



St Mary's Catholic Primary School

URN: 140776

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Diocesan Administrator of Plymouth

Click to enter start date. – 20 November 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

1

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

- There is a highly nurturing, welcoming, inclusive sense of community at this school.
- The passion and ambition of the head teacher and Religious Education (RE) lead has led to high quality RE across the school.
- The staff are a close knit team, supporting each other and the school community, particularly those most in need.
- The pupils have a strong sense of the need to follow the Pope's message in Laudato Si in caring for their common home including those around them in need.
- Pupils have a thorough appreciation and understanding of the scripture used in prayer and liturgy each week and that this impacts on the way they interact with the world and others which ensures they have a quality 'experience of Christ.'

What the school needs to improve

- Extend the pupils knowledge of Catholic Social Teaching by threading it through the wider curriculum.
- Give all pupils an age appropriate opportunity to plan and lead prayer and liturgy in class.
- Encourage staff to take advantage of the opportunities offered to them to plan and lead 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

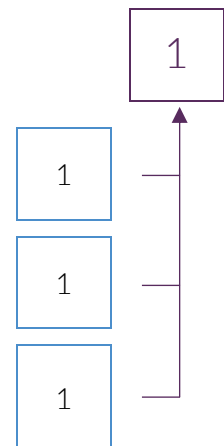
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

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



Pupils know the mission statement well and understand that this is about treating others with respect and dignity and that everyone is special and loved by God. They are highly involved in the Catholic life and mission of the school through supporting charities such as the local food bank and Cafod, and through their care for our common home. Pupils know how to follow in Jesus's footsteps on a daily basis for example by sharing with others, and they know that this makes 'the world a better place to live,' and, in turn, makes them 'a better person'. They are aware of Pope Francis's messages in Laudato Si and respond to Catholic Social Teaching by taking a leading role in helping others and the environment and are currently seeking the Live Simply award. They have a deep respect for each other and understand that they are well cared for and looked after in school and are therefore happy, confident and secure. Behaviour is exemplary around the school. The Growing in Faith Together (GIFT) team are extremely proud to be role models in the school, however they are not sure about their priorities. They are highly valued by the rest of the school.

The mission statement has been reviewed to ensure its relevance today. Staff are clear about their role in supporting the Catholic life and mission of the school and have been well supported in this by the head teacher and RE lead. They embrace opportunities to participate in promoting Catholic life, for example, in supporting those most vulnerable and new to the school community. All are welcomed into this nurturing, inclusive, family community with staff seeking to understand the needs of all so that suitable support can be offered. Relationships between adults, and adults and pupils are strong, leading to all knowing each other and knowing 'about each other'. Displays around the school are high quality promoting the Catholic identity. Pupils are rightly proud of the school environment and are able to articulate their contribution, for

example, the prayer garden which the GIFT team worked on with a local group. Relationships education is in line with diocesan guidelines and parents have been consulted about the resources used. Pupils understand the importance of relationships education.

Leaders have sought to ensure that Christ is at the centre of this school. With many pupils with little experience of the Catholic faith, the school seeks to give all pupils an 'experience of Christ' in their lives. The school is involved with the diocese through their involvement in training, which they find invaluable. Parish links are strong with both the parish priest and parishioners seeking to involve themselves in school life, for example, parishioners lead stations during the days of faith that are organised throughout the year by the GIFT team. The school value the parents, who actively support the school particularly through their fundraising events. Catholic Social Teaching is strong, and leaders are now seeking to embed this in the wider curriculum. Staff feel well supported by the head teacher, the RE lead, and each other. 'There is a truly family feel to the school where everyone supports each other and no one is left behind.' Governors are highly experienced and ambitious for the school, being able to offer invaluable support and advice to the leadership of the school. They challenge where appropriate and are also highly supportive. Governors are involved in the self-evaluation process and work alongside the leaders of the school to ensure high quality action plans are in place and the impact evaluated to ensure continuous school improvement. Pupil voice is valued as part of the monitoring process. New staff are welcomed and supported effectively.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

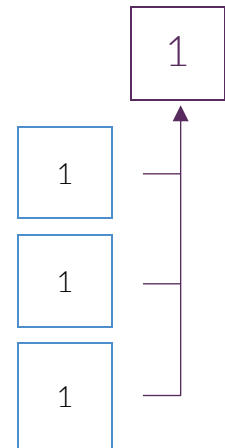
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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



Recapping on previous learning in lessons allows pupils to develop excellent knowledge, understanding and skills in all classes, with some strong challenge enabling pupils to show the depth of their thinking. Pupils are making consistent progress in line with or better than other core subjects. The focus on religious vocabulary from the youngest age enables pupils to become articulate and speak with confidence using correct terminology. This is a strength across the school. Pupils are highly motivated and enjoy RE, leading to high levels of concentration and independent work. The work in books is of a high standard across the school, capturing the key learning from each lesson. High expectations have led to consistently high quality presentation in each class. All pupils are supported at their level through skilful questioning that extends learning, sensitive support offered by teaching assistants to those with specific needs and appropriately adapted tasks. Pupils are actively engaged and curious in their lessons, they want to learn more. 'RE impacts me about how I think about other people and why. I think about my life.' They are making clear connections between RE, scripture and their own life. Consistent assessment in books across the school enables pupils to know exactly what they have done well, with follow up questions to improve or extend learning included in older classes. Attainment is in line or better than other core subjects.

Staff are confident and subject knowledge is strong, due to effective support from the RE lead and head teacher and a desire to know and understand the theology behind the teaching. High expectations have led to a high standard of learning across the school. The consistent approach to assessment ensures that pupils are given valuable and accurate feedback and their learning is extended where appropriate. Effective questioning in most classes leads to pupils' engagement and motivation to learn more, this is also supported by the energy and passion shown by the staff for RE. Carefully designed questions in feedback in books gives pupils time to

reflect and deepen their thinking and understanding. High quality resources are used across the school to ensure pupils' enjoyment, engagement and understanding. Teachers and teaching assistants work closely together to prepare for lessons ensuring pupils are given the support and challenge they need. A variety of tasks including freeze frames, artwork, role play, and building a church in the early years class ensures that all pupils can access learning in a meaningful way.

The school has adapted and extended the new *Religious Education Directory* to ensure a consistent curriculum across the school, suited to the different ages in each class, ensuring that they progress through the learning in a sequential manner. RE enjoys parity with other core subjects in terms of timetabling, resourcing and staffing. Staff are highly appreciative of the diocesan theology course offered which has led to increased subject knowledge and therefore increased confidence. The RE lead has a clear passion and vision for RE in the school and has worked tirelessly along with the head teacher to ensure that monitoring is effective in improving teaching and learning, for example, providing training sessions for all teachers and bespoke support for individuals according to need. Their support is highly valued by the staff. The rigorous evaluation of the RE action plan has ensured that improvements are steady and timely. RE is enriched through visits to the church to support learning, for example, on baptism, and linking lessons to Catholic Social Teaching aspects and the school values.

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

2

2

Pupils respond to prayer and liturgy opportunities with deep reverence and respect. They join in with prayers and responses, sing enthusiastically, listen carefully to adults and pupils and can reflect silently. They are eager to contribute to questions and show deep thinking and a confidence to articulate their thoughts in front of others. Scripture is at the heart of worship and is built on throughout the week through the actions expected of the pupils and the class worship led by the GIFT team, leading to pupils deep understanding and ability to make links between scripture and their own lives, the needs of others and world events. Pupils show an awareness of and can describe parts of the liturgical year, for example, the use of the colour purple during Advent and Lent. The GIFT team have the opportunity and enjoy working closely with the RE lead and head teacher to support well-constructed whole school and class worship, however, other pupils do not have the same opportunities.

Prayer is central to school life with daily prayers said in each class and a highly organised timetable across the year to include all aspects of the liturgical year and others key moments, such as Remembrance Sunday. Pupils are given opportunities to reflect during whole school and class worship as well as reflecting independently in their spiritual journals at the end of the week. Class booklets ensure that pupils learn traditional prayers each term and this builds up progressively over the years. The head teacher and RE lead are inspiring role models for the staff and pupils in planning and leading prayer and liturgy. There are opportunities for the teaching staff to plan and lead but this rarely takes place. Pupils enjoy the use of music and artwork in prayer and liturgy which enhances their prayer experience. Prayer spaces in the classrooms include age-appropriate artefacts, books, pupils' work and questions and provide attractive areas for pupils to pray. Prayer spaces around the school are high quality and are maintained by the GIFT team. They are clearly well thought out with scripture quotes on the wall, and rosary

beads and beautifully illustrated books for pupils to use. There is a prayer garden outside which is well used. Families are invited to join the school for celebration assemblies, Masses and services. The school has a flourishing relationship with the parish with parishioners coming into school to support the GIFT team and to meet parents.

The Trust policy for prayer and liturgy is fit for purpose and is useful to relevant staff. Whilst the GIFT team are involved in planning and leading, leaders have recognised that there is a need to encourage other pupils to build up their skills in planning and leading prayer and liturgy in the class. The parish priest celebrates Mass with the pupils in church. Most holy days of obligation and services, such as, Ash Wednesday are celebrated in the school, with the pupils helping the priest to distribute ashes. The GIFT team helps to organise highly effective 'days of faith' at Advent, Lent and in the summer, where all pupils are encouraged to reflect personally and are offered ways to express their sorrow for wrongdoings and ask for forgiveness in a way that they can relate to. The head teacher and RE lead have led training in prayer and liturgy and provide role models which has led to staff understanding the importance of quality prayer and liturgy in the life of the school and feeling confident to plan and lead worship. High quality resources in the prayer spaces around the school and the way they are lovingly maintained enhance the prayer experience and shows the recognition of the importance of prayer and liturgy in the school. Governors and pupil voice are included in the monitoring of prayer and liturgy and ensure that improvements are planned and implemented.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Mary's Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	140776
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	8383402
Full postal address of the school	St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Old Mill Lane, Marnhull, Sturminster Newton, DT10 1JX
School phone number	01258820417
Headteacher	Sharon Betts
Chair of Local Governing Body	Ben Holdsworth
School Website	http://www.stmarymarnhull.dorset.sch.uk/
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	Plymouth Cast
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	May 2017
Previous denominational inspection grade	1

The inspection team

Dawn Summers Breeze – Lead Inspector Paul Cotter – 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

