

St Vincent's Catholic Primary School

URN: 148289

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Bishop of Brentwood

24–25 April 2024

Summary of key findings

Overall effectiveness

The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school

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

Yes

The school is fully compliant with all requirements of the diocesan bishop

Yes

The school has responded to the areas for improvement from the last inspection

Fully

1

What the school does well

- Pupils are wonderful ambassadors for the school; they speak articulately about their Catholic life and their religious education.
- Parents and staff value highly the flourishing sense of community with Catholic education at its heart and central to all it does.
- Pupils plan, lead and evaluate prayer and liturgy with increasing skill as they progress through the school and they reflect deeply on scripture.
- The school's leadership is exceptionally strong, with a robust focus on inclusion and the pastoral needs of pupils and families.
- Governors place the highest priority on the evaluation of all aspects of Catholic life; they are extremely pro-active and ensure there are rigorous systems in place to positively impact on pupils' learning.

What the school needs to improve

- Develop a cohesive Catholic curriculum with leaders of different subject areas working together to plan opportunities to make connections between discrete subjects with religious education at its core.
- Ensure that the prayer and liturgy policy reflects the requirements of the new *Prayer and Liturgy Directory* and is written in such a way that makes it accessible and useful to relevant staff, who will use it consistently as a reference point when preparing prayer and liturgy.

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

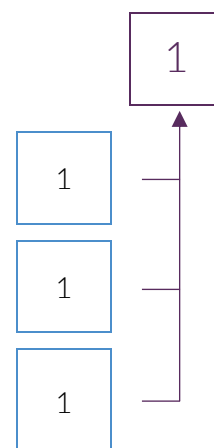
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

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



Pupils understand and fully embrace the Catholic identity and mission of the school. St Vincent's mission statement, 'We Welcome, we love, we learn, we grow - together with Jesus', is articulately explained by the pupils. Additionally, pupils embody the core values of the school. Their actions, demonstrating these core values, are celebrated weekly in the Friday assembly. Pupils know that they are created in God's image. This is particularly evident in the Early Years Foundation Stage floor books in their focus on Creation and Covenant. Pupils clearly express that they follow Jesus and provide excellent examples in their Spiritual Journals. One Year 5 pupil wrote, 'I will try to teach people how loving and generous Jesus is'. Pupils actively respond to the demands of Catholic social teaching and they are able to explain the theology that underpins their actions. A Year 2 pupil was able to explain that Pope Francis wrote a letter called *Laudato Si'* and therefore 'we need to care for the world God made.' However, pupils now need to take a greater leading role in pro-actively finding ways of responding to the demands of Catholic social teaching. Pupils show a deep respect for each other and behaviour is exemplary. They value highly the chaplaincy provision of the school. Pupil chaplains are great ambassadors and take a leading role across the school.

The mission statement is clear and lived throughout the school. Pupils, staff and governors are involved in reviewing this mission. When writing about the mission statement, one Year 3 pupil wrote, 'at St Vincent's we love the people, like God'. Staff enthusiastically participate in all activities relating to the mission of the school. One member of staff explained, 'Christ is at the centre of everything we do and is truly present in all of our lessons and reflections. This school is always welcoming to all and it can be felt in every aspect of school life. Children are always eager to learn and have deep conversations with adults'. St Vincent's provides an exceptionally

strong sense of welcome and community. The school's cultural days and curriculum activities, such as work on refugees based on the book *Boy Everywhere*, further enhance the sense of welcome and inclusivity. Staff are exemplary role models and there are excellent relationships across the whole school. Staff who work with the pupils with additional needs provide remarkable care and love. Pastoral care is extraordinary and parents provide passionate testimonies regarding the head teacher, deputy head teacher and special educational needs co-ordinator, who are always available to listen. The school offers a very good range of pastoral interventions including Rainbows, a children's mentor, a Thrive Practitioner, Lego therapy and nurture support. The school's environment effectively witnesses to the Catholic character of the school, including a reflective focal area in the school's entrance and poignant displays throughout. The school meets the diocesan and statutory requirements for relationship, sex and health education and there is a recently-reviewed policy in place.

Leaders and governors clearly articulate the Church's mission. They work tirelessly to ensure the school's part in this mission is at the heart of all they do. Leaders and governors embrace and actively promote the bishop's vision for the diocese and pro-actively work with other schools within the Trust. They regularly attend diocesan training, which is clearly impacting on their actions to ensure Christ is at the centre of this school. There is a flourishing partnership with the local parish. School and parish worked together to joyfully celebrate the 100th anniversary of the church with the pupils forming a wonderful choir. The school has a range of highly successful strategies to engage with parents, who are confident that any concerns are listened to sympathetically and quickly addressed. One parent summarised their feelings, 'The staff are very helpful and genuinely display care for the children. The teachers also know all their children and have a special bond with them. I really love St Vincent's.' Leaders and governors ensure there is a strong commitment to Catholic social teaching and are particularly supportive towards the most vulnerable pupils in the school. They demonstrate an inspirational commitment to the dignity of workers; ensuring key policies are in place. Staff are appreciative of the support provided by leaders, particularly in regard to their well-being. Governors are highly ambitious and emphasise Catholic life and mission as the school priority. They are passionate, with high levels of expertise which result in highly effective and well-organised monitoring and evaluation systems.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

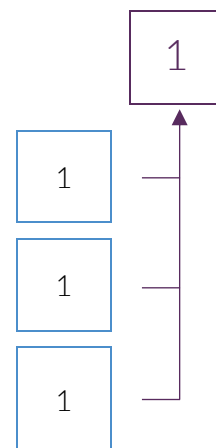
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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 and making consistently good progress, building effectively on prior learning. They remember well and share a great deal of unusual and not well known information. For example on St Mark's feast day, pupils explained that 'Mark was like a son to Peter' and was a close friend and companion to St Paul. They are religiously literate with an ability to think ethically and theologically due to the superb use of Christian art which stimulates and deepens learning experiences. Pupils speak confidently and in full sentences using subject specific vocabulary. They use the Bible naturally and comfortably and are very familiar with scripture. Consequently, pupils see the importance of religious commitment in everyday life. One pupil stated, 'we are being taught step by step how to get closer to Jesus'. Pupils concentrate well and apply themselves fully, asking insightful questions. For example in Year 4 pupils asked 'Why are many things forty days long in the Bible?' Pupils have great respect for their religious education books, and their work is of a consistently high standard. Information technology offers a vast array of opportunities, which clearly motivate pupils and allows them to express themselves creatively. Thoughtful responses and deep insights can be seen within their written work, evidencing their own self-assessment of their learning. Pupils respond well to teacher's feedback and comments, using their green pens, in line with the school's marking policy.

Teachers are confident and have strong subject knowledge. They are experienced and demonstrate expertise in their year groups. All staff have high expectations and are aspirational for their pupils, ensuring questioning is incisive and specific. They support one another in their planning, which builds well on pupils' prior knowledge. Teachers provide pupils with what the learners themselves call 'advice', and ensure that it is relevant; this feedback, via marking, ensures pupils know their next steps and what they need to do to make continued progress.

Teachers are clearly aware that religious education has a profound impact on the moral development of pupils and that religious education deepens spiritual growth. Consequently, they give pupils space and time to reflect, which is evidenced in their Spiritual Journey books. These books show pupils value these opportunities to be creative, or write their thoughts and prayers, or undertake perceptive drawings. Teachers provide extensive opportunities for pupils to present their work in a variety of ways. This ensures pupils are always willing to engage, and they especially value the Christian art resources which staff use to really enhance and deepen understanding. These beautiful visuals along with well-chosen scripture readings, music and signing really dovetail to make the learning of religious education at St Vincent's memorable, impactful and outstanding.

Leaders and governors ensure the school curriculum for religious education is exceptionally well and creatively resourced. Religious education has parity with other core subjects, particularly in regard to timing and presentation of work. Consideration should also be given to consistency in homework in line with other core subjects. Staff value the high level of professional development that they are offered, positively impacting on pupils' learning outcomes, particularly in the Early Years Foundation Stage with the enthusiastic introduction of the new *Religious Education Directory*. Their Nursery and Reception floor books are being shared as examples of excellent practice. The subject leader has an inspiring vision and high level of expertise, which she generously shares with all staff. This impacts teaching and learning, resulting in consistently good teaching across the school. Religious education is imaginatively planned and enhances learning for all. Pupils with additional needs have work adapted to meet their needs. The self-evaluation undertaken by leaders and governors results in strategic actions which lead to outstanding outcomes.

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 engage deeply, are active participants in the many prayer and liturgy opportunities provided and exuberantly sing hymns in whole school assembly and in class liturgies. Pupils are developing a wide range of ways of praying, including traditional prayers and reflection on scripture. They are able to pray in silence and their Spiritual Journals and Journey in Faith floor books provide excellent examples of pupils' own prayers. Older pupils are able to use the Lectio Divina approach to reflect on scripture. Pupils work collaboratively to plan, lead and evaluate prayer and liturgy, with increasing skill throughout Key Stage 2. In Year 4 pupils were able to provide their rationale for the use of scripture, drama and hymns in a prayer and liturgy on new life. They demonstrate great skill in their ability to question their own peers. Pupils reflect on their own experiences and the taught curriculum to confidently articulate their own prayers. In Year 2, one pupil thanked God for his home being a safe place. Other pupils in Year 2 were able to reflect on their learning on the Green Planet Day and thanked God for His creation. Pupils can confidently reflect on their experiences of prayer. Pupil chaplains from Years 5 and 6 were able to explain that when they pray they 'feel calm and we can talk to God' and that prayer helps them to 'grow in the grace and truth of God'.

Prayer is central to the life of St Vincent's. Pupils and staff regularly gather to pray together. One member of staff explained that 'prayer is the beating heart of the school'. There is a naturally embedded pattern of prayer during each day. The use of scripture is well chosen to link with the theme of each prayer and liturgy and is appropriate to the liturgical season. Staff recognise the skill of the head teacher and deputy head teacher, who model prayer and liturgy to a high standard and are excellent role models, encouraging other staff to lead and participate. For example in a whole school assembly on the theme of the Good Shepherd, led by the head teacher, a variety of staff read passages for pupils to meditate and reflect on. Artefacts and

images were used to help pupils to focus. Staff have developed a high level of skill in supporting pupils to plan, lead and evaluate prayer. Pupils use their planning pro-forma with increasing skill and apply their religious education knowledge in this process. Art is used as a focal point and a point of reflection during prayer and liturgy. Music is used for times of reflection and pupils are guided to choose appropriate hymns. Staff are confident and skilful to intervene appropriately to aid the flow of prayer and liturgy planned by pupils. The school has a flourishing partnership with parents, who are encouraged to take part in Mass and attend Friday assemblies. Leaders now need to plan how to work with families to include them more fully in the prayer life of the school.

The school's prayer and liturgy policy is well formulated, but now needs to be developed to reflect the requirements of the new *Prayer and Liturgy Directory*. Leaders and governors ensure pupils attend Mass on holy days of obligation. They have a clear plan of worship opportunities reflecting the liturgical calendar of the church, including the celebration of St Vincent's Feast Day each September. Professional development for prayer and liturgy is given the highest priority and the impact of recent training is seen in the level of pupil skills and the use of Godly Play resources in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The impact of leadership, including pupil chaplains, is exceptionally strong. High priority is given to the evaluation of prayer and liturgy. The highly skilled religious education link governor has supported the school in developing rigorous and systematic monitoring, which has led to improvements in pupil skill and confidence.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Vincent's Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	148289
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	3013506
Full postal address of the school	St Vincent's Catholic Primary School, Burnside Road, Dagenham, RM8 2JN
School phone number	02082706695
Headteacher	Helen Craft
Chair of Local Governing Body	Corinne Adams
School Website	www.st-vincent.barking-dagenham.sch.uk/
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	The Good Shepherd Catholic Trust
Phase	Primary
Type of school	Academy
Admissions policy	Non-Selective
Age-range of pupils	3-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	15 December 2017
Previous denominational inspection grade	1

The inspection team

Mrs Gael Hicks
Mrs Sheila Birtles

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