest is a real celebration and enables prayer to be central to the school's mission. Pupils are given the opportunity to pray in a range of ways including teacher and child led song, silence and reflection. The artwork around the school focusing on the creation and God's world is testimonial to the prayer life of the school. High quality resources are used creatively and help engage the pupils in meaningful ways. The use of the school gardens including the prayer and peace garden enables pupils to experience the awe and wonder of God's creation. Parents are invited to school to the 'rejoice' celebrations.

Key liturgical celebrations are also inclusive of the wider community and parishioners are appreciative of this inclusivity. During liturgy and worship the pupils when going forth often create prayer cards which are taken to the church and shared with the parishioners.

Prayer and liturgy is the central focus for leaders at St. Oswald's, built on strong relationships with the parish. All staff, guided by the headteacher and subject leaders are role models and fully support the pupils' development of prayer and reflection. This enables pupils to acquire the relevant skills to lead their own worship with confidence. The pupils are at the heart of every decision made, including areas identified for continued improvement. Governors also prioritise provision for prayer, liturgy and worship to uphold the Catholic life of the school. The parish priest ensures that celebrations and holy days are marked to enable further opportunities to bring the school community together. Parishioners act as leaders of prayer and support the school in delivering the sacramental programme. Prayer resources are sent home to develop and celebrate prayer in pupils' families, and to focus on celebrating liturgical celebrations throughout the year. Policies are evident within the provision for prayer and liturgy and ensure consistency in the planning and relevance of prayer across all key stages. Continued professional development is planned with a particular focus on staff who are new to school and to early career teachers. This enables further enrichment of the existing quality of prayer and liturgy.

## Information about the school

Full name of school	St. Oswald's Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	111369
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	8773612
Full postal address of the school	St. Oswald's Catholic Primary School, Padgate Lane, Padgate, Warrington, WA1 3LB
School phone number	01925 813015
Headteacher	Ms. Helen T. Lennon
<b>Chair of Governors</b>	Rev. Canon David Heywood
School Website	<a href="http://www.stoswaldscatholicprimary.co.uk">www.stoswaldscatholicprimary.co.uk</a>
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	N/A
Phase	Primary
Type of school	Voluntary Aided School
Admissions policy	N/A
Age-range of pupils	4-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	31 January 2017
Previous denominational inspection grade	Outstanding

## The inspection team

Karl Landrum  
Joanne Farrimond

Lead  
Team

## 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