

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

URN: 140779

Carried out on behalf of the Rt Rev . Terence Patrick Draine, Bishop of Middlesbrough on:

Date: 08 -09 June 2023

Overall effectiveness

The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school.....

1

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

✓

The school is fully compliant with all requirements of the diocesan bishop

✓

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

Fully

Summary of key findings

What the school does well

- The Catholic life of the school is outstanding: the well-being and the personal and spiritual development of all pupils is at the heart of St Mary's, and they strive to 'Live as Mary did' and follow their mission statement 'Fiat Mihi' – Let it be with me.
- The school is a haven in its community and pupils know that their school's Catholic character brings responsibilities to live out what they learn in school by saying yes to God as Mary did. The school provides ample opportunity for the pupils to do this in daily life, in links with the parish and the local community.
- The school promotes inclusivity, providing a warm and welcoming, caring environment for pupils', staff and visitors where everyone feels valued and respected. The Treehouse provision ensures all pupils are loved and nurtured in order to meet their full potential.

This Catholic Schools Inspectorate inspection was carried out under canons 804 & 806 of the code of canon law. For maintained schools and academies in England it fulfils the statutory requirements of s.48 of the Education Act 2005. For maintained schools and academies in Wales it fulfils the statutory requirements of s.50 of the Education Act 2005.

- Pupils and parents speak highly of the school and welcome the good Catholic education it provides. Parents' attendance at class liturgies, stay and pray, assemblies and other prayer opportunities has been increasing over the last academic year.
- Strong leadership ensures all staff are highly aspirational for pupils in their care and are deeply committed to the mission of the school. St Mary's is the 'Mother' of this community. The leadership team ensures the religious education curriculum is well planned and delivered, meeting the needs of all including the most vulnerable. Excellent leadership ensures that the outcomes for pupils and provision are rapidly improving.

What the school needs to improve:

- Building on the good practice that already exists, using coaching and modelling across the school, ensure that all pupils are aware of their next steps and how to improve their work in religious education.
- Further embed the range of prayer and liturgical events throughout the school to allow for greater creativity and more opportunities for pupils to lead worship.
- Enable pupils to deepen their understanding of Catholic social teachings by taking shared ownership of the direction the school takes.

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:.....

1

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

Pupils demonstrate a real love for this inclusive school, which is situated in an area of extremely high deprivation with many social problems and high levels of crime. All pupils spoken to, tell of how proud they are of this school and clearly understand the part they play in living out the school mission statement. *Fiat Mihi – Let it be with me Luke 1:38*. The strong outward signs of the Catholic faith are demonstrated regularly to all stakeholders. Pupils are particularly enthusiastic about the role Mary plays in their school and how it influences their behaviours and attitudes to learning. This is evident within the displays and the learning environment at St Mary's. The behaviour of most pupils is good, where there are challenges it is dealt with, with kindness and respect and in keeping with the dignity of pupils involved. Pupils are enthusiastic about the pupil groups they belong to: Stewards of Creation pupil group described how they help spread the word of God and Pope Francis' message about caring for our World: Eco warriors discussed the bug hotels they had made and why they had been made. Pupils are beginning to take a leading role in responding to Catholic social teachings, but this needs further development.

Relationships are very strong throughout the school between pupils, pupils and staff and staff and parents. The strong outward sign of faith is shown through the welcome given by the staff as the pupils and their families enter the building. St Mary's offer exceptional care for the children and families in their school and community. Families very much appreciate the support they are given by the inspirational executive headteacher and the school staff and see themselves as active participants in the education of their children. This is evidenced in the parental survey responses where one parent commented, "The school is always involving all children in activities both in and out of school. There is a real family vibe feeling, wanting all children to thrive to their best abilities. As parents we are encouraged to share our own faith journeys with pupils."

Leaders are deeply committed to their faith and to the Catholic life and mission of St Mary's. They lead by example; the executive headteacher being described as a servant leader by one staff member during the inspection. She has transformed the school, bringing the whole community with her on this journey of change. Leaders are visible to the school community as seen in the charities supported in the local community. The staff have a clear vision of what they want to do in the future and the team approach is evident through school improvement priorities and the school development plan. Clear policies and structures are in place, which reflect their shared vision and aspirations for those in their care. The school engages extremely well with parents who are supportive of its mission. The religious education leader is deeply committed to developing religious education within the school. She enthusiastically shared the work she does annually on delivering a mission week for the school, the community and two other schools within the Trust. This year it is based on the year of Blessed Nicolas Postgate and centres around the theme of 'Who is my Neighbour?' Governors are highly ambitious for the Catholic life and mission of the school and lead by example. They consistently emphasise it as a school improvement priority. Governors are actively involved in evaluation of the Catholic life of St Mary's and have clear systems in place for receiving the views of the parents/carers, staff, and pupils. As a result, governors offer challenge as well as support where necessary and make a highly significant contribution to the Catholic life and mission of the school. Governors are passionate, have high levels of expertise and are well organised and thorough in their work.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade:.....

1

Pupil outcomes

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

1

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.....

1

Pupils have developed a secure knowledge and understanding of their faith. Pupils discuss their learning and are confident in sharing what they have learnt. They are very proud of the work they produce in religious education. Work in books is well presented and follows the school teaching and learning policy, which is embedded across the school. Retrieval strategies allow pupils to consolidate their prior knowledge and build strong schemas for learning. This results in pupils who remember more, know more and learn more. Pupils confidently work independently. Pupils value the structure given in some of their lessons, giving them ownership of their learning. Pupils with special educational and health needs (SEND) access religious education fully and are ably supported by the SEND co-ordinator and support staff, resulting in really good outcomes for SEND pupils across the school. Behaviour in religious education lessons is good because pupils are engaged and motivated in their learning. Pupils listen well and they respond enthusiastically. Through evidence in workbooks and from conversation, most pupils can demonstrate effective use of prior knowledge when making links between religious ideas and using scriptural references accurately. Almost all pupils, across the whole school, spoke with inspectors about their religious education lessons. Their responses were consistently enthusiastic and reflective, showing a clear understanding and awareness of their religious commitment in their daily lives. Attainment data is very strong across the school and compares very favourably to all core subjects. Progress is good, across the school, often from extremely low starting points.

The quality of teaching and learning in religious education, as evidenced through pupils' religious education books and the teaching observed is of a good standard. Teachers' expectations are high in most lessons. Teachers explain and model what pupils are learning, enabling pupils to see examples of good answers before attempting their own independent work. The best lessons challenged pupils with the use of good questioning. In all the lessons observed, teachers showed

sound subject knowledge, which contributed to the good progress pupils made by most pupils in the lessons. Most learning is tailored to meet the needs of their learners with pupils responding well to the live marking as seen during lessons and through discussions with the pupils. However, the pupils found it difficult to describe their next steps and how to improve their work further. Pupils' effort is celebrated in a variety of ways throughout the school: gaining 'Thrive' points; to certificates in celebration assembly. This motivates pupils in their learning. Teachers recognise the impact religious education has on the moral and spiritual development of its pupils and therefore they give pupils the space and time for reflection in lessons.

The school has adopted a team approach to religious education in order to further develop religious education and the Catholic life of the school. This ensures that all areas are led effectively. The religious education leader's passion and drive for the subject underpins their outstanding support for all staff. Teachers who are early in their career commented on the support, professional development and teamwork approach at St Mary's which is allowing them to flourish. This team approach enables teachers to deliver lessons with confidence and enthusiasm and ensure that standards in religious education are good from each pupil's individual starting points. Their strong knowledge and experience gives them the confidence and skills to adapt the school's approach to the subject in order to continually seek improvement. The school uses the "Life to the Full" curriculum for relationships, sex, and health education, which is carefully planned and it fully meets diocesan requirements, and is firmly rooted in the teaching of the Church. All leaders, including governors, recognise the importance of religious education and share the religious education subject leader's passion in seeking the highest standards in this subject. Adequate funds are made available. Professional development is given priority and valued by all. Staff have attended cluster, trust and diocesan training and have used this training positively within the school. Good strategies ensures that leaders and governors have a very good understanding of the strengths of St Mary's and what is needed to improve. Leaders and governors ensure that the religious education curriculum meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference, with 10% of the timetable dedicated to the subject across all year groups.

Collective worship

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

Collective worship key judgement grade:.....

1

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

2

Leadership

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

1



Prayer and liturgy is central to the life of St Mary's and valued by all. Prayer is a regular part of the daily experience of all pupils and staff. From a very young age, pupils are reverent and respectful during all prayer and liturgical celebrations. This was observed; with the early years during their worship in the outside space; class-based liturgies; whole school liturgies. Pupils respond very well and sing with enthusiasm. Pupils tell us they have different types of prayer and liturgies including class led, adult led, Mass, special services, and Godly play. Many of these were seen during the inspection. The stewards of creation pupil group explained how they had set up a liturgy for Mary and shared the May procession that had taken place last month. Pupils demonstrate with confidence the ways in which prayer and liturgy influence and are influenced by both the curriculum and the wider life of the school. Pupils are taking an increasing lead in preparing and leading liturgies in class, as seen in Year 5 and Year 3 classes. However, this is not fully developed across the school. Pupils say that they enjoy liturgical celebrations and can talk about their experiences and what they have learned. Pupils have a very good understanding of the Church's liturgical year, seasons and Feasts and describe how they are celebrated in school. Pupils show respect for faiths not of their own.

Praying together is clearly part of the daily experience for all pupils and staff, which has a very positive impact on the school's sense of community. Teachers ensure that prayer and liturgies in their classroom are age appropriate, centered on themes and messages and are accessible to all pupils. In the early years, children knew that by lighting a candle in the class during the liturgy was because Jesus was the light of the world. There is a planned programme of liturgies, Masses, and other liturgical celebrations. Themes chosen for worship reflect a good understanding of the liturgical year as well as the Catholic character of the school. Parents,

parishioners and governors are encouraged to share in the spiritual life of the school through various liturgies, celebration assemblies and Mass. However, there are limited opportunities for pupils to lead and take ownership of prayer and liturgies.

School leaders have secure knowledge of how to plan and deliver high quality liturgy and worship. Prayers are age appropriate and build on previous knowledge and the school's policy on prayer and liturgy is carefully formulated, regularly reviewed and fit for purpose. The leader for those pupils with special educational and physical needs ensures all pupils take full part in all prayer and liturgy activities at an appropriate level. In the class-based worship seen, parents were actively encouraged to participate and did so willingly and reverently. Pupils and parents are given opportunities to reflect and have moments of quiet throughout many of the planned worship activities. Leaders ensure there are no barriers to full participation in the worship life of the school and adjustments are made so all can partake. Pupils are ably supported by staff to access this as seen during the liturgical celebration within the treehouse provision. Leaders understand the strengths and areas for further development. Priority is given to high quality professional development and as a result all staff understand the centrality of prayer and liturgy to the life of the school. Relevant staff are highly skilled and well supported to lead this. The leaders understand the increasing role and responsibility they have as a school community to enable the pupils and families to experience the full life of being part of a Catholic community. The social media streams actively showcase the Catholic life and liturgical celebrations of St Mary's. The voice of pupils and other relevant stakeholders are an integral and valued part of the school's evaluation of prayer and liturgy.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Mary's Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	140779
Full postal address of the school	Tennyson Avenue Grangetown Middlesbrough TS6 7AD
School phone number	01642 455309
Name of head teacher or principal	Mrs Anna McClurey – Executive Headteacher
Chair of governing board	Audrey Kirby
School Website	https://stmarys.npcat.org.uk/
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	Nicholas Postgate Catholic Academy Trust
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy
Age-range of pupils	2 to 11
Trustees	Diocese of Middlesbrough
Gender of pupils	mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	May 2018
Previous denominational inspection grade	2 - Good

The inspection team

Angela Spencer	Lead Inspector
Dermot O'Neill	Team Inspector
Liz King	Shadow 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