

# St Francis Xavier's Catholic Primary School

URN: 116884

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Archbishop of Cardiff

25–26 October 2023

## 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

- Governors and leaders are inspirational in driving the vision of the school forward ensuring that the mission is central to the community.
- Relationships throughout the school are built on the highest level of care and respect.
- Standards in teaching and learning in religious education are excellent.
- Pupil voice is a strength, pupils are confident in articulating their knowledge and understanding and evaluating the Catholic life and mission, religious education and collective worship.
- Innovative technology enhances religious education and allows children an immersive experience of their world.

## What the school needs to improve

- Use the implementation of the new *Religious Education Directory* to review and evaluate the current religious education curriculum in time for 2025.
- Develop and share with other schools religious education pedagogy for the Immersive learning environment.
- Develop the role of the prayer and liturgy leader to further enhance provision throughout the school.

## 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

1

**Provision**

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

1

**Leadership**

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

1

1

Pupils at St Francis Xavier's school understand and express eloquently the school's Catholic identity. They confidently articulate how they live out the mission statement 'Love one another as I have loved you', which is embedded and embraced throughout the school.

Pupils know they are loved and valued by their school community and that, because they are unique individuals and part of God's family, they must share God's love, follow their dreams and excel in citizenship. Behaviour is exemplary throughout the school.

The Catholic Schools' Pupil Profile is used to guide pupils on their journey, deepen their knowledge and grow in virtue. The school's weekly focus on the 'Living Word' places scripture at the centre of action for children and brings the gospel to life. The school is a community based on Catholic tradition and practice and deeply rooted in the Word of God.

Pupils are happy and confident, and they demonstrate care for each other, our common home and the wider world. They are passionate about using their talents to respond to the demands of Catholic social teaching and expressed the reasons underpinning their actions of painting Peace Pebbles, visiting the sick and elderly, fundraising for Cafod and local charities. Pupils explained how they made links with Misión Cristiana Moderna Fuerteventura in Spain and their work supporting Sister Valeria's refugee project.

Pupils highly value the care and support of their parish priest and deacon and know that this is important in developing and strengthening their relationship with God. The school benefits from links with Belmont Abbey which enhance and strengthen Catholic life and mission. Staff are exemplary role models and embrace the mission statement in every aspect of school life.

This inclusive, welcoming school demonstrates commitment to the most vulnerable and provides the highest level of pastoral support which is greatly valued by parents.

Pupils show respect for other cultures and belief traditions and spoke knowledgeably of how their visits to the mosque and synagogue had deepened their understanding of other faiths.

The Catholic character of the school is reflected throughout the environment. Vibrant displays and well-used outdoor spaces offer opportunities for prayer, reflection and spiritual development.

The amazing Immersion Room provided opportunity for pupils to experience and internalise Religious Education through a highly engaging and interactive environment. The provision for relationship, sex, and health education is carefully planned and timetabled throughout the school using archdiocesan recommended schemes. Pupils talk confidently about their learning and its application to their lives.

The head teacher has a strong vision for Catholic education and is passionate in ensuring that the school actively achieves its mission. Staff and parents describe her as 'dedicated' and 'inspirational'. Leaders and governors are committed in promoting the school's mission and Catholic life as a core leadership responsibility. All policies and procedures clearly reflect the Catholic identity and charism of the school.

The governing body is well-established and ambitious for the school. Governors are highly committed to ensuring the school is at the heart of the parish and provides the best possible Catholic education and care for pupils and staff.

Pupil and parent voice are part of the self-evaluation process and parent questionnaires were overwhelmingly supportive. The school self-evaluation document is an honest reflection of monitoring and analysis and leads to well-planned improvement.

The school has highly successful strategies for engaging with parents and embraces the principle of parents as first educators. One parent stated, 'Gospel values are not a bolt on here, they are lived'.

The school responds well to diocesan policies and initiatives. All staff, including new staff, regularly receive professional development making good use of diocesan training opportunities and resources. Extensive staff training opportunities have been undertaken to innovate and improve provision. Staff also participate in high quality extended formation programmes which promote a profound understanding of the school's mission and values.

## Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

### Religious education key judgement grade

**Pupil outcomes**

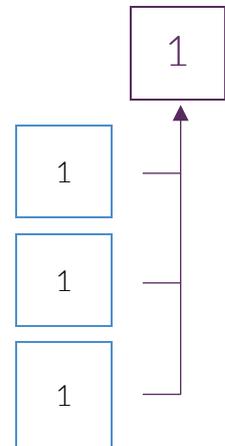
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

**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 respond well to a range of creative activities delivered competently by experienced and skilled staff with good subject knowledge. High levels of engagement and progress were evident in all lessons observed. Pupils have positive attitudes to work and stated they enjoyed religious education.

Using diocesan-approved schemes of work and resources, teachers effectively plan and deliver lessons that build on prior learning and enable knowledge to become embedded, rapidly improving pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding of religious education.

Pupils demonstrate a curiosity and love for learning in religious education and work with focus and pace, applying themselves enthusiastically to tasks. At both key stages they make excellent progress as evidenced in books and prayer journals. The quality of work and presentation in books is consistently high quality and compares favourably with English.

Pupils can articulate what they have learnt using religiously literate language and use their knowledge and understanding to reflect spiritually, think ethically and theologically. One pupil confidently explained that the blind man not only came out of the darkness because he could see but also because he was embraced by the light and love of Jesus.

The acronym *ROCKS* (Remembering our curriculum knowledge and skills) is used to good effect to support and enhance pupils learning and memory. Pupils are confident to link their learning from religious education to their moral and religious commitment in everyday life and KS1 pupils were able to list a variety of qualities that would help them do Jesus's work.

Use of questioning is a strength of teachers in all classes, deepening pupils' understanding of their faith. The use of driver words to ensure progress against the 'I Can' statements and

allowing time to reflect on their knowledge through Talk Partners as a retrieval technique also ensures progress.

Support staff are used effectively to enhance learning. Pupils with English as an additional language and those with special educational needs benefit from focused teaching assistant support. The school tracking system enables teachers to assess and monitor progress and identify next steps. Feedback to pupils is regular and positive. It celebrates the efforts of every child and provides them with the knowledge to improve further.

Teachers ensure pupils are given a range of opportunities to present their learning creatively using composition, music, art, drama and dance. The Immersion Room provided an inspirational environment for pupils to immerse themselves interactively in their learning.

Leaders and governors articulate a clear vision for the religious education teaching and learning which fully meets the archdiocesan requirements. Staff, including early careers teacher (ECT) feel well supported in delivering religious education and state they can seek advice and support when required. They have good access to continuous professional development. Regular feedback is given to staff following monitoring.

Leaders and governors undertake joint evaluation through learning walks and book scrutiny, which is fed back to the governing body. Consequently, governors have an accurate knowledge and understanding of the quality of teaching and learning in religious education and ensure that it is at the heart of the school. They are well-positioned to support and challenge leaders.

The head teacher has a clear vision for teaching and learning and has a high level of expertise in securing this vision. She effectively shares this in her school to school support which she views as living the school mission and putting her faith into action.

The subject leader is passionate and active in her leadership across the school. She attends all diocesan training, supports and monitors all staff and ensures the planned curriculum is coherent, secures excellent progress and is enriched by extra-curricular opportunities e.g. visits to homes for the elderly. Governors and leaders undertake robust self-evaluation and plan for improvements for teaching and learning in religious education as documented in the well written School Improvement Plan.

## 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 and participate fully in a wide range of acts of collective worship. They are knowledgeable about different ways of praying, including traditional Catholic prayers, Christian Meditation and the Examen. Class prayer leaders prepare prayer spaces to ensure they reflect teaching topics and the liturgical year, ensuring the use of scripture, symbols and reflection.

Prayer leaders in the Prayer Garden regularly use this sacred space, collaborating with peers to plan and deliver prayer opportunities for other pupils. Prayer and liturgy resources and prayer prompt cards are available and used in all classes to support and undertake pupils' planning.

Pupils fully understand their role when leading liturgies undertaking these confidently and with skill using the creative pedagogy established in religious education lessons as demonstrated in the Year 6 pupil-led liturgy for Year 5 pupils in the Immersion Room.

Pupils understand prayer as important and a regular part of everyday school life and know that they can pray anywhere. Pupils have a detailed knowledge and understanding of the Church's liturgical calendar and make connections between this and various school events, for example Harvest Festival, October rosary and the Sacrament of Reconciliation in Lent. They particularly enjoy school Masses and the opportunity to take on the various ministry roles such as readers, welcomers and altar servers.

Pupils recognise the importance of supportive prayer partner links as a way of asking God to bless others. They spoke about how the power of prayer makes an impact on lives anywhere in the world sighting the prayers sent to Sri Lankan children and the joy they felt when they received cards in return.

Prayer and liturgy is central to and naturally embedded in the daily rhythm of the school making it integral to lessons and gatherings of pupils, staff and leaders. A balance between set prayers and creative times of prayer offers a range of engaging and creative experiences which reflect the Catholic tradition and ensures active participation.

Scripture is at the heart of prayer and liturgy and a pupil commented 'It is how God shows himself and his work to us'. Pupils in Key Stage 1 took delight in writing prayers and posting them in the class prayer box. Key Stage 2 pupils have an individual prayer journal to spend time with God, sharing their own precious moments in his presence. Key Stage 1 pupils contribute to a class prayer book which is celebrated in their class prayer and liturgy.

The whole school collective worship, led by the head teacher, focussing on the new commandment 'Love one another', was of a high quality. Pupils were reverent, prayerful and sang joyfully.

Staff thoughtfully work with families through sharing prayer bags; travelling cribs and rosary packs to include them in the prayer life of the school. Pupils often take home a symbol or activity to complete as a go-forth mission to bring liturgy into their homes. This is appreciated and valued by parents.

The relationship between governors and the school is a strength, they have a very good understanding of prayer and liturgy. Governors have an excellent understanding of the needs of the community and join with all prayer and liturgy opportunities.

The school has a clear and shared policy which underpins and supports the liturgical life of the school. The head teacher is inspirational and knowledgeable in her faith and, as such, provides excellent opportunities for staff to pray together.

The leader for religious education places high importance on scripture and relating prayer and liturgy to the lived experience of the school community. The active involvement of the parish priest and deacon provides high quality chaplaincy support which engages and motivates the pupils.

The monitoring and review cycle is prioritised and demonstrates rigour, challenge, and progress. Leaders and governors have created a strategic succession plan to develop and enhance this area through the appointment of a Prayer and Liturgy leader.

Self-evaluation is used effectively to reflect the views of all members of the community through formal and informal methods to seek improvement. The views of pupils and parents are sought as part of monitoring of prayer and liturgy and shared on the website. The resources provided for this school are of a high standard, well organised, and this area is prioritised in the budget.

## Information about the school

Full name of school	St Francis Xavier's Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	116884
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	8843331
Full postal address of the school	St Francis Xavier's Catholic Primary School, Venns Lane, Hereford, HR1 1DT
School phone number	01432 273941
Headteacher	Diana Pearce
Chair of Governors	Paul Williams
School Website	<a href="http://www.st-francisxaviers.hereford.sch.uk">http://www.st-francisxaviers.hereford.sch.uk</a>
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	N/A
Phase	Primary
Type of school	Voluntary Aided School
Admissions policy	Non selective
Age-range of pupils	4-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	18 – 19 May 2015
Previous denominational inspection grade	Good

## The inspection team

Jacqueline Phillips

Lead

Sheelagh McCool

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