

**CONSULTANCY REPORT FOR
ST ALBERT'S CATHOLIC
PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Name of School:	St Albert's Catholic Primary School
Headteacher/Principal:	Lorraine McEvoy
Hub:	Aspire
School type:	Voluntary Aided Catholic School
MAT (if applicable):	N/A

Date of this visit:	23/06/2021
Estimate at last QA Review:	N/A
Date of last QA Review:	N/A
Grade at last Ofsted inspection:	Good
Date of last Ofsted inspection:	22/12/2016

1. Information about the visit

In place of a QA Review, St Albert's Catholic Primary School was visited by a Lead Reviewer who spent two days reviewing the following areas with them:

- Middle/subject leadership
- Curriculum, with a particular emphasis on the recovery curriculum

2. Information about the school

St Albert's Catholic Primary School is a one-form entry primary school situated in Stockbridge Village, between Liverpool and Knowsley. The school is identified as being in the top 10% of the most deprived areas in the country and is in the highest deprivation area in the borough.

The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is significantly above the national average, as is the proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL). There is an increasing number of EAL pupils from Poland and Eastern Europe, as well as from Africa. The school has an on-site nursery and provision for two-year olds in Alby Tots.

The school's mission to 'love, learn, serve' pervades everything in the school 'with the child at the centre'.

Leaders work closely and collaboratively with the Central Area Heads (CAH) network that provides an extensive wealth of supportive continuing professional development (CPD). Leaders at all levels take full advantage of the opportunities to exchange ideas and deepen their subject knowledge.

3.1 Middle/subject leadership – What went well

- Senior leaders are tenacious role models to the rest of the staff. They are relentless in their quest for the best and this is demonstrated by their drive and determination to provide an excellent education for every pupil, regardless of any barriers. This results in a tight-knit staff that works in close harmony together with a high degree of mutual professional trust. The consequences of the pandemic are viewed as positive learning opportunities, referred to by the headteacher as 'unexpected silver linings', such as strengthened relationships with parents, families and a heightened sense of belonging within the community.

- Subject leaders are knowledgeable and confident, leading their areas with competency and pride, due to qualifications such as NPQML. Succession planning is built in to increase leadership capacity, and there are several examples of new and inexperienced leaders shadowing longstanding leaders. For example, a teacher who shadowed the leader for modern foreign languages is now in charge of this area. There are opportunities for movement across subject areas; for example, the current science leader has led a number of other curricular areas previously, which is enabling him to transfer his leadership skills seamlessly.
- CPD has played a pivotal role in reviewing the curriculum to ensure that the progression of skills and knowledge is cumulative. Staff have all received training on metacognition and bespoke CPD in their own subject areas. Subject leaders know that the intent of the curriculum is taught well because of their insightful use of information from effective monitoring activities, such as work scrutinies. They RAG-rate their action plans which helps them to identify and share best practice and plan next steps. Distributed leadership is demonstrated through subject leaders' ability to self-evaluate and monitor performance autonomously. Every subject leader knew the strengths and areas for development for their own subject.
- The history leader has created highly effective revision maps that include key vocabulary and knowledge, relevant artefacts and significant people. Parents have commented how useful these revision maps are in consolidating their children's learning at home. Higher attaining pupils receive in-depth challenges to increase their independent research skills, for example including enquiry style questions to stretch those pupils working at greater depth.
- Early reading is taught and led well. As a result of successful strategies such as personalised, flexible interventions and books that are matched to phonics learning, the lowest attaining children catch up quickly.
- All subject leaders are exceptionally passionate about leading their subjects and they hold colleagues to account. The science leader is very proud of teachers' knowledge and enjoyment of teaching science. The information stations that are consistent in every classroom provide pupils with opportunities to deepen their understanding about concepts that interest them. For example, a Year 4 pupil's interest in the recent solar eclipse prompted a rich discussion about space. The science leader said, 'When pupils are having fun, that's when they are learning!'; for example, learning the names of body parts and bones through exploring a model skeleton. All subject leaders believe that it is their responsibility to prepare pupils for life by inspiring them through memorable activities.

3.2 Middle/subject leadership – Even better if...

...the school's self-evaluation, monitoring and development planning documentation demonstrated the impact of leaders' actions more explicitly.

...leaders articulated the impact of their actions more concisely.

4.1 Curriculum, with a particular emphasis on the recovery curriculum - What went well

- The dynamic and passionate headteacher has modelled a unique style for the recovery curriculum, believing that 'it was important to slow down in order to catch up.' Thus, the curriculum is based on the academic and emotional needs and interests of the current pupils.
- Topics begin with a 'wow' experience to inspire pupils of all abilities to engage fully, such as a man in a polar bear suit to introduce the topic of plastic in the oceans and climate change! Knowledge organisers have been reviewed and improved over time. Other schools in the CAH network have benefited from these improvements and many are using the St Albert's model in their own schools. Refinements include ensuring that all vocabulary is progressive throughout the school and that specific words are not repeated in subsequent year groups. For example, 'monarch' appears in the history curriculum at Key Stage 1 and 'monarchy' at Key Stage 2. Pupils are expected to learn and remember the appropriate vocabulary at the right time. The science leader is implementing innovative strategies, such as science stories and retrieval grids which are linked to the knowledge organisers to extend their use even further.
- Pupils spoke eloquently and with great pride about their school and the leadership roles that they hold. They are appreciative of the catch-up sessions that take place after school, because 'they help us to close any gaps in our learning caused by the lockdown periods.' Pupils demonstrate well-defined knowledge and understanding of equality and diversity. For example, one pupil said, 'We don't judge colour or race here. We judge people for who they are and always give everyone a chance.' Pupils described their teachers as being 'really helpful, showing lots of support and kindness.' They all unanimously agreed that the headteacher makes sure that they 'have great teachers and great teaching.'
- There is an excellent team approach to the provision for pupils with SEND and those who are disadvantaged. The SENDco leads provision for pupils with SEND very effectively. She has made many adaptations to the curriculum to enable disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND to succeed. She deliberately works with numbers not percentages, saying that 'numbers are names of individual pupils.' She tracks progress rigorously. The learning mentors and teaching assistants (TAs) provide excellent support and guidance to pupils. For example, extra resources, such as sensory boxes, wobble boards and weighted blankets,

have been introduced to calm any anxieties caused by the lockdown periods. Due to TAs' participation in the Education Endowment Trust training on maximising the impact of teaching assistants, the support staff make a significant difference in accelerating learning and are viewed as an extremely valuable resource.

- The application of basic skills across the curriculum is embedded. For example, history and geography books have a list of 'golden rules' at the front, clearly outlining the same high expectations of presentation, spelling and punctuation that are insisted upon in the core subjects. This strategy acts as a constant reminder and so is promoting consistency across the curriculum.
- There is a whole school road map for history and geography. This is constantly reviewed and adapted; for example, the geography leader has added Russia into the Year 6 curriculum to prepare pupils for the in-depth study on Russia that they will encounter in Key Stage 3. The leader has identified mapping skills as a school-wide strength from her recent work scrutiny. Every effort is made to link the geography curriculum with the origins of the pupils with EAL so that they learn appropriate geographical skills when studying aspects of their own culture and heritage.

4.2 Curriculum, with a particular emphasis on the recovery curriculum – Even better if...

...pupils had more opportunities to articulate their learning journey through using specific vocabulary.

5. What additional support would the school like from the Challenge Partners network, either locally or nationally?

- The leaders are happy with the support that they currently access.

This visit will support the school's continuing improvement. The main findings will be shared within the school's hub in order that it can inform future activities.