

St Mary's Catholic Primary School and Nursery

URN: 146867

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Bishop of Brentwood

17–18 January 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

- St Mary's Catholic Primary School and Nursery is firmly founded on the teachings of the Catholic faith, with all members belonging to one extraordinary Christ-centred family.
- Pupils are exemplary role models; they are warm and welcoming, embodying the school's mission and values.
- Pupils' work in religious education is of a consistently high quality; teaching is inspiring and motivating, resulting in positive outcomes.
- Prayer and liturgy permeate all aspects of school life.
- The school's physical environment promotes its Catholic identity, faith and ethos to all.

What the school needs to improve

- To increase the percentage of vulnerable pupils achieving greater depth in religious education.
- To ensure that chaplaincy provision provides opportunities for all pupils' spiritual and moral development.

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

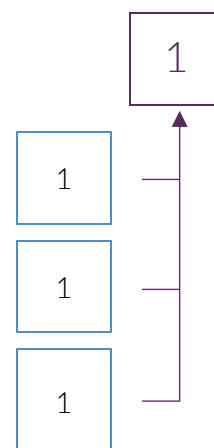
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

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



St Mary's is a welcoming community built on Gospel values and the school mission statement, 'Respect Ourselves, Respect Others, Respect our World, Love God'. Pupils are fully committed to the mission statement; they are key players in living it. Their enthusiasm for and participation in all school activities greatly enhances the Catholic life and mission of the school. Pupils' ability to talk confidently about their commitment to Catholic social teaching is strong and they fully appreciate that they are unique individuals made in the image and likeness of God. They know they are valued and respected, that their voices are heard, their opinions valued, and that they can make change happen. Pupils embrace opportunities to serve their peers and the wider community, taking on leadership roles such as faith councillors, Eco Councillors, school councillors and house captains. They have a solid understanding of God's call to help the most vulnerable members of society and to act as stewards of the world. They know that they can do this in different ways, not just by fundraising, but also by their prayers and actions. 'We can love people', a young pupil commented. A favourite area of the school is God's Garden where all pupils can take care of the plants growing there, putting their faith into action. During the inspection the youngest children were excitedly making homes for their favourite animals. The exemplary behaviour in class and around the school reinforces the respect everyone has for each other.

Along with the simple but highly inspiring mission statement, the school values are clearly evidenced in the daily lives of staff and pupils. Staff commitment to the school is impressive because of the passion and determination of the head teacher, her deputy head teacher, and the governors. The school is a place of inclusion and nurture; as a result, all staff provide exemplary role models for pupils, providing the highest levels of pastoral care and

commitment to the whole community. The school environment beautifully witnesses its Catholic identity and charism. The creative use of spaces, corridors and outdoor areas ensure that pupils are surrounded by an inspirational and faith-filled environment in which to learn and grow. School corridors are filled with visual reminders of their rich Catholic heritage with artwork created by talented pupils sitting alongside established Christian works of art. The Gospel display board where pupils can reflect on the current Gospel reading, adding their own thoughts, is a unique and creative way to develop pupils' faith formation. Provision for relationships, sex and health education is carefully planned and structured to ensure it meets all statutory requirements as well as those of the diocese. It is firmly rooted in the teachings of the Church and care has been taken to share it with parents.

The head teacher, deputy head teacher and governors bear inspirational witness to the Church's mission for education; they are highly ambitious for the school's continuing development. There is a genuine commitment to all the families they serve. Rigorous and robust monitoring, evaluating and reviewing all aspects of school life ensures that leaders are constantly driving the school forward. Leaders have worked hard to strengthen their links with parents who are now welcomed into school regularly to celebrate class liturgies and Mass. A parent commented 'I particularly love how the school have opened their doors to parents to join in the class Mass and also visit the chapel for Stay and Pray.' The parish priest is also a frequent visitor to the school to celebrate key liturgical celebrations and support staff to broaden and strengthen their own knowledge and understanding of theological issues. Leaders and governors are fully committed to the physical and mental well-being of staff and pupils, and structures are firmly embedded to support this.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

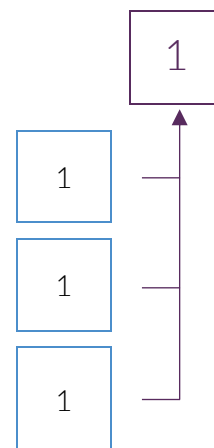
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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 thoroughly enjoy and fully engage in learning during lessons; religious education is an integral part of school life. Pupils live out the words and actions of the religious topics studied and, because of this, their knowledge, skills and understanding are very secure, leading to the best possible outcomes as they journey through the school. Pupils' religious literacy is clearly evident in their discussions in class and in their written work, and they can accurately talk about their learning using subject-specific vocabulary. They confidently and independently recall previous knowledge and effectively use new learning to reflect upon key messages. Younger pupils knew the significance of lighting their class candle for prayer and reflection; they stated that 'Jesus is the light of the world'; older pupils openly discussed links between scripture and their faith in action. Across all year groups, pupils' work is consistently produced to the highest standards; they take great pride in their work. Attainment in religious education is strong, with most pupils achieving or exceeding age-related expectations. Behaviour is exemplary in all classes.

Teachers are confident and knowledgeable, have high expectations and are committed to creating challenging, ambitious lessons which inspire pupils to reflect more deeply. This passion for the subject is communicated to pupils and impacts on their moral and spiritual development, ensuring they understand their role as active global citizens. There is a consistency in approach to planning, provision and display work that can be seen across all year groups. Lessons are creative and there are a range of ways in which pupils can present learning including role-play, responding to religious art, writing for a range of purposes and scriptural analysis. Teachers are skilful in checking understanding and addressing any misconceptions quickly and effectively. The constant use of retrieval practice in lessons ensures concepts are embedded. Questioning is used to strengthen and challenge pupil

understanding. Pupils explain their responses by giving examples, linking ideas to scripture and explaining how it helps develop their faith formation. The deployment of skilled and dedicated teaching assistants plays a key part in ensuring that pupils can be successful learners. Most teachers adhere to the school's teaching, learning and assessment policy, recognising and valuing pupils' efforts; teachers' model, encourage and support pupils to do their best, and provide next steps. Staff have opportunities to work with colleagues, in school and across the Trust, to assess and moderate pupils' work, ensuring teacher assessments are accurate.

Leaders and governors are ensuring that there is a smooth transition from the *Religious Education Curriculum Directory* to the *Religious Education Directory*, and that learning is effectively sequenced. Leaders and governors prioritise the teaching and learning in religious education in school development and have an insightful level of expertise. Leaders systemically undertake detailed monitoring which leads to well-targeted improvements, and feedback is helpful. Staff and pupils are also involved in the monitoring process. Leaders and governors evaluate this feedback, ensuring that the quality of provision continues to develop and improve. The resourcing of religious education is comparable with that of other core subjects. Alongside the very supportive headteacher, the deputy headteacher, who is also the subject leader, has a clear and accurate understanding of the strengths and areas for development and takes robust and effective action to secure improvements. Her vision for the subject is inspiring; she is dedicated to sustaining the excellent quality of provision. The subject leader ensures all staff are up-to-date with their subject knowledge, and continuous professional development is carefully and meaningfully planned. She readily shares her knowledge and expertise with colleagues, enabling them to develop their practice; this is particularly evident with teachers new to the profession and Catholic education.

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

St Mary's is a prayerful and praying community, and all pupils are fully engaged participants in the wide range of opportunities they are given. They sing joyfully and pray with deep reverence. Pupils have a good knowledge of different forms of prayer including a rich variety of Catholic prayers and more personal moments. They confidently articulate how praying, both individually and as a community, deeply impacts their daily lives. They regularly take advantage of the high-quality special places around the school, and the calm atmosphere of the chapel to reflect and spend time with God. Pupil leadership of prayer and liturgy is well established at St Mary's, with pupils taking on liturgical ministries with great confidence. During the inspection a group of pupils planned and led a class celebration about the Bible. The celebration was very well researched and used carefully-chosen scripture passages, and music to keep their peers focused and attentive. It was further enhanced and spiritually uplifting when each pupil was invited to place a hand on their Bible and silently reflect. In another class pupils used prayer stones, individually inscribed with motivating and inspiring words, to enhance their prayer experience. Pupils confidently talk about how their prayers have inspired them to action as seen in their response to support the local foodbank. A recent initiative by a member of the Faith Council to provide each class with a Prayer Bear, which they take home to share with their parents, is very popular, and has encouraged pupils to write their own prayers for the class prayer book, some in pupils' home languages.

The centrality of prayer and liturgy is clearly evident across all aspects of school life. The daily pattern of prayer ensures that each day starts and ends in prayer, and is cherished as a time of calm. The rich provision for prayer and liturgy impacts significantly in developing the spiritual life of all within the community and allows pupils to experience a wide range of experiences. The head teacher and her senior colleagues are inspirational role models in leading pupils in

prayer and worship. All staff are confident and highly skilled in helping pupils plan and lead liturgies which are meaningful and joyous. The use of scripture in prayer and liturgy is well established across the school, and scripture passages are carefully chosen to enhance pupils' prayer experiences, with music being an integral part of celebrations. Displays around the school and the prayer areas in each classroom are vibrant and supportive of prayer life. Strong links with the parish have resulted in classes joining parishioners in church where pupils serve by reading and acting as altar servers. Parents are encouraged to join their children for Stay and Pray sessions, and a travelling crib shared with families during Advent is very popular and encourages family prayer time at home.

St Mary's has a carefully crafted policy for prayer and liturgy. It is reviewed regularly by the head teacher and subject leader, and is accessible to and useful for staff when planning celebrations. Further success of the policy is clearly seen in pupils' ability to lead and evaluate worship and how they embrace the opportunity to do so. The school calendar is carefully put together to ensure that there are many opportunities to celebrate the Eucharist throughout the year and to include major Church events. Pupils speak enthusiastically of celebrating their class saint's day and Mary's birthday with cake. Pupils also have the opportunity for the Sacrament of Reconciliation during Advent and Lent. High priority is given by school leaders and governors to professional development; as a result, staff feel well supported: 'The support we are given by our leaders is well informed and empowering.' Self-evaluation is accurate and rigorous and is always followed up, ensuring that improvement is continuously made, allowing the school to sustain outstanding provision and outcomes.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Mary's Catholic Primary School and Nursery
School unique reference number (URN)	146867
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	8833522
Full postal address of the school	St Mary's Catholic Primary School and Nursery, Calcutta Road, Tilbury, RM18 7QH
School phone number	01375843254
Headteacher	Victoria McBrown
Chair of Governors/Trustees	Mrs S Yeboah-Jackson
School Website	www.stmarystilbury.co.uk
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	Christus 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	14 th June 2017
Previous denominational inspection grade	1

The inspection team

Mrs. Angela Podmore
Miss. Isabel Quinn

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