



Catholic Schools Inspectorate inspection report for St Mary Immaculate Catholic Primary School

URN: 125717

Carried out on behalf of the Most Rev. Bernard Longley, Archbishop of Birmingham on:

Date: 28-29 June 2023

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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

- Governors are a visible presence in the school. They effectively support and challenge leaders regarding school improvement in all areas. They are active in their monitoring and clearly articulate its impact in moving the school forward.
- The new executive head teacher is an inspirational leader who has rapidly implemented effective school improvement processes, which have provided a strong foundation from which the school can grow.
- The pastoral care of pupils and staff is excellent. They genuinely care about each other; the senses of community and family are strong.
- There is a strong commitment to prayer and liturgy which is well resourced. Prayer holds a purpose that is reflected in the well cared for prayer spaces, especially the prayer garden.

- Teachers' subject knowledge regarding religious education is strong.

What the school needs to improve:

- Ensure that questioning in lessons and feedback challenges pupils' understanding so that pupils know what they need to do to improve their learning in religious education.
- Develop pupils' ability to apply Catholic social teaching to their lives, so they can articulate the impact it has on their actions and the decisions they make.
- Ensure the focus of all prayer is a spiritual encounter with God, which enables pupils to raise their hearts and minds to Him.

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:.....

2

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

Leadership

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

2



St Mary's is a welcoming community in which all pupils are enabled to live out the Catholic faith. Pupils are familiar with the school mission, 'Live wisely, think deeply, love generously' and can articulate how to show this in their lives; for example, 'If people are lonely, you can help them'. The importance of this is reinforced by the mission prayer, collectively written this year with pupils, staff, and governors, which is prayed regularly in school. Pupils enjoy being at St Mary Immaculate, they have a good sense of respect for one another and say that the school is made up of 'lovely people' and shows 'teamwork'. There is an active chaplaincy team, which carries out its responsibilities with pride. Its members understand their purpose to change people's thinking, spread the word of God, and help others. Pupils recognise their role in supporting those in need and making the world a better place, both globally and locally. Pupils support global initiatives such as Cafod and responding to humanitarian crises, as well as local issues, including supporting the expansion of the local community centre. Pupils have a growing understanding of what it means to be part of a community, living and working to spread God's love and compassion, as is their knowledge of Catholic social teaching.

Staff are proud of the school and all it stands for. They embrace new initiatives and can explain the impact of these on their personal faith journeys. Staff have cultured an environment in which their professional relationships are strong, resulting in strong provision of pastoral care. The staff genuinely care about every child in the school and instil that caring heart on others. Consequently, everyone feels safe, cared for, and valued. The school's Catholic character is clearly evident because the mission statement and prayer are displayed with pride and there are dedicated areas throughout the school for prayer. Staff are encouraging role models who actively encourage parents' involvement in their child's spiritual journey. Experiences are shared at home and parents feel privileged to be part of this special community and inspired to reconnect with their faith.

The school's leadership is a strength. Governors and leaders articulate their vision and mission clearly, along with their role in moving that forward. They hold a deep desire to want the best for staff, pupils, and parents, and are highly motivated to achieve this. Their monitoring is accurate, rigorous, and effective because they confidently know the school's strengths and weaknesses. This means that their work immediately impacts the school; for example, in the recent improvements made to its physical expression of its Catholic mission. Leaders work in partnership with the diocese so that the school's mission underpins all policies and procedures. God's word and Christ's teachings in the gospels are at the heart of St Mary Immaculate. The head teacher is an inspirational leader who brings clarity, purpose, and reason to the school's work. She communicates her vision clearly to all stakeholders and values the opinions of the school community, which are regularly sought. Pupils' families value her leadership. Leaders know that the curriculum does not yet reflect a Catholic expression of reality sufficiently. Leaders' drive and determination to bring the school together as a cohesive family is supported by the training given to staff. Staff well-being is a high priority and staff work, knowing they are listened to because changes are made, based on their feedback. Links between the school and parish are strong; the parish priest is united in, and committed to, the school's mission. A strong catholic foundation is being built at St Mary Immaculate.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade:.....

2

Pupil outcomes

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

2

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.....

2

Pupils develop their religious education skills in a clear and relevant sequence because they work well through the diocesan scheme of work. They can recall previous learning, where they are given the opportunity to, resulting in some progress being demonstrated, but this is inconsistent across pupil groups, meaning progress is limited. Where teaching is strong there is evidence of independent work from pupils. However, in some lessons, pupils are restricted by staff providing too much support, which hinders their ability to demonstrate initiative or independence. Pupils produce work that is presented well. Pupils are generally engaged in lessons and can articulate what they enjoy about religious education. They talk about Bible passages and the messages that they learn from them, using subject specific vocabulary with confidence. Pupils respond well to the questions and opportunities given to them; consequently, behaviour in all lessons is good. Pupils also talk about the variety of activities they enjoy, but they are unable to articulate how they can improve their understanding and progress in religious education. This is because teachers' feedback does not make it clear to them. Attainment in religious education has historically fluctuated; action has been taken to address this, with early signs that attainment is now stabilising.

Teachers are confident in deploying their strong subject knowledge. They are committed to, and value, the importance of religious education for all pupils. Their approach is consistently inclusive. Teachers are enthusiastic and passionate when teaching religious education, meaning pupils are well-motivated to learn. Planning is in-line with diocesan expectations, and pupils' exercise books demonstrate the wide variety of activities used to facilitate learning. In the best examples, questioning is used to extend and deepen pupils' learning; however, the practice of this is inconsistent throughout the school, meaning teachers' questions do not always improve the quality of pupils' learning or the outcomes they achieve. Support staff are always effectively deployed during group work sessions, resulting in all pupils being able to access the learning intention for the lesson. There is a marked improvement in presentation and outcomes in exercise books following

the implementation of a new marking policy, which is used consistently across the school. However, in some books, teachers' comments are not driven by the learning objective and at times lean towards literacy-based marking. This is not enabling pupils to develop their understanding of religious education or to know how they can improve their achievements.

Rigorous and focussed monitoring is in place to enhance school development; leaders and governors clearly understand its findings. Plans for staff meetings include, outcome moderation, book looks, and taking part in diocesan training, demonstrating the high priority the subject is given. Well-targeted training has resulted in a strengthening of teachers' subject knowledge and the enthusiasm for developing a creative approach when teaching the learning objectives for religious education. Carefully planned monitoring activities have empowered governors and leaders to identify various strengths in the teaching of religious education throughout the school. Governors are working with leaders to further secure consistency in teaching standards across the school. Leaders have identified a need to introduce coaching strategies for staff, so that good practice is shared, observed, and has an impact on the wider staff. The head teacher, as the subject leader, has a clear vision to improve the quality of teaching and learning across the school; however, not enough time has yet passed for this to embed or determine its impact. Leaders analyse outcome data, though structures to evaluate what they learn from it, and the subsequent actions they can undertake to address any issues arising from it, are not yet firmly embedded.

Collective worship

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

Collective worship key judgement grade:.....

2

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

2

Pupils speak with confidence about the prayer rhythm and routines at St Mary Immaculate that is present on a daily and season basis, including during lessons and praying the Rosary during the months of May and October. Pupils enjoy praying and this is reflected by their reverence in doing so. They like to communicate with God and know it helps them to 'follow the right path'. During Mass and class prayer, they participate respectfully, sing with enthusiasm, and read with eloquence. A parishioner regularly visits school to support pupils in their singing. Because pupils take an active part in prayer they are also aware of how it influences their lives and school life. They recognise the key components of the Church's liturgical year and how these impact on life in school. For example, during May, pupils were able to write their own Marian prayers and put them to liturgical music with the help of a specialist music teacher. The most recent addition of the prayer garden allows pupils to engage in quiet spontaneous prayer during break times as well as providing a place to celebrate significant times of celebration and reflection. Opportunities are given for pupils to plan and deliver prayer and liturgy. Subsequently, they evaluate their prayer using their class Catholic life journals. However, because pupils do not know what constitutes good quality prayer, their comments are ineffective in identifying things to improve their future planning and leadership of prayer.

Prayer is central to school life. The development of the prayer garden has been significant to the community and since being created has been used for purposeful celebrations and times of deep reflection. All prayer has a clear purpose at St Mary Immaculate; there is a clear plan for its delivery, put together by key staff and the parish priest. The prayer traditions of the Catholic Church are alive in these plans. Pupils are provided with opportunities to experience the range of Catholic traditions, including Stations of the Cross and May Procession, and during June, a plenary indulgence is available to pupils and staff. There is a well-planned cycle and progression of expectations in the planning and delivery of prayer, about which staff are enthusiastic and respond positively towards. Each classroom has a prayer and liturgy box to support both pupils and staff in selecting the

resources to enhance the experience. Whilst the staff and pupils are familiar with the structure and expectations of prayer and liturgy, there is inconsistency in the way staff facilitate it that impacts on its capacity to be a spiritual encounter with Christ, resulting in prayer sometimes being more like an experience of a religious education lesson.

The prayer and liturgy policy is well written, and the progression strategy clearly sets out expectations for each year group, providing clarity for staff. Governors have been active participants in this development which has resulted in leaders sowing the seeds of change relating to prayer and its development in school. Training is a priority for the staff, who embrace every opportunity to hone their skills; their passion is an inspiration. However, the impact of such training has not become an embedded part of school life as prayer still contains question-answer sessions, which detract from the spirituality of it. Furthermore, a creative and composed approach to prayer, which enables an atmosphere of personal reflection to be recognised and appreciated is yet to come to fruition. Parental views are regularly sought to help the school to evaluate the quality of prayer, which leaders use to support the next steps on their development journey. Governors ensure the school is well-resourced regarding prayer.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Mary Immaculate Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	125717
Full postal address of the school	Wathen Road, Warwick, CV34 5BG
School phone number	01926 493959
Name of head teacher or principal	Julia Wallace
Chair of governing board	Christine Beaumont and Andrew Staley
School Website	stmaryimmaculateschool.co.uk
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	N/A
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age-range of pupils	3 to 11
Trustees	Archdiocese of Birmingham
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	June 2016
Previous denominational inspection grade	2

The inspection team

Louise Bury	Lead inspector
Joe Bridgewater	Team 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