



# St Mark's Catholic Primary School

URN: 104469

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Archbishop of Liverpool

09–10 May 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

1

#### 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 curriculum requirements laid down by the Bishops' Conference

Yes

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

Yes

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

Fully

## What the school does well

1. Catholic life and mission is outstanding at St Mark's. The inspirational leadership of the head teacher is evident throughout the school.
2. Strong relationships ensure that the pupils thrive both spiritually and morally and feel safe.
3. The senior leadership team are rigorous in their determination to improve outcomes.
4. Behaviour of pupils is excellent.
5. Catholic social teaching is understood by pupils and is an integral part in all that they do.

## What the school needs to improve

1. In religious education ensure that all pupils are given further opportunities to communicate their learning using even more unique and creative strategies.
2. Provide continued professional development in religious education to support teachers' skilful questioning of pupils.
3. Reinforce pupils' skills in planning, organising and leading prayer and liturgy.

## 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**

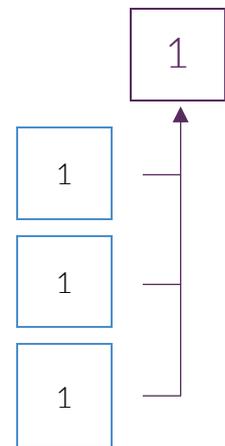
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

**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



All members of St Mark's Catholic Primary School understand and embrace the distinctive Catholic identity and mission of the school. This is a school where pupils truly live their mission statement to *'love, learn, laugh and achieve'*. There is a tangible feeling that the pupils and staff embrace their Catholicity. All are happy, confident, valued, and safe. The pupils are a real joy. Pupils are calm, polite, and enthusiastic and interact well with each other, showing genuine care and compassion to all members of their community. The community comments positively upon the impact the head teacher has had on pupils' contributions to Catholic life. Pupils know and embrace the mission statement and can explain its effect on the school environment. Respect for the dignity of each person is evident in the different roles and responsibilities taken by the pupils. They are provided with a plethora of opportunities to respond to the demands of Catholic social teaching and participate in a range of activities such as worship warriors, attendance ambassadors, sports ambassadors, and members of school council. Pupils benefit from the range of experiences provided to put their faith in action. An example of this is through the Live Simply award where pupils apply their personal knowledge and experiences to looking after the world as our common home.

Staff too fully embrace the mission of the school and readily implement it across the curriculum and the whole of school life. They are excellent role models through their passionate care of the pupils. The mission statement is central to school life and has a significant impact on pupils' attitudes and learning. One pupil said, *"We need to import our mission statement into our daily lives, just like Jesus."* The head teacher has transformed the school in terms of Catholic life and has brought the whole community with her on this journey of change. The pastoral care for all pupils and staff is a real strength and should be celebrated. Staff provide the highest levels of pastoral

care for pupils, and there is an explicit and concrete commitment to the most vulnerable. The school provides a calm and prayerful environment and adapts areas for the needs of all pupils. The school environment reflects its mission and identity through explicit signs of the school's Catholic character. The quality of the space reflects inclusive dignity. Provision for relationships, sex and health education meets both Archdiocesan and statutory requirements. It is carefully planned and delivered according to the needs of the pupils.

Leaders and governors are enthusiastic and effective in promoting Catholic life. They speak with pride about how well their pupils engage with the school's mission. They display a clear vision and promote this by ensuring decisions are made in relation to the gospel values. The parish priest offers great support and is highly valued by the school. Links with other Catholic primary schools including termly staff reflections also ensure strong community links. Staff well-being is a high priority at St Mark's, and this is appreciated by the staff. They compare with individual pieces in a jigsaw, which put together form part of a school family. The senior leadership team is at the heart of the jigsaw and always there particularly when one of the pieces is missing. Leaders are committed to ensuring all new staff are supported. This includes utilising Archdiocesan support and the sharing of good practice in school. Parents see school staff as models of good practice in Catholic life. They are supportive of the school and feel welcomed and valued.

## Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

### Religious education key judgement grade

#### Pupil outcomes

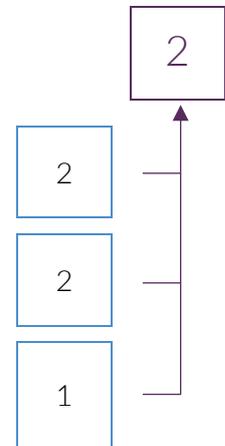
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

#### 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



Over time, pupils at St Mark's develop a secure knowledge in religious education. This begins from the early years where pupils are provided with the knowledge and the skills which reflect the learning required by the *Religious Education Directory*. As a result, pupils including the disadvantaged and those with special educational needs, do make progress. High priority is given to the teaching of religious education, which is demonstrated in the progress made and in the quality of some of the pupils' work. Further development of teaching and learning in religious education should focus on using a variety of classroom strategies aimed at increasing pupils' individuality through providing further opportunities for creativity within their work. Pupils can speak with confidence and are able to use religious vocabulary appropriate to their age. Behaviour is a strength across the school, and this has a positive impact on learning. Pupils can make links with prior learning, and it is very clear that they love to learn and share their thoughts and ideas. They quietly engage, present their work well using a wide range of media and they are proud of their efforts.

Staff are committed to the delivery of religious education and show a commitment to its value within the curriculum. Good relationships are evident throughout school and all staff want all pupils to achieve. During inspection, in most lessons teaching assistants were used effectively and worked with kindness and genuine care in supporting the learning of those children with specific needs. Questioning is used to identify pupils' understanding. However further detailed questioning in lessons would have a continued impact on maximising learning for all pupils, especially those who are working at a greater depth. Pupils' effort is celebrated which motivates and enthuses them. Teachers provide pupils with 'in the moment feedback' which ensures their pathway to progress. In some lessons at appropriate points, teachers provide reflection time to explore the effects of the content upon spiritual and moral development. Planning and books

show some evidence that the curriculum is adapted for groups of pupils, however this needs to be developed even further. The school is equipped with a wide variety of resources, and these are used effectively in lessons. Attainment is in line with other core subjects within the curriculum.

Leaders and governors ensure that religious education is a faithful expression of the *Religious Education Directory* which the school has begun to implement. The current religious education curriculum is compliant with the Archdiocesan programme of study. A wide range of engaging enrichment activities are provided to enhance pupils' learning in religious education, which are enthusiastically accepted. Leaders and governors ensure that religious education receives the same rate of continued professional development that is allocated to all core subjects. They are enthusiastic and knowledgeable about religious education. This enthusiasm is shared and celebrated throughout the school. Monitoring ensures that religious education consistently meets the needs of different groups of pupils. Leaders and governors' self-evaluation is informed by the whole process for monitoring, analysis, and self-challenge.

## 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

2

**Leadership**

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

1

2

Pupils respond well to the experiences of prayer and liturgy provided by the school. From a young age, pupils are reverent and respectful. Most pupils join in with community prayer, responses and sing with joy. These aspects should be developed even further to ensure pupils deeper engagement as active participants in prayer and liturgy. Most pupils are knowledgeable of and confident to describe the liturgical year and articulate how it influences the prayer life of the school. They can describe how seasons, feasts and saints are celebrated in the school especially the recent feast of St Mark. They can explain the symbolism of the liturgical colours and can relate these to the colours of clergy vestments. Worship warriors are confident when explaining how prayer can impact on their own lives. The recent development of a prayer garden following the death of a pupil, plays a pivotal part in how pupils participate in prayer with reverence and care. Pupils spoke confidently about how they can spend time in the prayer garden and reflect and think about their friend and pray.

There is a daily pattern of prayer for all pupils and staff, which has a very positive impact on the school's sense of community. Most acts of worship are age appropriate, centred on themes and messages which are accessible to pupils. However, this needs to be consistent throughout the school. Themes chosen for worship reflect a good understanding of the liturgical year as well as the Catholic character of the school. Music and art forms are used appropriately to enhance the prayer experiences of the children. The school makes good use of the spaces available both inside and outside of school for prayer and these are easily accessible. Spaces are used appropriately and are conducive to prayer. Staff work well to involve parents in the spiritual life of the school through various acts of celebrations, stay and pray sessions, assemblies and Masses. One parent said, "St Mark's is inclusive and a good place for the children to be. It helps the children to be themselves and God is at the heart of everything that they do."

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Leaders have developed an effective policy for prayer and liturgy which is regularly reviewed and approved by governors. It informs all staff about how to deliver prayer and liturgy. The school calendar reflects the liturgical year and enables the school to come together as a community. Leaders understand the strengths and areas for further development. Priority is given to high quality professional development and good practice is shared both in school and within the school cluster. However, the pupils now need to be fully involved because they have acquired the skills and knowledge to plan, organise and lead all aspects of prayer and liturgy. Prayer and liturgy are well monitored and continued practical support is available..

## Information about the school

Full name of school	St Mark's Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	104469
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	3403327
Full postal address of the school	St Mark's Catholic Primary School, Fir Avenue, Halewood, Liverpool, L26 0XR
School phone number	01512888910
Headteacher	Susan Bradshaw
Chair of Governors	Catherine Ming
School Website	<a href="http://www.stmarkshalewood.org.uk">www.stmarkshalewood.org.uk</a>
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	5 December 2017
Previous denominational inspection grade	Outstanding

## The inspection team

Karl Landrum  
Janice Taberner

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

