



DIOCESE OF **Arundel and Brighton**

DENOMINATIONAL (S48) INSPECTION REPORT

St Edmund's Catholic Primary School

Address: The Drive, Godalming, Surrey, GU7 1PT

Telephone: 01483 414497

Email address: info@stedmunds.surrey.sch.uk

School Unique Reference Number: 125216

Headteacher:	Mrs Elizabeth Higgins
Chair of Governors:	Dr Mark Farrar
Lead Inspector:	Mrs Ann Oddy
Associate Inspector:	Mrs Frances Novis

Inspection date:	4 th June 2019
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Previous inspection: 1

Overall Effectiveness

This inspection: 1

Catholic Life:	1
Collective Worship:	1
Religious Education:	1

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

St Edmund's Primary is an Outstanding Catholic school because:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• It is an outstanding school with a strong Catholic ethos. It is characterised by its welcoming and inclusive nature and the good relationships between all members of the school community. The mission statement is at the heart of school life and informs all policies and practice. Attractive displays and high quality religious artefacts reflect the school's Catholic identity and enhance the learning environment. Pupils are proud of their school and enjoy being part of their school community. Pupil behaviour is exemplary. Governors, school leaders and staff are committed to ensuring the wellbeing and personal development of every pupil. Pastoral care is excellent. School leaders and governors show commitment and dedication and are excellent role models. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The school's rich Catholic life embraces all members of the school community and permeates all areas of the curriculum. It features the traditions and celebrations of the Church as well as extending to participation in community events. Pupils are encouraged to consider the needs of others, in their school community and beyond. They are active in fund raising for those in need and support a range of charities. Strong links with the parish, Ladywell Convent, St John's Seminary, the deanery and the diocese foster pupils' sense of belonging to a wider Catholic community. |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The school's collective worship and prayer life is strong. A wide range of prayer and worship opportunities nurtures pupils' spiritual development and their knowledge of the celebrations of the Church. Pupils are encouraged to plan and lead prayer and worship and do so with confidence. Prayer is an integral part of the school day for pupils and staff. Parents and parishioners are invited to school worship celebrations and respond very positively, welcoming these opportunities to be part of the school worshipping community. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• High quality teaching and learning in religious education ensures that all groups of pupils make good progress and achieve well. Standards are high. Cross curricular links effectively enrich the teaching of religious education. Pupils enjoy their learning. They are enthusiastic and reflective learners and can apply their learning in religious education to their own lives. |
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FULL REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Edmund's is a one form entry voluntary aided Catholic primary school. It is maintained by Surrey Local Authority and is situated in the Guildford Deanery of the Diocese of Arundel and Brighton. The school serves the parish of St Edmund's, Godalming, which includes the churches of St Joseph's, Milford and St John's, Farncombe. The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholics is 91%. The average weekly proportion of curriculum time given to Religious Education is 10% in Key Stage 1 and 10% in Key Stage 2.

The school takes pupils from 4 to 11 years. The number of pupils currently on roll is 210. The proportion of pupils for whom Pupil Premium funding is received is 4% and is below the national average. 11% of pupils are on the school's register of Special Educational Need or Disability (SEND). Six pupils have an Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP). The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic heritages and those who speak English as an additional language is below the national average.

The school has experienced significant staff changes in the last two years, with a new leadership team and governing body leadership as well as four new class teachers.

WHAT DOES THE SCHOOL NEED TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- Continue to develop the current high standards in teaching and learning in religious education by encouraging accurate spelling of religious terminology, simplifying success criteria for younger pupils as appropriate and establishing consistency in the use of success criteria across the school.
- Continue to develop the school's current good practice in developing the role of pupils in preparing and delivering whole school collective worship, with a particular focus on developing its spiritual and inspirational nature in order to fully engage all present.

CATHOLIC LIFE

THE QUALITY OF THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

- The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school.
- The quality of provision of the Catholic Life of the school.
- How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school.

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The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school is Outstanding because:

- Pupils have a strong sense of belonging to their school community. They describe it as 'a family' and know that they have a responsibility towards being part of its mission and ethos. They know the importance of looking after each other and being inclusive. This was evident from pupil interviews, *'We are all friends here'* and *'Everyone helps anyone who needs it.'*
- They are involved in the evaluation of the school's Catholic life and actively participate in planning improvements to it. An example is the School Council's involvement in planning and improving the Prayer Garden. Pupil surveys show that they value the experience of being part of a Catholic community and that they feel the school helps them to grow spiritually and learn about their faith.
- Pupil behaviour during this inspection was exemplary, in classrooms and around the school. Pupils are kind and considerate to each other. They know it is important to forgive others and can relate this to the teachings of Jesus and today's world. A pupil commented, *'If we don't forgive each other it would be a world of hate.'* They enjoy celebrating their own success and that of others, recognising that everyone has gifts and a part to play in their school community. Parents mentioned that pupils are kind and respectful to each other and develop caring relationships that continue even after they have left the school. These relationships begin in Foundation and are strengthened as pupils move through the school.
- Pupils are given many opportunities to take responsibility and respond very positively, relating these to their sense of vocation and service to their school and to others. Examples include School Council, Prefects, Buddies and Bible Leaders.

- They enjoy participating in a wide range of activities related to the Catholic life of the school and are often involved in planning and preparing these. Examples include school Masses and assemblies, celebrating the diocesan Grandparents' Day and participation in a number of community celebrations and events.
- Pupils have a sense of social justice and a desire to help those less fortunate than themselves. They are active in fundraising for local, national and international charities. A link with a primary school in Burkina Faso has enabled pupils to exchange letters and photographs as well as raising funds for school resources, putting principles into practice in a real life context.
- The school has good links with the parish, the deanery and the diocese, enabling pupils to feel part of the wider Catholic family. These include the Good Shepherd celebration at Worth Abbey and joining other Catholic schools at deanery events. Parish links include invitations to parishioners to school events and the parish priest's valued contribution to school life.
- The school has good links with its local Catholic secondary school and has worked closely with the chaplain there on a personalised transition programme to ensure continuity and the best possible start for pupils. Parents commented on how well pupils are prepared for transition, including visiting the school and building up a good relationship with the chaplain.
- Parents appreciate the school's strong Catholic ethos and how it supports pupils academically, spiritually and emotionally. Parents spoke of the strong 'family and community' atmosphere and the excellent relationships between pupils and staff. Parents wrote, *'The Catholic ethos was one of the reasons we chose this school. The caring and supportive atmosphere has been a lovely place for our children' and 'St Edmund's nurtures my child mentally, spiritually and emotionally.'*

The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school is Outstanding because:

- The school mission statement reflects the educational mission of the Church. It is central to school life and informs all policies and practice. It is clearly displayed in the school and is regularly discussed, reviewed and related to the school's ethos statements. A parent wrote, *'As a school they really do live up to their school vision, "To learn love and live with the Lord." For this, as parents we are so grateful.'*
- Staff are committed to the mission of the school and to implementing it across the curriculum and in the school community. They form a cohesive team, supporting each other and participating in events related to the school's Catholic life. They attend in-school, deanery and diocesan training and events. Prayer forms part of staff meetings, training days and governors' meetings.

- High quality displays relating to the liturgical year, school events and celebrations and themes in Religious Education, as well as attractive artefacts and prayer focus areas, enrich the learning environment and reflect the school's Catholic identity. Many displays are interactive and include pupils' work as well as questions to inspire thought and reflection.
- Provision for the Catholic life of the school includes considering responsibility towards others, respect and tolerance for all and the duty to care for our common home. These values are woven through the curriculum and events in the school's Catholic life. Parents appreciate the school's strong Catholic ethos. One wrote, *'We have had two children at St Edmund's and the faith shines through.'*
- The school is an inclusive community in which all pupils are enabled to flourish and achieve. Pupils with SEND are sensitively supported and encouraged. Disadvantaged pupils make good progress and achieve well. The academic, spiritual and moral development of pupils is nurtured at all levels. As a result, pupils feel safe and secure and are keen to do their best. Academic results are high.
- The school community embraces and supports all within it. Strong systems of pastoral care ensure that pupils, parents and staff are considered and cared for. Examples include the 'Rainbows' programme for those experiencing bereavement or loss, the nurture group provided in conjunction with a local farm and the provision of a Home School Link Worker (HSLW) to work with pupils and their families. Pupils know that adults in school care about them and will help them if they have any anxieties. A pupil said, *'They always understand and are always there for you.'* Staff have had sessions on reflection, meditation and life coaching to support their own wellbeing.
- The school's behaviour policy reflects its mission statement and values. It incorporates the role of personal responsibility and the need for forgiveness and reconciliation. Whole school training has included 'Restorative Approaches' in order to implement these and emphasise Christian values in dealing with conflict.
- Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) is well established in the school, encouraging pupils to consider their responsibilities to themselves and to society as well as the development of emotional wellbeing and personal relationships. Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) follows the 'Journey in Love' programme. Teaching is in line with the guidance of the Church. Parents are invited to view the materials and discuss any queries they may have. The school's PHSE draws upon the 'Statements to live by' which skilfully links scripture with pupils' own lives.
- Parental questionnaires distributed as part of this inspection showed a good rate of return and were overwhelmingly positive regarding the school's provision. One parent wrote, *'We are thrilled to see how well St Edmund's guides the children throughout the years. Each year they are taught elements of the Catholic faith, scripture, prayer, Masses, sacraments and in particular, 'living as a Christian' and what that means.'*

How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school is outstanding because:

- School leaders and governors are committed to the Church's mission in education and to ensuring that St Edmund's school reflects this in all aspects of its provision. Leaders are excellent role models and have created a staff team with a strong sense of Christian community and the importance of the traditions of the Catholic Church.
- Provision for the Catholic life of the school is given high priority by school leaders. The governing body is exceptionally well informed, with regular reports from the Headteacher and subject leader. Governor visits and attendance at school events contribute to their monitoring role and their participation as part of the school community. They are committed to ensuring the school reflects and serves its community. A number of governors are also parishioners, strengthening the link between school and parish. The Catholic life of the school is regularly discussed, and each governing body meeting ends with reflection, *'What have we done to promote the Catholic life of the school?'*
- School self-evaluation is comprehensive, accurate and reflective, indicating effective systems of monitoring and analysis. Views from a wide range of stakeholders, including the Parent Forum, contribute to this. Self-evaluation informs development planning. Evidence includes the school development plan (SDP) and the clear 'Next Steps' on the self-evaluation document relating to this inspection. The SDP features well targeted and planned objectives, with appropriate timescales and lines of responsibility.
- Professional development relating to the Catholic life of the school occurs regularly, providing support and guidance. The Headteacher is the Chair of the Deanery Heads Group and is on the Primary Headteachers' Steering Committee, providing service to the wider Catholic community and increasing participation in the school's role within this. The link governor for religious education has attended diocesan training on 'Outstanding Governance', which includes monitoring the distinctive ethos of the Catholic school.
- The school has very successful strategies for engaging with parents, including providing support for those who need it. A range of communication includes newsletters, the website, religious education topic information, the Parent Forum and a Parent Staff Association. Parents feel the school is welcoming and approachable; this was evident in parent interviews and questionnaires that formed part of this inspection. They also recognise and value the school's strong Catholic ethos and enjoy being part of its Catholic life.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP AND PRAYER LIFE

THE QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP AND PRAYER LIFE

- How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship and Prayer Life.
- The quality of provision for Collective Worship and Prayer Life.
- How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship and Prayer Life.

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How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship and Prayer Life is Outstanding because:

- St Edmund's provides a wide range of collective worship opportunities to interest and inspire pupils. Pupils value and enjoy these and respond very positively. In the whole school collective worship observed as part of this inspection, pupils were reverent and respectful, appreciating that this was a special time. They listened and were happy to respond and participate. They sang tunefully. They were able to use quiet moments for reflection and meditation. The class worship observed in two year groups inspired and engaged pupils and provided an uplifting and spiritual experience.
- St Edmund's has established and developed pupils' involvement in planning, leading and delivering worship. They take responsibility for class worship, including evaluating each session. Bible Leaders evaluate worship in different classes. Pupils of all ages are involved in planning and leading worship, developing their knowledge and use of scripture, liturgical music, religious artefacts and types of prayer. Pupils enjoy their role in collective worship. They appreciate that this is part of their service to God and their school community.
- Pupils have a good understanding of the Church's liturgical year, its feasts and seasons and how these are celebrated in school. This is reflected in displays and prayer tables throughout the school.
- Pupils recognise the importance of prayer in their lives. They know that prayer can help them and others who need their prayers. They are aware that prayer and collective worship help them to deepen their relationship with God. They are familiar with the traditional prayers of the Church and are at ease composing their own prayers and offering spontaneous prayer. Prayer is an integral part of the school day and pupils know it is essential to their school community. Opportunities for voluntary prayer include weekly lunchtime prayer group sessions; these are well attended. Year 6 pupils are offered a retreat day at Ladywell Convent and speak appreciatively of this opportunity.

- All pupils and their families are welcomed and included in the school's collective worship. Pupils know the importance of respecting the faith beliefs and practices of others. Pupils who are not Catholic are fully involved in all aspects of collective worship and participate very positively.
- The spiritual and moral development of all pupils is nurtured and developed by the rich programme of prayer and worship provided by the school.

The quality of provision for Collective Worship and Prayer Life is Outstanding because:

- St Edmund's is an inclusive community, uniting its members in prayer and worship and offering a wealth of opportunities for spiritual development. Collective worship is central to the life of the school and is at the heart of every school celebration. High quality provision makes these memorable occasions for all concerned.
- Collective worship is well planned and resourced, with provision for a range of opportunities across the year. This also enables information to be circulated so that members of the wider school community can attend. High levels of attendance indicate that this is valued. Examples include the Year 6 Passion Play and weekly Lenten Masses.
- Provision includes a variety of activities to interest and engage pupils and their families. Prayer bags and travelling cribs link home and school in prayer. 'Little Way Week' links learning to a whole school liturgy. A link with Ladywell Convent has provided opportunities to join in its May Procession and Crib Building service as well as providing a valued venue for the First Reconciliation service. Pupils also regularly visit the parish church for Mass, taking an active part in the service. Meditation was introduced in 2018 and is now well established, enriching pupils' spiritual development and wellbeing.
- Two acts of class worship were observed as part of this inspection. Both were examples of high quality provision. Pupils were thoughtful, reflective and keen to be engaged. Creation of a special atmosphere including music, candles and choice of items for a focal area was a lovely preparation for this special time. A strong scripture focus and links with life at school and beyond provide a spiritual start to the school day.
- The whole school assembly on the meaning of Pentecost was led and prepared by pupils. The theme of Pentecost was skilfully linked with all elements of the assembly. Prayer, meditation and singing invited participation from those present. Dance contributions from younger classes engaged and interested pupils. Prayer was effectively led by pupils from across the school. Pupils made a significant and valued contribution on a variety of levels but would now benefit from more guidance on ensuring that opportunities to engage, inspire and create a spiritual atmosphere are not missed.

How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship and Prayer Life is outstanding because:

- School leaders plan collective worship on a termly basis, involving staff and ensuring that provision is comprehensive and responsive to the liturgical year, themes in religious education and school events and celebrations. Pupil involvement is organised by the Headteacher and subject leader, with pupils volunteering to plan and lead worship.
- Leaders and governors ensure that collective worship is promoted to the wider community and that they are invited and involved. The termly school Mass is celebrated at St Joseph's, Milford and is a parish celebration of school life. Key Stage 2 pupils attend a weekday Mass at St Edmund's once a term and parishioners attend the weekly Lenten Masses. Pupils play an active part in these services. Parents are invited to school worship. The Wednesday Word supports families in sharing the Gospel at home.
- School leaders have considerable expertise in planning and leading collective worship. They model good practice and provide guidance and support for staff. As a result, staff are confident and willing participants.
- School leaders have worked hard to promote the role of pupils in collective worship. It is now well established in the school. Support and guidance is provided as appropriate. Pupils are fully involved in leading and delivering worship and increasingly involved in evaluation, which informs development planning.
- Governors are active in their monitoring role. They attend school Masses, liturgies and celebrations. Observation and evaluation of collective worship also forms part of the link governor's role. Governors see collective worship as a high priority in school life. This is reflected in governing body discussions and records of governor visits.
- The views of parents are actively sought and form part of school self-evaluation. Parental questionnaires and feedback from the Parents Forum provide evidence of a very positive response to school collective worship. Parents interviewed mentioned how much they appreciated receiving invitations from their children to Masses and liturgies and how much they enjoyed these occasions.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

THE QUALITY OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

- How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education.
- The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education.
- How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education.

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How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education is Outstanding because:

- Standards of attainment in religious education are high. End of Key Stage results indicate that the great majority of pupils meet or exceed age related expectations, with a significant proportion of pupils working at a greater depth. All groups of pupils make good progress, reflecting the school's accurate provision of support and challenge.
- Pupils enjoy religious education lessons and appreciate the importance of religious education to their own lives. They are encouraged to make links between their lessons and life in school and beyond. They are interested and thoughtful learners. This was evident in the lessons observed as part of this inspection. Pupils were attentive and responded well to teachers' questioning. Behaviour for learning was excellent.
- Pupils show excellent knowledge and understanding. A high standard of religious literacy was evident in pupils' written work and in the lessons observed. Pupils apply a wide range of skills to their learning.
- Feedback from pupil survey results indicate very positive attitudes to religious education. This is in line with the findings of this inspection. Pupils interviewed were enthusiastic, said they enjoyed the challenge that religious education presented and the variety of activities that enriched lessons. They commented that religious education was different from other subjects and was directly linked to their own lives and their relationship with God. They appreciated the thoughtful and reflective aspects of religious education and the cross-curricular links made. A pupil commented, *'Religious education isn't always about writing.'*
- Parents commented on how much their children enjoyed religious education and how they were keen to share their learning at home. One wrote, *'My daughter often discusses at home topics she has covered in school relating to the Mass, the Church calendar, religious events and Bible stories. She is keen to engage in these topics due to the enthusiasm of her teachers and the way the school celebrates Mass and religious events.'*

The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education is Outstanding because:

- Standards in teaching and learning are high. School monitoring of lessons indicates that the quality of teaching in Religious Education is in the main outstanding and never less than good. This is in line with lessons observed as part of this inspection.
- Four lessons, across two key stages, were observed as part of this inspection. One lesson focused on Christian meditation as part of an RSE lesson. A learning walk, including drop-ins to other classes, contributed to the picture of religious education teaching and learning across the school. Creation of a special atmosphere using candles and music marked the distinctive nature of the lesson. Lessons showed careful preparation and interesting content. A range of teaching strategies and styles were used effectively to engage learners. Lessons built on previous learning, incorporated probing questioning and provided evidence of progress within the lesson. Teachers demonstrated good subject knowledge and had high expectations of their pupils. Pace ensured that lessons proceeded smoothly, but with time provided for thought and reflection. Open-ended questions encouraged pupils to explore their understanding and relate their learning to the school ethos statements.
- Marking is regular, affirmative and encourages pupils to explore their learning. Teachers' questions provide challenge and extension and form a productive dialogue between teacher and pupil. Pupils know that they are expected to respond to these questions and that this develops their learning.
- Peer and self-evaluation promote pupils' greater involvement in their own learning and that of their peers. Simplifying the success criteria, particularly for younger pupils and ensuring consistency across the school would enhance accessibility and accuracy of judgements.
- Regular assessment informs differentiation, providing appropriate levels of support and challenge. The school is part of the pilot group for religious education assessment and as a result of this has been using driver words as part of the interim assessment framework. Moderation takes place at school and deanery level to validate teachers' judgments. The school is developing a link with another one form entry Catholic school to share good practice in assessment and moderation.
- In most books, success criteria are evident and clearly linked to the learning objective, but this is not consistent across all classes. In some classes, success criteria are focused on literacy rather than learning in religious education. The school should consider establishing clear expectations and consistency in the use of success criteria.

How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education is Outstanding because:

- The school follows the 'Come and See' programme of religious education, enriched by cross curricular links as appropriate. Curriculum time allocation is in line with the requirements of the Bishops' Conference. The study of other faiths is well established and includes visits to places of worship and talks from outside speakers.
- Religious education is well resourced and receives an appropriate budget share. Prayer focus areas in classrooms and around the school feature attractive, high quality, age appropriate artefacts and resources. The curriculum is enriched by visits, for example, to the Life of Christ at Wintershall and visitors such as speakers from CAFOD. Events such as 'Home is a Holy Place' and Advent Workshops include parents in supporting their children's learning and faith journey. The parish priest, who is also a governor, provides significant and valued support for the religious education curriculum. Staff and pupils draw upon his considerable knowledge and expertise to enrich learning and deepen understanding. Seminarians from St John's seminary have also worked with pupils, providing valued support.
- Religious education is well led and managed. The subject leader shows dedication to her role. She is supported by the Headteacher; they share a vision of excellence in Catholic education and work together to achieve this.
- A comprehensive system of monitoring includes learning walks, lesson observations and work scrutiny. Results inform school self-evaluation development planning and ensure consistency across the school. Assessment data is effectively used to target and support individuals or groups and to evaluate performance. This results in well targeted planning and strategic action which has led to high standards of pupil outcomes in religious education.
- Governors have a clear understanding of provision and standards in religious education. They conscientiously fulfil their monitoring role and are frequent visitors to the school. The link governor for religious education works well with the subject leader to monitor provision and practice. She ensures the governing body is fully informed and involved. Governor monitoring has included looking at progression and the use of cross curricular links in religious education.
- Areas for development identified by the last inspection have been addressed.

Summary of Inspection Judgements

How effective the school is in providing Catholic Education.

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Catholic Life

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The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school.

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The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school.

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How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school.

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Collective Worship and Prayer Life

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How well pupils respond to and participate in the schools' Collective Worship and Prayer Life.

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The quality of provision for Collective Worship and Prayer Life.

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How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship and Prayer Life.

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Religious Education

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How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education.

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The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education.

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How well leaders and managers monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education.

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