

St Mary's Catholic Primary School

URN: 147241

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Bishop of Middlesbrough

17–18 January 2024

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

Religious education (p.5)

The quality of curriculum religious education

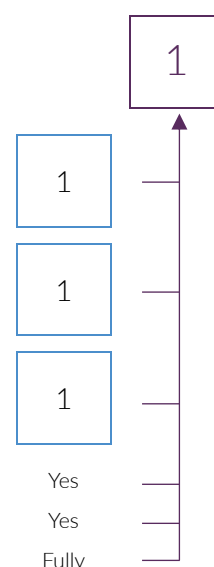
Collective worship (p.7)

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

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



What the school does well

- The commitment and drive of the head teacher, ably supported by her senior leaders, has revitalised the Catholic life and mission of the school.
- The inspirational chaplaincy leader ensures that faith is put into action through a variety of initiatives at local, national and global levels.
- The pupils of St Mary's are exemplary in their behaviour, attitudes to learning and the respect they show to others.
- Staff at all levels share a strong commitment to the school's Catholic identity, regardless of faith; often going the extra mile to ensure that pupils and their families are supported in all aspects of life.

What the school needs to improve

- Review the mission statement, so that the school's Catholic identity and its values are clear to all.
- Ensure that all pupils have a clear understanding of the shape of the liturgical year and the prayers associated with its seasons.

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



At St Mary's outcomes for Catholic life and mission are outstanding. Pupils benefit hugely from the commitment shown by all staff in their mission to provide a full and rich Catholic life experience. All pupils understand that they are unique and made in the image of God, with these unique qualities being celebrated by the whole community. Pupils clearly understand that staff are helping them to follow Christ's example, with one commenting, 'we follow in the footsteps of Jesus'. They are also aware of Laudato Si and speak passionately about their work as 'eco-warriors'. Catholic social teaching values are woven into the life of the school and all staff and pupils are active in responding to this. Pupils speak eloquently about these and weekly whole school liturgy is underpinned by these principles. One pupil commented that their links with a Ugandan school has given them a better understanding of 'solidarity and unity'. Pupils appreciate the work that staff do for them and they speak highly of the opportunities that they have to explore their faith. They also appreciate each other and this culminates in outstanding behaviour and attitudes towards others. The school's mission statement is not clear to some members of the school community and the school is in the process of reviewing this.

The school's provision is underpinned by the belief that Christ is at the centre of all that it does; this drives the whole school curriculum intent. Lesson observations and meetings with staff also highlight the strong pastoral systems in place; with staff modelling the behaviours expected from pupils. All staff are wholly committed to the most vulnerable within the school and the local community; striving to ensure a community where equality and diversity are promoted. This is an inclusive school. Display throughout school is current, appropriate for the liturgical year and of a high standard. Pupils play a large part in contributing to display and they are proud of this. The rich opportunities on offer in school allow all pupils to contribute to improving the lives of

their peers, the local community and those further afield. Pupils and their families support the local food bank, with pupils helping distribute hampers to those in need locally. They also fundraise for a wide range of charities including CAFOD, Missio, the Royal British Legion and the Butterwick Hospice amongst others.

Leaders and governors have a clear vision for Catholic life and they articulate this well. The school's links with parishes are outstanding. In addition to Mass in school, pupils from St Mary's, along with those from the local secondary school, visit their parish church regularly for Masses; providing liturgy and music. These are also well attended by the wider community. The Chaplaincy leader is highly regarded by staff and pupils. Her dedication to the school and wider communities is extraordinary. Her work in creating new opportunities for the spiritual growth of staff and pupils is inspiring. As the chair of governors, the parish priest is fully active in school life and visits regularly. He plays a key role in developing the Catholic life programme and his contributions are highly valued. Governors know their school well, bringing appropriate support and challenge; this is welcomed by senior leaders. This expertise is used well to review the school's provision and refine the Catholic life experience for all pupils. Staff induction is outstanding and continued training is also strong. All staff value the support they receive from leaders in the school. Staff comment that this has made a positive difference to their lives, feeling valued and well respected. They also speak highly of the support and training delivered through the Nicholas Postgate Catholic Academy Trust (NPCAT) and how this has enhanced their roles.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

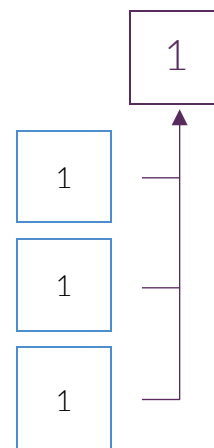
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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 enjoy religious education lessons at St Mary's and, as they progress through the school, their knowledge, skills and understanding of religious concepts and Catholic life are effectively developed through an appropriate level of challenge in lessons. This, coupled with the high expectations of all staff, has created a learning environment where all pupils can speak confidently and articulately about the work they have covered. Staff are skilled in developing a learning environment where pupils have become accomplished, independent, reflective learners. When working independently, pupils are focussed and succeed in meeting the challenges offered. Reflection time is built into all lessons which gives pupils an opportunity to contemplate and better understand spiritual concepts, thus further developing their religious literacy. The progress made by all groups of learners is impressive, a consequence of consistently good or better teaching. Pupils' enjoyment of lessons and the excellent relationships established with staff ensures that they are fully engaged and that behaviour is outstanding. The quality of work in books exemplifies the challenge offered in lessons and high attainment; presentation is excellent. Pupils are proud of their books and keen to show them to others; they talk fluently about their work and the best examples are modelled for the benefit of others.

No teaching in religious education is less than good and is predominantly outstanding. Staff are proficient in delivering age-appropriate lessons that provide fitting challenge and, where needed, effective support. They show a deep commitment to their subject and are relentless in their high expectations of pupils. Skilful questioning allows staff to effectively assess where pupils are with their work. This culminates in outstanding examples of adaptive teaching; which ensures that pupils maximise their understanding and consolidates their learning. Assessment in books is outstanding and pupil discussions gave evidence that they know exactly what they have to do to make progress. This is also evident from their high-quality books; presentation is

excellent and they demonstrate outstanding examples of religious literacy. Pupils are keen to follow up on incomplete work or suggested improvements. Rigorous and thought-provoking assessment informs planning that is extremely well-suited to the needs of pupils. This planning also caters for a wide variety of teaching approaches and assessment methods that allow all types of learner to achieve. The schools' teaching and learning policy ensures a consistency in planning across the whole department that results in a structured learning approach for all pupils.

Monitoring and evaluation by senior leaders is outstanding. This is because religious education is at the forefront of all that the school does. It has full parity with other core subjects in terms of time and resourcing, with pupils' work and outcomes being as good as or better than those in other subjects. Leaders and governors are reflective in their approach to their work and this results in a strong strategic approach to improvement. Senior leaders have ensured that appropriately targeted subject training for staff meets the needs of the school and is tailored to suit the requirements of the individual teacher. This is delivered effectively by senior leaders, NPCAT staff and the diocese; who liaise with the school regularly. Staff are appreciative of this, understanding that it has enabled rapid progress in teaching and learning over the past academic year. The subject leaders for religious education have a clear vision and are inspiring in their work. The sequential curriculum on offer meets the needs of all groups of learners and all pupils in school benefit from this.

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

2

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

At St Mary's pupils of all ages are fully involved in prayer and liturgy life; they participate fully and engage deeply with the prayer activities that occur, both in and out of the classroom. They are respectful and reverent during prayer time and their singing during whole school worship is uplifting and joyful. Pupils experience a wide variety of prayer encounters and demonstrate their willingness to participate in activities involving scripture, lectio divina, singing and liturgical dance. Most pupils understand the meaning of the Church's liturgical year and understand how this shapes the prayer experiences during the year. However, some are not clear on this and are not familiar with some of the more traditional prayers associated with its seasons. Pupils, through the leadership of the school chaplaincy team, are confident in taking on ministry and leading prayer and liturgy. This begins with the youngest children being active listeners and participants in prayer and liturgy. All pupils are involved in the evaluation process, with one pupil commenting, 'It was magical'. Pupils in the Mini Vinnies group talked confidently about their links with the SVP in the parish and the activities they have been involved in; one pupil commented that they 'loved praying with people from the parish'. They could make the connection between their prayer experience in school and how this has inspired them to become part of this group.

Prayer and liturgy is a central part of school life, woven into the fabric of the curriculum and having scripture at its heart. Staff and pupils pray whenever they come together, both in and out of the classroom and pupil discussions evidence that there are occasions of spontaneous prayer during the school day. Staff are exemplary role models during prayer and liturgy activities, participating and leading when appropriate. Scripture is well chosen, suited to the age of the pupils and fits well with the liturgical year. This is delivered in a way that ensures all pupils can participate and engage. All staff, led by the chaplaincy team, are skilled in assisting pupils to provide prayer and liturgy experiences that are of high quality. There are numerous prayer

spaces within school and these are used well by all; they are well maintained and reflect the liturgical year. Each classroom is consistent in having an age appropriate prayer area with relevant display and artefacts. Families play a significant part in the prayer life of the school and regularly attend Mass; feedback indicates that parents and carers appreciate being given the opportunity to participate in prayer and liturgy activities with their children. These activities are well planned by staff and the school strives to be fully inclusive in its approach to prayer and liturgy. Parents, carers and those in the wider parish are overwhelmingly positive about the impact that the school has had on their children's spiritual development.

The school's policy on prayer and liturgy is well established and used by all staff; the newest of whom value it as a point of reference. Leaders, including governors, have a clear understanding of skill progression and know their staff and pupils well. Consequently, they provide a tailored prayer and liturgy programme that allows all staff and pupils to participate easily and grow in confidence with their own spirituality. This programme is evaluated regularly by leaders and governors, with input from pupils, parents and carers. Their reviews are thoughtful and incisive and these, in turn, ensure that prayer and liturgy opportunities are refined to offer a more meaningful spiritual experience.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Mary's Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	147241
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	8153614
Full postal address of the school	St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Cross Lanes, Richmond, North Yorkshire DL10 7DZ
School phone number	01748822365
Headteacher	Ms Fran Mackle
Chair of Local Governing Body	Rev. John Bane
School Website	https://smr.npcat.org.uk/
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	Nicholas Postgate Catholic Academy Trust
Phase	Primary
Type of school	Academy
Admissions policy	N/A
Age-range of pupils	3-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	July 2018
Previous denominational inspection grade	2

The inspection team

Mark Taylor
Angela Phillips

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

