



Catholic Schools Inspectorate inspection report for St Mary's Catholic Primary School

URN: 142162

Carried out on behalf of the Most Rev. John Wilson, Archbishop of Southwark on:

Date: 29-30 June 2023

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The school is fully compliant with the curriculum requirements laid down by the Bishops' Conference	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
The school is fully compliant with all requirements of the diocesan bishop	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
The school has responded to the areas for improvement from the last inspection	Fully

Summary of key findings

What the school does well

- Pastoral care of staff and pupils and personal development
- Parish school partnership
- Opportunities for pupils to develop spiritually, morally and ethically
- Welcoming supportive community and ethos
- Catholic Social Teaching and almsgiving.

What the school needs to improve:

- Build on developmental marking as part of pupil feedback so that pupils can clearly understand and articulate their targets and next steps in learning.

- Provide more opportunities for extended writing within religious education to match the higher expectations in literacy and to enable pupils to achieve the highest outcomes.
- Develop pupil chaplaincy and leadership within prayer and liturgy to enable the pupils to contribute more actively and independently to the prayer and liturgy of the school.

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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

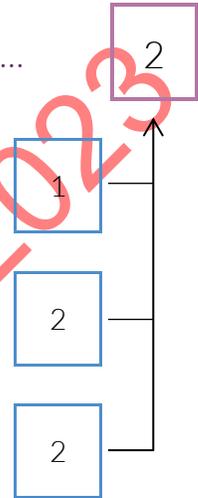
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

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



All of the school community embrace the school's mission, 'to become a centre of learning excellence, inspired and led by the teachings of Jesus Christ. We celebrate, respect and value everyone at our school as a unique gift from God'. Pupils describe the school as 'very inclusive' where 'everyone is welcome.' Behaviour is excellent, pupils describing teachers as 'firm but fair.' Pupils can resolve their differences through pupils trained as antibullying ambassadors and there is a rainbow bench where, if someone is upset, they can sit with another person. Pupils highly value leadership roles being involved in for example the Mini Vinnies. Pupils speak with enthusiasm about their roles such as wanting to 'give the elderly some joy.' Pupils clearly articulate the principles of Catholic Social Teaching and identify ways they can support others, 'we want to because we are God's family'. Pupils describe St Mary's as 'a family where everyone helps each other.' Parents stated that the school has provided what they want for their 'child's journey of faith and much more besides it's a caring nurturing school that goes above and beyond.'

The known and lived mission statement is a clear expression of the educational mission of the Church to which staff are committed. They are conscious that Christ is at the heart of the community like a 'golden thread' running through the life of the school. This is evident in the quality of the relationships within the school and the culture of welcome which includes valuing and supporting those from other cultures and beliefs. Staff are positive role models for pupils. The therapy dog is a greatly valued member of the school community contributing to the pastoral care which is of the highest quality. Parents state that 'the children have lots of opportunities to live out their faith e.g. fundraising and collecting for those in need; visits to the church and services in school. My children are very happy in and proud to be part of this school community'. The parish priest is a regular visitor and provides strong chaplaincy, supporting the life and mission of the school. Provision of relationships, sex, and health education (RSHE) using the Ten Ten programme meets diocesan and statutory requirements and is faithful to the teaching of the Church. The school ensures parents are fully informed of the content through consultation and information meetings.

Leaders and governors can articulate the Church's mission for education and ensure that Christ is at the school's heart. School policies reflect the mission of the school. Pupils greatly value being house captains and youth chaplains helping the parish priest in, for example, setting up for Mass, and raising money for victims of earthquakes. There are strong links between the school and the parish, the parish priest is 'delighted to be part of the community'. Parents state that 'the relationship between the school and parish community is growing much stronger.' Leaders and governors recognise that parents are the first educators of their children and seek to involve them. Staff describe St Mary's as a 'truly Catholic school which supports the wellbeing of all staff in increasingly challenging circumstances.' Parents value the work of the school stating that 'my children are growing into caring, morally grounded individuals and that this is testament to the excellent work that the school does'. Governors are clearly ambitious for the school and committed to the development of St Mary's as a Catholic school.

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Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade:.....

2

Pupil outcomes

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education.....

2

Provision

The quality of teaching, learning, and assessment in religious education.....

2

Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor, and evaluate the provision for religious education.....

2

Data shows that pupils make good progress when measured against the planned curriculum for each year. Relative to their age they are religiously literate and engaged young people who really enjoy their religious education. Pupils express their opinions about how religious education (RE) impacts upon their lives. They describe their religious education curriculum as 'going more into depth each year' and state that activities in lessons are varied, and they learn about different religions. Pupils are given the opportunity to work collaboratively and individually. Where teaching is good, lessons showed good pace and a variety of activities including drama and art. Pupils showed an in-depth knowledge of the stories. Pupil work, whilst inconsistent in its quality, showed signs of emerging individuality and creativity. In addition, pupils struggled to be able express how to improve. Pupil behaviour during lessons is good because they enjoy their learning, but they expressed a desire for more written work in religious education. Parents said that, through the newsletter, they are provided with an update about what the children have been learning in religious education but would like more information about how their children can improve.

Teachers are confident in their knowledge and have a good understanding of how pupils learn. They value religious education and communicate this effectively to their pupils. Questioning is good and is used well to refer to previous learning and to encourage greater depth. Teachers said that pupils 'are given the opportunity to discuss the various topics throughout the religious education curriculum. This enables them to develop their understanding of the Catholic faith. This, in turn, helps them to grow their own faith beliefs.' To further improve, feedback needs to be developed so that pupils can clearly understand and articulate their targets and next steps in learning. Teaching provides good opportunities for pupils to reflect upon their learning and how it impacts upon their spiritual development. For example, 'in lessons we can learn, pray more and build our relationship with God.' Some parents appreciate the value placed on religious education and 'believe that St Mary's takes an innovative and inclusive approach

to including prayer and religious education into the day-to-day life and RE lessons. It's not just dry learning but different activities that our child very much enjoys.'

Leaders and Governors ensure religious education is comparable to other core subjects in resourcing timetabling and staffing. They ensure regular training in implementing the religious education curriculum. Work is being undertaken to incorporate the new *Religious Education Directory (RED)*. The subject leader for religious education has a clear vision for teaching and learning and uses this vision to improve RE. The curriculum is sequential through its content and effectively planned to meet the different needs of the pupils. Staff say they are supported by leaders regularly drawing upon their expertise, and 'no question is off the table,' which they said is 'very encouraging.' Governors greatly value religious education. Their self-evaluation of religious education is informed by thorough monitoring, analysis and self-challenge. They regularly carry out learning walks and work scrutinies, talk with pupils and observe teaching. Reports from visits are shared with the academy committee. Governors challenge leaders and ask relevant, probing questions.

Collective worship

The quality and range of liturgy and prayer provided by the school.

Collective worship key judgement grade:.....

2

Pupil outcomes

How well pupils participate in and respond to the school's collective worship

2

Provision

The quality of collective worship provided by the school

2

Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for collective worship

2

Pupils respond well to the experiences of prayer and worship, they participate by reading, the Gospel choir leads the singing, and the ministry of serving at the altar is being developed. Pupils said that the Mass is 'inclusive of all faiths.' During Mass on the Feast of St Peter and St Paul, pupils behaved with prayerful reverence,. Staff said that the pupils have ownership of class Masses for example giving input into hymns and writing bidding prayers. Pupils understand a variety of ways of praying, they talked about being prayer leaders which involves leading daily prayers and pupils have used their initiative to start a 'Rosary club.' Parents said that the pupils 'have lots of opportunities to live out their faith e.g. fundraising and collecting for those in need; visits to the church and services in school.' Prayer spaces in classrooms are used as a focus for prayer.

It was evident that prayer and liturgy are central to the life of the school, they form 'a natural rhythm of the life of the school' reflecting the prayer life of the Church. Pupils have a good knowledge of daily prayers and prayer leaders lead prayers 'before lunch, after lunch, and at the end of the day.' Pupils are engaged and active participants in prayer and liturgy. A variety of activities are used including candlelight, music, time for reflection and use of scripture which relates to the pupils' lives. Passages of scripture are carefully and thoughtfully chosen to reflect the liturgical calendar. Church teaching is used to support prayer and liturgy. The parish priest encourages pupils in leadership of prayer and liturgy. For example he does a pre-visit to help pupils plan and prepare a liturgy with a key question. Most recently the pupils chose the theme of refugees reflecting a current issue to which the pupils are very sensitive. Staff are skilled in helping pupils plan and lead well-constructed prayer and liturgy. Parents stated that they 'are well-informed about events including all the Masses - the class Mass I attended was wonderful' and that 'families are invited to Mass with the children and they regularly attend the Church.'

The policy for prayer and liturgy is well formulated and fit for purpose and staff agree that it is useful for them in carrying out their role. Leaders give clear guidance and support them to lead appropriate

prayer. The school calendar reflects significant dates in the Church's year and special sacramental celebrations, which results in lots of opportunities for pupils to participate in celebrating the Mass. Governors prioritise staff formation and training, to ensure effective prayer provision. Retreats for leaders enhance this provision. Leaders understand the importance of prayer and liturgical experiences when setting and allocating budget resources such as funding for pupil retreats. Governors regularly monitor and evaluate the quality and impact of prayer and liturgy through being present and participating in liturgical events and asking probing questions at committee meetings.

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Information about the school

Full name of school	St Mary's Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	142162
Full postal address of the school	Northwood Road, Tankerton, Whitstable, Kent CT5 2EY
School phone number	01227 272692
Name of head teacher or principal	Michele Blunt
Chair of governing board	Christine Giles
School Website	https://www.st-marys-whitstable.kent.sch.uk/
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	Kent Catholic Schools Partnership
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy
Age-range of pupils	3-11
Trustees	Archdiocese
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	November 2016
Previous denominational inspection grade	2

The inspection team

Stephen C Horsman	Lead inspector
Helen Frostick	Team inspector
Name of inspector	Lead/team
Name of inspector	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