

Catholic Schools Inspectorate inspection report for St Edward’s Catholic Junior School

URN: 148670

Carried out on behalf of the Right Rev. David Oakley, Bishop of Northampton on:

Date: 25-26 May 2023

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|---|-------------------------------------|
| Overall effectiveness The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school..... | 3 |
| 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..... | 3 |
| Religious education (p.5) The quality of curriculum religious education..... | 3 |
| Collective worship (p.7) The quality and range of liturgy and prayer provided by the school..... | 3 |
| 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 | Partially |

Summary of key findings

What the school does well

- There is a strong sense of community at St Edwards. The school promotes inclusivity, providing a warm, welcoming, caring environment for pupils, staff, and visitors, where everyone feels valued and respected.
- Staff are positive role models for pupils, showing love and care for all.
- The religious education subject leader has a clear vision for the subject and is proactive.
- Teachers are committed to the value of religious education and its status as a core subject.

What the school needs to improve:

- Improve the quality and accuracy of self-evaluation in all areas, to ensure it is robust and challenging, so that well targeted planned improvements occur at pace.
- Ensure the mission of the school is regularly revisited, known, and lived throughout the school so that it has a visible impact on the life of the school.
- Develop pupils' understanding of Catholic Social Teaching to enable them to articulate how it impacts on their daily lives and has led to action.

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:.....

3

Pupil outcomes

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

3

Provision

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

2

Leadership

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

3



The well-being and all-round personal development of each pupil is at the heart of the school's vision and is reflected in the pastoral care provided. Pupils feel valued, safe and cared for in school. Pupil behaviour in class and around the school is good; they demonstrate respect for themselves and others, including a well-developed sense of respect for those of other faiths. They are given opportunities to respond to Catholic Social Teaching through fundraising for Cafod, local foodbanks and through responding to the emerging needs in the world. They show concern for those less fortunate than themselves by supporting these various charities and fundraising activities throughout the year. During May, pupils and staff have been collaboratively walking 31K for a cancer charity in memory of a staff member. Pupils are given some opportunities to take on responsibilities to develop the Catholic character of the school, through the work of faith ambassadors and faith ministers. Pupils are proud of their school community; however, they struggle to understand how the Catholic identity of the school makes a difference to its mission.

The school's mission, 'At St Edwards we have faith at the heart of our community: faith in ourselves, in each other and in God.' is displayed around the school. Despite this, it is not well known and understood by all. Pupils are unable to articulate what it means and how it is guiding their actions. Staff know the pupils well and the positive relationships they have enhance the pastoral care which they provide. Senior leaders encourage and foster a strong partnership with the local parish and the parish priest is a regular, welcomed visitor to the school. A donation, gifted to the school to finance Wednesday Word, is testimony to this strong partnership. One parent said, 'St Edward's has been an absolute pillar in my child's life to help

her through her Catholic journey and learning and I just wish she could stay in this nurturing, supportive environment forever!' Pupils learn about positive relationships through staff role models and through a well-planned relationship programme which meets diocesan requirements.

Leaders and governors are committed to the church's mission. Leaders recognise and support parents being the first educators. Parents speak of the school being very positive and inclusive. They value all that the school does to support them and their children both personally and spiritually. They recognise the sense of faith and Catholic values that underpin everything. Whilst governors are ambitious for the school and involve themselves in the Catholic life and mission, working collaboratively with leaders, self-evaluation lacks accuracy in some areas and is insufficiently focused on the Catholic life and mission of the school. As a result, any attempted improvements have limited impact. Pupils' involvement in the school's evaluation of its Catholic life and mission is infrequent so their contributions lack impact. Further development to ensure accuracy through well planned monitoring and analysis over time is needed to ensure the school is further developed through a Catholic lens. Staff new to the school are well supported through induction and ongoing professional development for all staff is planned into the school calendar.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade:.....

3

Pupil outcomes

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

3

Provision

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

3

Leadership

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

2



Pupils are developing secure, knowledge, skills and understanding in religious education as they journey through the school. With lessons focusing on teachers imparting knowledge, pupils are not given enough opportunity for collaboration and independent learning. Therefore, work produced is inconsistent and mostly does not reflect the depth in understanding that some children orally are capable of. Pupils engage well and do as the teacher directs. When answering questions, they show interest, curiosity, and a developing religious literacy. During a lesson on sin and contrition, one pupil commented that when someone says sorry but doesn't mean it, "they are saying sorry with their mouth and not their heart, which would upset God." Pupils with special educational needs are well supported by additional adults, so they can access the lesson. Lessons though, are not planned to meet the needs of all and are not guided by data analysis, resulting in less challenge for the most able. Pupils have limited opportunity to self-assess their learning and told inspectors they are unclear on what they need to do to improve.

Teachers are secure in their subject knowledge and there is a supportive culture of professional development to enhance this where necessary. When used well by teachers, questioning is used to reinforce knowledge and check understanding; thus improving learning for most pupils. However, there is a tendency for questioning sessions to become lengthy discussions. In all classes there are good relationships between staff and pupils. They value and praise pupils' efforts, which enables pupils to be comfortable putting forward their ideas and suggestions as they know they will be respected by their teachers and peers. Planning is not linked to pupils' current assessment resulting in pupils completing the same task to the same expectation level.

Senior leaders ensure that the curriculum for religious education meets the requirements of the Diocesan Bishop. It is given full parity with other core subjects, particularly in terms of training and professional development and is resourced efficiently. The curriculum time is appropriately allocated in every classroom. Staff in the early stages of their career are well supported and there is a sense of collaboration. However, leaders do not currently ensure that teachers' planning meets the need of all pupils, especially those with higher attainment. The new subject leader has a clear vision for improving the quality of religious education and demonstrates the skills needed to achieve it. The new link governor is developing in role and has already undertaken several monitoring visits, quickly assuming a key part in the self-evaluation process. In conversations with inspectors, staff comment that they feel well looked after by working closely as a team, supporting each other. Self-evaluation of religious education is insufficiently informed by monitoring and analysis.

Collective worship

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

Collective worship key judgement grade:.....

3

Pupil outcomes

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

3

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 liturgy provided by the school. They come together respectfully and participate confidently. They join in with prayers and listen with interest. Singing is joyous, with pupils participating enthusiastically. However, pupils cannot articulate a detailed understanding of prayer and have limited knowledge of the liturgical year. Year 6 pupils who are faith ambassadors work well with staff to prepare prayer and liturgy and are willing and enthusiastic to be involved. Pupils understand how to reflect on their experience of prayer and liturgy, but some pupils cannot articulate clearly how these experiences have shaped how they think about themselves and the world and how this has inspired them to action.

There is a daily pattern of prayer and liturgy across the school. Prayer and liturgy are integral to the life of the school. Acts of worship are planned throughout the year; and year 6 pupils lead many of them. These include the St Edward's Feast Day and other significant times in the church's year. There are weekly whole-school Gospel worship, singing and celebration collective worships. Two further days of class focused worship are less formalised and staff can decide when it fits into the day. Children told inspectors that it didn't happen very often. The role of chaplaincy is developing in the school with the recruitment of a pastoral support and forest school leader. The inspectors observed a prayer session at the start of a forest school session. The children were encouraged to reflect on what they were thankful for and collaboratively gave thanks to God. Teachers are supported in their planning of class prayer and liturgy through class liturgy boxes which provide a scaffold for pupils. The Oratory, is a beautiful, dedicated prayer space that is cherished and used by both staff and pupils. Parents are supportive of being welcomed into the school for Mass and prayer and liturgy and they

would welcome more opportunities to do so.

Leaders plan the school calendar and timetable carefully to ensure that opportunities to celebrate the Eucharist are regularly offered to the whole school community, particularly at key times in the liturgical year. Holy Days of Obligation and feast days are observed and given high priority. Leaders ensure the school is well resourced to deliver prayer and liturgy but now need to further embed their policy, so that there is a clear expectation of the progress of the children delivering and participating. The school should ensure that procedures to evaluate and monitor this area of school life have impact and are more deeply embedded in a cycle of improvement. Relationships between the governors and the school are a strength; consequently, they provide highly effective support mechanisms to pupils, staff, and the parish community.

Information about the school

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| Full name of school | St Edwards Catholic Junior School |
| School unique reference number (URN) | 148670 |
| Full postal address of the school | Hazell Avenue, Aylesbury. HP217JF |
| School phone number | 01296 424544 |
| Name of head teacher or principal | Mrs Suzette Harris |
| Chair of governing board | Elaine Sidhu |
| School Website | https://www.stedwards.bucks.sch.uk/ |
| Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable) | St Thomas Catholic Academy Trust |
| Type of school | Junior |
| School category | Academy |
| Age-range of pupils | 7-11 |
| Trustees | Diocese of Northampton |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Date of last denominational inspection | March 2017 |
| Previous denominational inspection grade | Good |

The inspection team

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|--------------|----------------|
| Kirstie Yuen | Lead inspector |
| Laura Maw | Team inspector |

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 |