

St Mary's Catholic Primary School

URN: 100636

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of Most Rev. John Wilson, Archbishop of Southwark

12–13 June 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

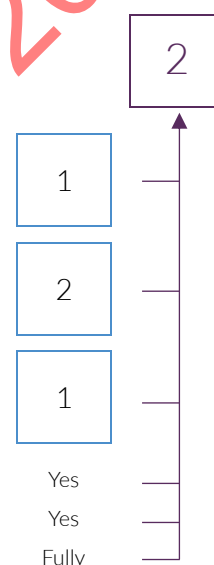
Collective worship (p.7)

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

- Pupils' exemplary behaviour reflects the strong Christian ethos of St Mary's which inspires them to serve others in a profound way.
- Catholic social teaching is fully embedded in the school in the way pupils engage in fundraising for the those in need.
- Pupils respond to liturgical occasions with deep reverence and respect.
- There is a very strong partnership at all levels that leads to clarity, vision and purpose in Catholic life and mission and prayer and liturgy.
- Pupils respond with enthusiasm and a desire to learn because of the range of strategies used by teachers in religious education lessons.

What the school needs to improve

- Support teachers to develop tasks in religious education that will challenge pupils to develop higher order thinking skills.
- School leaders should establish a more strategic system of accurate assessment that will lead to enhanced progress for all pupils, especially the more able.

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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

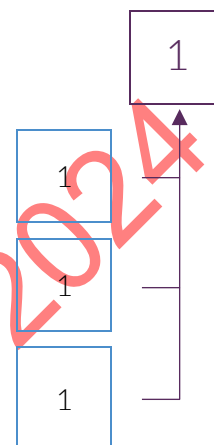
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

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



Pupils know they belong to a special place, their 'school family', where they feel safe and nurtured. They happily say how grateful they are for their teachers who are warm-hearted and are always there for them. Pupils respond by recognising and celebrating their differences and by showing a deep respect for their own dignity and that of others. A pupil said, "We should all love each other. We are all different and that's ok". Behaviour in all areas of the school is exemplary because pupils know it is the right thing to do. Older pupils thrive in the leadership roles they are given. The school council, for example, set up the playground buddies' team to look after younger pupils. They proposed the friendship bench that ensures no pupil is ever alone. The Growing in Faith team play a significant part in responding to the demands of Catholic social teaching. They demonstrate a genuine commitment to others and are pro-active in organising fundraising activities, such as the Cafod big walk, for the Ace of Clubs and the Royal Trinity Hospice. In partnership with the parish Redemptorist order, they support the missionary life of service to the church in Zimbabwe.

The motto, 'Wisdom and Faith', underpins everything the school provides for the whole community. It is a visible and lived commitment to loving God and neighbour. A willingness to serve others creates a strong culture of welcome and a real community spirit within the school. From the very start, pupils are welcomed into a Christian family. Their words and actions show they soon begin caring for others. Staff throw themselves into all aspects of Catholic life. They are fully committed to the school's mission statement and are exemplary role models in the way they consistently bear witness to the school's Catholic life and mission. A teacher said, 'The teachings of Christ influence everything we do and are the foundations for how our school operates.' Staff genuinely care about each other and pupils. There is sensitive but unstinting support for families. An explicit and concrete commitment to the most vulnerable is evident in how they raise awareness through the mental health, autism and downs syndrome days. The Catholic character of the school is clearly visible in the creative displays and sacred

spaces featured around the school. Provision for relationship, sex and health education is in line with the teachings of the Catholic church.

Leaders and governors are fully dedicated to developing and sustaining an authentic Catholic way of life. They understand they are guardians of the Catholic life and mission of the school. The wellbeing of staff is a priority for leaders as evident in the exemplary pastoral care for them, including with the induction programme and the well-being day. Leaders and governors have an excellent grasp of the strengths of the school and demonstrate integrity in recognising areas for development. The choir is in school weekly and, with a proactive link governor, monitors the quality of provision effectively. Leaders are highly ambitious for all children. A strong working partnership between governors and school leaders means that plans for developing the Catholic life and mission of the school are strategic and accurately focussed on school priorities. The executive head teacher, school leaders and the parish priest are excellent role models and are enthused by their journey. The school engages very well with parents and carers to the benefit of all its pupils, who have a very good understanding of the school's mission and are very supportive of it. A parent commented, 'The school is a wonderful Catholic nurturing community.'

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

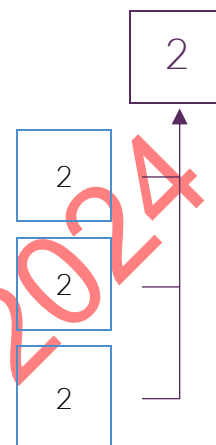
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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 approach learning with genuine interest and enthusiasm. They settle quickly to work and are attentive to the teacher. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary because they want to learn. They know they are there to learn. Pupils are aware of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life. In one lesson, key stage 1 pupils confidently questioned each other on the story of Levi the tax collector. They were able to explain how they can change and become better people. Pupils concentrate well and remain on task, working both independently and collaboratively. In lessons, pupils speak with confidence about what they are learning, are motivated and take pride in their work. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make good progress from their starting points and in line with other subjects. They can recall key learning, for example from scripture, and they show a growing level of religious literacy. Progress overall is good. However, pupils are not always given enough opportunities to take the initiative in their learning in more challenging tasks. The school needs to ensure pupils have opportunities to deepen and enable independent thought to ensure all pupils achieve their best.

Teachers understand the value of religious education for pupils. They have high expectations of them and well-established routines that create a settled and strong learning environment. Teachers are becoming more confident in their subject knowledge. They understand how to use structure and pace to keep pupils engaged. Pupils speak warmly about how teachers help them learn. Planning across the school ensures that teachers manage time well and secure good learning in lessons and across a sequence of lessons. Questioning is used to recall prior learning. However, this is not developed consistently enough throughout the lesson to ensure pupils know how to learn at a higher level. Although lessons are designed to help pupils to learn and think about issues linked to their lives, opportunities for activities that lead to this independent thinking are often missed. Pupils' progress is assessed regularly. There is an established process for monitoring and evaluation that leads to targeted planning and action, but the school is aware that how they assess and track progress can be more strategic to help teachers know where pupils are more accurately. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are strongly and very sensitively supported within the lesson by other highly skilled, caring adults.

Leaders and governors are deeply committed to achieving high outcomes in religious education. They are very experienced and knowledgeable and fully understand that teaching the faith is central to their vocation. Governors are kept fully informed of the quality and impact of provision through their visits to the school and by receiving written and verbal reports from school leaders. The link governor is experienced and regularly monitors the provision of teaching and learning. Governors are knowledgeable about the strengths in Religious Education as well as the identified areas for improvement. With school leaders, they show they value their mutual support and challenge. The executive head teacher demonstrates an ambitious vision for the school and for what every pupil and teacher can achieve. He is experienced and has identified how teaching and assessment can be developed further. There are regular training opportunities for teachers. The subject lead provides support and quality teaching resources which staff appreciate. He keeps records of lesson observations, analysis of data and the monitoring of pupils work in all classes across the school. However, the school needs to develop more searching analysis of data to ensure well-targeted objectives that result in sustained improvement in outcomes.

Collective worship

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

Collective worship key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

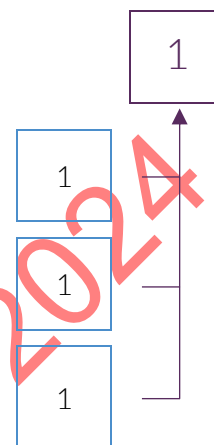
How well pupils participate in and respond to the school's collective worship

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



The way staff and pupils pray shows a genuine commitment to prayer and liturgy across the school community, including parents. Pupils are engaged by a wide variety of prayer experiences and understand that they are special occasions. They can articulate how prayer has shaped the way they think about themselves and how to make the right moral decisions. A pupil said, "When we blow out the candle we catch the light of Jesus". Pupils participate joyfully as seen in the high quality of beautiful communal singing. Their respect is also evident in the prayerful silence and the depth of reverent participation in communal prayer. The impact is summed up in a parent's comment, 'Within a month of joining this school, our daughter started saying prayers at home.' Pupils are keen to take the initiative in leading prayer and liturgy in class with their peers. The key stage 2 assembly characterised the manner in which pupils pray. They sang, played instruments and led with their prayers in a spiritual and enjoyable way. In the key stage 1 assembly, pupils were attentive and prayerful throughout. The parish priest confirmed the active lead pupils play in the weekly parish mass and how they do so with reverence.

The provision of a wide range of varied religious experiences for prayer and liturgy reflects the strong Catholic character of this faith-filled, praying community. There is a daily pattern of prayer that gives pupils opportunities to add their own intentions to formal prayers. Appropriately planned prayer and liturgy are a central part of developing the spiritual and caring ethos of the school. It has a profound and visible effect on the moral development of all pupils, evident in the way pupils pray and talk about prayer. It is totally inclusive of all pupils who have a deep sense of respect for those of other faiths. The impact of provision is evident in the way the creative skills of staff and pupils confidently enhance prayer and liturgy. The themes for prayer and liturgy are carefully chosen and reflect a deep understanding of the liturgical season and the Church's mission in education. They celebrate significant Church feasts. Chaplaincy provision is enhanced by very strong links with the parish and the strong spiritual support from the Redemptorist priests. Classes are welcomed by the parish community for Mass each week. Parents appreciate the openness with which they are welcomed to prayer and liturgy.

Leaders and governors ensure prayer and liturgy are integral to the growth of a Catholic, spiritual community. The prayer and liturgy policy shows that they fully embrace their responsibility by providing a wide range of opportunities for the whole community to pray. The executive head teacher, head teacher and senior leadership team have a very clear vision for prayer and liturgy at St Mary's. As a leadership team they make liturgy accessible to all pupils. The religious education lead is a visible leader of prayer and liturgy in school. Staff appreciate the support they receive and are enthusiastic and skilled in helping pupils pray sincerely and in a heartfelt way. Leaders have ensured that there are clear systems in place to monitor and evaluate the provision for prayer and liturgy across school. They witness it by regularly attending assemblies and Mass. They ensure the quality of worship on offer continues to improve. Governors are quick to identify areas for development and offer a significant level of challenge to the leadership team to ensure that the offer of quality worship continues to improve. This reflects the commitment of leadership to create more opportunities for pupils to prepare and participate in prayer and liturgy.

Date Published: 4th July 2024

Information about the school

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| Full name of school | St Mary's Catholic Primary School |
| School unique reference number (URN) | 100636 |
| School DfE Number (LAESTAB) | 2085208 |
| Full postal address of the school | St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Crescent Lane, Clapham, London, SW4 9QJ |
| School phone number | 02076225479 |
| Executive Head teacher/ Headteacher | Joshua Levenson / Kelly Doody |
| Chair of Governors | Lynette Murphy O'Dwyer |
| School Website | www.stmarys-lambeth.co.uk/ |
| Trusteeship | Diocesan |
| Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable) | N/A |
| Phase | Primary |
| Type of school | Voluntary Aided School |
| Admissions policy | N/A |
| Age-range of pupils | 3-11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Date of last denominational inspection | 7 February 2018 |
| Previous denominational inspection grade | 1 |

The inspection team

Damian Fox
Helen Frostick

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 |