



St Mary's Catholic Primary School

URN: 139881

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Bishop of Hallam

20–21 November 2024

Summary of key findings

Overall effectiveness

The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school

2

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

2

Religious education (p.5)

The quality of curriculum religious education

2

Collective worship (p.7)

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

2

The school is fully compliant with the general norms for religious education laid down by the Bishops' Conference

Yes

The school is fully compliant with any additional requirements of the diocesan bishop

Yes

The school has responded to the areas for improvement from the last inspection

Fully

Compliance statement

- The school's religious education programme ensures that 10% or more of the timetable is dedicated to teaching and learning in the subject.
- The school follows the guidance of the diocesan bishop in its choice of religious education resource for teaching.
- School leaders have worked hard and effectively to have impact on those areas identified for improvement at the last inspection.

What the school does well

- The inspirational leadership and passionate commitment to Catholic education from the headteacher has united and energised the whole school community.
- The exceptional, high standard of pastoral care, support and love from all staff towards all pupils, especially the most vulnerable.
- The school's mission statement is well-known, regularly visited, lived, and permeates the school. It has an ever-increasing impact on school life.
- The high standard of adaptive teaching enables all pupils to engage and behave well during religious education lessons.
- The enthusiastic participation and response for prayer and liturgy from pupils and staff, including joyous singing.

What the school needs to improve

- Provide regular opportunities for pupils to demonstrate creativity and individuality in their religious education lessons, displaying a high level of religious literacy.
- Develop pupils' understanding of Catholic social teaching so that they can articulate the theology underpinning their charitable and community work.
- Enhance staff's knowledge of prayer and liturgy to enable them to model a range of ways of praying that will enhance pupils' experiences.

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

2

Provision

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

2

1

Leadership

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

2

The school's Catholic identity is strong and is felt by all members of the school community. Pupils are happy in school and feel safe, secure and supported. They report that one of the key strengths of the school is that 'Staff care about us and are always wanting to help.' Pupils are actively engaged in responding to the demands of Catholic Social Teaching. The recently formed Eco Warriors, along with the established GIFT (Growing in faith together) team, are examples of groups that pupils enthusiastically participate in as part of the faith life of the school. Currently, pupils are unable to articulate the theology underpinning these actions. They enjoy opportunities to fundraise for good causes but do not understand the reasons behind taking part in charitable events, apart from at a basic level. Pupils demonstrate a respect and welcome for those of other faiths, beliefs and religions. They demonstrate kindness to each other, and this is evident throughout the school. The behaviour of pupils in lessons is very good and results in all pupils being able to contribute and share ideas.

The quality of provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school is outstanding. The school's mission statement is a clear and inspiring expression of the school. It is known, understood and embraced by everyone in the school community, and is rooted in the word of God. Even the very youngest pupils in school can recite the strapline of, 'Achieve, believe, care, a community united by God's love.' Staff enthusiastically live out this mission, particularly through giving the highest level of pastoral care to all pupils, especially the most vulnerable. Staff work well as a team and are exemplary role models. Their love and care for each other, and everyone in their school community, bears witness to the school's Catholic life and mission. The school has identified the need to provide explicit opportunities for staff spiritual and moral development. The provision for relationships, sex and health education meets both statutory and diocesan requirements.

Pupils are able to articulate what they have learned in these lessons. The physical environment of the school reflects the mission and identity of the school but is currently being developed to fully reflect the priority and provision of Catholic life throughout the school.

The passionate and skilled headteacher has prioritised the Catholic life of the school and provides clear and skilled direction. Staff appreciate the care and consideration that they are given and the ongoing commitment to their wellbeing. Formal induction of new staff is not currently in place, though. The school works well with both the diocese and as part of the St Francis Catholic multi academy trust. The school is well supported by both the parish priest and academy trust priest who regularly lead Mass and liturgy and also visit school to support and enhance religious education. Parents are viewed as partners in educating pupils. They value the work the school does to involve and engage with them, especially during information sessions and celebration events. Opportunities are currently limited for cross-curricular links between religious education and other subjects. Governors play a key role in the Catholic life and mission of the school. They are actively involved in the evaluation of the school and have a clear, informed picture of the strengths and areas for development. Pupil voice is increasingly becoming part of the school's evaluation of Catholic life, and pupils are beginning to play a role in planning improvements.

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

2

2

2

2

Pupils are developing secure knowledge, understanding and skills of the learning required by the *Religious Education Curriculum Directory* (2012). They are enthusiastic, engaged and curious learners who show a genuine interest in their work; this curiosity is evidenced through pupils' ability to ask good questions of both adults and peers. Pupils demonstrate good collaborative skills; the use of talk partners and group discussion is used regularly to allow pupils to share ideas and develop thoughts. This was evident in a Year 6 lesson where pupils were sharing personal reflections on how a Bible passage relates to their life today. During lessons, pupils are engaged and clearly enjoy their learning. One pupil in Year 2 reported that, 'I love RE lessons because they are exciting.' This ensures that behaviour is very good, and pupils are keen to impress and achieve. Pupils work well independently, following the direction of the adults in class, but do not currently have opportunities to develop individuality and creativity in how they present their learning. Pupils' attainment in religious education has parity with other core subjects, but the quality of pupils' work in books is not yet consistent enough. Pupils have a limited understanding of how well they are doing in religious education and what they need to do to improve.

Teachers have benefitted from well-planned professional development and show a good understanding of how pupils learn. Teaching in Early Years Foundation Stage is a key strength of the school. Pupils are getting the best possible start through skilled, creative and innovative teaching. Provision areas include opportunities for pupils to develop and enhance their knowledge, skills and understanding. Lessons in all classes are language-rich. Teachers regularly use a high standard of subject-specific vocabulary. Scripture, including the use of Bible references, is used well in lessons, and, as a result, pupils are developing good Bible skills. Teachers are highly committed and report an increased confidence in delivering religious

education lessons. They feel supported by the subject leader, and other members of staff, to assist with subject knowledge queries. Questioning is used well in lessons to establish pupils' learning during lessons and address misconceptions. A range of adaptive teaching strategies are used to ensure all pupils are given the best opportunity to succeed. Teachers and teaching assistants skilfully adapt explanations and tasks, ensuring all pupils can access learning. Written feedback is currently underdeveloped though and does not identify how pupils can raise the standard of their work.

Leaders and governors ensure that the school curriculum for religious education is a faithful expression of the *Religious Education Curriculum Directory (2012)*. The subject leader has a clear vision and plan for improvement, with pupils' wellbeing, attainment and progress at the heart of all areas for development. Staff are united in their determination to support the planned areas for development and increase pupils' attainment. Leaders and governors have prioritised professional development opportunities for staff to enable standards of teaching to improve. Regular, robust monitoring has ensured that this training has had a positive impact on practice. This high standard of planned monitoring has resulted in accurate self-evaluation and analysis of further areas for development. Leaders have also ensured that religious education has parity with other core subjects in terms of timetabling and resourcing. Staff and pupils' understanding of assessment and the next steps for learning to improve standards of attainment throughout the school are not yet fully developed. Religious education has been effectively planned to meet the needs of all pupils with a range of adaptive teaching strategies in place. Opportunities for enrichment activities, such as visiting different places of worship, are currently limited.

Collective worship

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

Collective worship key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

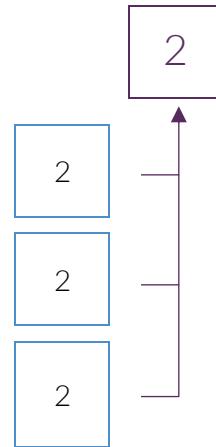
How well pupils participate in and respond to the school's collective worship

Provision

The quality of collective worship provided by the school

Leadership

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



Pupils respond well to the experiences of prayer and liturgy provided by the school. They show respect and reverence and understand that prayer is a key part of their life at school. During a whole school liturgy, all pupils and staff sang joyously in their praise of God. Pupils currently have a limited experience of a range of ways of praying and do not routinely have opportunities for spontaneous prayer. Their knowledge of the liturgical year is at a basic level. All pupils are given opportunities to lead liturgy, and they understand the required structure and components. In a Year 1/2 class liturgy, pupils carefully chose items to display for a prayer focus and demonstrated a good understanding of what these items represent. Pupils do not however have the opportunity to evaluate their own, or peers', liturgies. Pupils recognise the importance of prayer and the effect this has on their lives. One child remarked, 'When I find things difficult, I know that I can pray to God and things will get better.' Parents also report positively about the prayer life of the school, sharing that pupils recite at home prayers that they have learnt in school.

There is a clear, well-designed pattern of prayer and liturgy embedded into school life at St Mary's. Seasonally appropriate scripture passages are central to prayer and liturgy sessions. Scripture is also used effectively in class and communal area displays with inspirational Bible quotes imaginatively added to provision areas and resources. All staff are highly committed to the prayer life of the school and are excellent role models. They engage and lead prayer and liturgy with confidence. Staff understanding and training about the nature of prayer and liturgy is at an early stage of development, designed to ensuring there are regular opportunities for pupils to have periods of prayerful silence and reflection. The school makes good use of the spaces available to create areas for prayer. There is a well-maintained prayer garden, and prayer focus tables are in place in all classrooms and around communal areas of the school. The

school's family liaison officer works well with families to support pupils' development. In difficult times, prayer is offered as a strategy to offer comfort and inspiration. Links with the parish are good. Parishioners enjoy opportunities to visit school and share in the school's prayer and liturgy.

Leaders have planned the school calendar appropriately to set aside regular opportunities to celebrate the Eucharist. Pupils regularly have the opportunity to visit the parish church for Mass, and this is an embedded part of school life. Holy days of obligation are prioritised in the school timetable. There are not currently opportunities for pupils to be offered the Sacrament of Reconciliation above the first time that they receive this. The school has a policy on prayer, but leaders have not currently formulated a clear progression of pupil independence and leadership responsibility that reflects the age and capacity of pupils. Staff understanding of prayer and liturgy has been identified by leaders as a key area of development moving forward. Leaders recognise the importance of prayer and liturgy and this is reflected when setting budgets and allocating resources. They regularly review the quality of prayer and liturgy as part of the school's cycle of self-evaluation and are beginning to include pupils' voice in this process. Staff feel confident and secure in approaching leaders for support and advice in developing high-quality experiences of prayer and liturgy.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Mary's Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	139881
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	3723335
Full postal address of the school	St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Muglet Lane, Maltby, Rotherham, S66 7JU
School phone number	01709812611
Headteacher	Victoria Sonko
Chair of local governing body	Aden Wass
School Website	www.stmarysmaltby.co.uk/
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	St Francis Catholic Multi Academy 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	March 2016
Previous denominational inspection grade	Good (2)

The inspection team

Christopher Power
Emmeline Janvier

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