



# St Mary's Catholic Primary school

URN: 144091

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

06–07 June 2024

## Summary of key findings

### Overall effectiveness

The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school

1

### 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

1

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

- The school charism and the Catholic social teaching principles, underpin every aspect of the school creating a learning environment where pupils feel safe and confident to deepen their learning and faith.
- Behaviour for learning and respect for each other's learning from pupils is exemplary.
- Pupil leading in prayer and liturgy goes above and beyond with all pupils being enabled to be leaders of faith and the school charism.

## What the school needs to improve

- Structure existing monitoring systems to enable systematic feedback with impactful actions.
- Ensure that policies are adapted to match and guide all stakeholders to sustain exemplary practice.

## 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

1

**Provision**

The quality of provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school

1

**Leadership**

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

2

1

Pupils fully embrace and live out all aspects of the school charism. They can express clearly that they are children of God and how their actions can impact on the school. The language of Catholic social teachings is common practice in actions, leadership and participation. Pupil chaplaincy led through Faith Friends enables all children to embrace chaplaincy in action. A parent said "My children genuinely enjoy Faith Friends and appear very knowledgeable of the Bible and teachings of Christ". A member of staff quoted that "St Mary's is a wonderful community where children live out their faith". The children are very familiar with the school charism being inspirational in promoting the school's mission and vision. This is seen in the proactive way all children take on leadership within the school for charity work, community giving back projects and support of their peers in school, such as playground buddies and running clubs for younger year groups.

The charism is embedded in all provision which includes a vast range of opportunities for every stakeholder to engage in nurturing their talents for the good of others, including supporting local, national and global charities chosen by pupil and school leaders. This has a wider holistic impact on the high expectations which are lived out across the school, success in sport, languages, and music to name a few. A parent commented on the impact of the charism of the school saying "The values, faith, and knowledge taught to our children shines through in their everyday actions both at school and in the wider community". The school creates a place of nurture, a parent commented "My children feel safe, secure, happy and well nurtured in all aspects at this school". Staff commented that "Nurturing our God given talents is the heart of what we do" and that "St Mary's is a very special school for our children and our staff." The level of care and community provision is seen in the subtleties around the school such as the book swap box in the playground and donations bin organised by Faith Friends. The highest levels of pastoral care and family support mean that all children are included in every aspect of the school no matter what challenges they face in life or learning. There is a palpable sense of joy created by leaders and staff which all who enter the school benefit from. St Mary's follow an approved relationships and sex education, programme, with a structured provision based on the Ten: Ten's Life to the Full.

Leaders ensure that Christ is always at the heart of the school. They plan opportunities which enable pupils and staff to respond to the high expectations of them rising to the challenge by participating in all aspects of the school. A member of staff commented that "The leaders have an open-door policy which allows us all to be heard and our views to be considered." The relationships and sex education programme would benefit from impactful monitoring to support the training and programme in place. Leaders and governors embrace partnership with the diocese putting the school at the service of the diocese at events and in the support of other schools. Leaders seek pupils' opinions by encouraging them to contribute about their experiences through pupil voice and active evaluations. Leaders and governors are inspirational witness to the Gospel and Catholic social teaching principles. The school has positive working relationships with the parishes. Governors are highly ambitious for the school, they know their school well and give their time generously, to attend activities. Governors work would be further enhanced through planned and systematic school evaluation systems.

## Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

### Religious education key judgement grade

#### Pupil outcomes

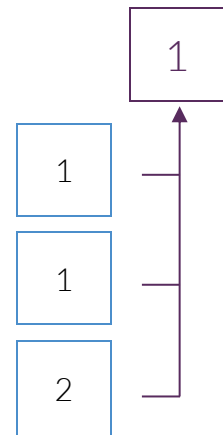
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

#### 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



In all lessons pupils are developing excellent knowledge and are making rapid progress achieving above average attainment whatever their starting point. Appropriate and considered use of religious language and knowledge and understanding of scripture enables deep exploration of the meaning and understanding of the Gospel message. As a result, pupils speak fluently and confidently about what they have learnt asking incisive questions of adults and their peers. A parent noted that “My family were so impressed at her theological knowledge at 4 years of age”. Pupils produce work which is of a consistently high quality with books being well presented and pupils showing great pride in their work and achievements. Pupils enjoy their learning, responding well when presented with opportunities for stretch and challenge, keen to improve their knowledge and understanding. An example of this was in Year 4 classes, where pupils were encouraged to use deep thinking and were stretched through high level questioning when discussing how St Stephen taught us the power of forgiveness. Pupils show notable independence in their learning immediately engaging in individual and group task maintaining focus and working supportively with their peers. This deep respect for their own learning and the learning of others leads to exemplary behaviour and enjoyment in lessons.

Lessons are built around appropriate gospel teaching and Catholic social teaching principles, which are embedded into purpose and outcomes ensuring religious education learning directly impacts on pupils’ lives. Religious education vocabulary is strongly embedded in planning and not only used in every lesson but regularly reinforced and revisited using a variety of techniques to repeat, learn and practice, appropriate use of technical language. Teachers have a high level of confidence with the majority using questioning skillfully, to extend and stretch learning providing deep thinking. Careful planning with considered differentiation in the majority of lessons meets the needs of every child. An example of high quality engaging and creative differentiation was seen in a Year 5 class where the teacher used resources and support staff effectively to stretch and challenge every child. Teachers create a classroom environment where praise is embedded and children feel safe to push themselves out of their comfort zone leading to high levels of motivation and enjoyment in learning. The school benefits from enhanced curriculum provision from the local parish priest such as on the topic of the sacraments. Teachers work in partnership and take pupils to the nearby church helping to bring topics

to life. All religious education provision is underpinned by a strong special needs support provision which enables inclusion and diversity for every child no matter what their individual challenges might be. Empathy and care alongside planned special needs provision leads to a truly inclusive learning environment.

Leaders and governors ensure that the religious education curriculum is a faithful expression of the *Religious Education Curriculum Directory*, giving it full parity with other core subjects and the required curriculum taught time. The curriculum is planned to provide sufficient opportunities for learners to progress sequentially through the subject content whilst incorporating key learning across the school where key liturgical events occur, such as Pentecost. Monitoring is planned for, however it shows little impact following feedback and inconsistency of application of advice given. Governors are aware of outcomes and have discussed these at governor meetings and would benefit from regularly reviewing outcomes and standards in provision of religious education. Leaders and governors ensure professional development opportunities are available and senior staff provided time to support classroom teachers with planning and resourcing to ensure engaging activities which promote learning in an inclusive classroom environment.

## 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

1

**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

1

Opportunities for pupil leadership in prayer and liturgy is exemplary with a range of experiences which enable pupils to engage deeply and lead fully. Pupils embrace these demonstrating extensive leadership and participation including the choir enhancing prayer and liturgy experiences. Pupils regularly lead prayer, discussions on scripture and intercessions in both their class groups and assemblies. Prayer is the norm and pupils feel safe to share thoughts and experiences. Spontaneous prayer is common practice, with children feeling safe to share their prayers and thoughts. A member of staff noted that "Their spontaneous prayer is amazing." Prayer books introduced in the spring term as part of the Year of Prayer, are already embedded and form an opportunity for every child to lead and take ownership of class prayer. Pupils, alongside their family, take responsibility to create appropriate and relevant prayers and images for use in school, ensuring the wider community are included in the school's daily prayer life. Pupils have a detailed understanding of the different ways of praying with many pupils quoting St Augustine in that "when they sing they pray twice". Singing is a strength of the school bringing joy to prayer experiences and liturgical events. A member of staff quoted that "The way children lead prayer and liturgy is inspirational to the adults" as seen in the exemplary Key Stage 2 assembly led by pupils about Carlos Acutis.

The school provides all members of the community an exploration of prayerful life. The whole school environment reminds the community to reflect, thank and bring Jesus into their lives through Gospel values and the school charism. A parent commented "We are so very lucky to have our children attend this school, and it definitely enhances their young journey of faith". Masses and liturgical celebrations are structured across the year to enable everyone to participate in key liturgical events. A member of staff commented that "The development of prayer and liturgy and the delivery of Catholic social teaching principles in recent years has really enhanced the spirituality of our children". Furthermore, a member of staff stated that "Having the opportunity to attend Mass in the convent is one of the highlights of the year for our children and staff." Staff are inspiring models of exemplary practice with all staff supporting, motivating and praising pupils for their input.

Leadership shows planning which forms a coherent program of formal and informal opportunities to bring the community together in prayer and liturgy. This includes embracing the power of pupil leadership in delivering at the highest level. Governor minutes show participation in prayer and liturgy and full support of all provision. Monitoring of provision is not always in line with published policies and would benefit from clear and regular evaluation systems. Leaders have ensured that key times in the liturgical year are celebrated, with pupil books and classroom displays showing in depth exploration and a commitment to deepen understanding of the church and its teachings. Pupils appreciate how much teachers support them to empower them to delivery prayer and liturgy. Parents appreciate the opportunity to engage with the prayer and liturgy of the school with one parent commenting "Parents are often invited to share in Catholic celebrations at the school such as the crowning of Mary, praying of the Rosary, the Nativity, Carol concerts and leaving Masses." A member of staff expressed their appreciation for the support of the Sisters saying, "The sisters are really supportive attending Masses regularly." The maintains close links with the local priest and church enhancing sacramental formation as well as learning activities in school.



## Information about the school

Full name of school	St Mary's Catholic Primary school
School unique reference number (URN)	144091
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	2033535
Full postal address of the school	St Mary's Catholic Primary school, Glenure Road, Eltham, London, SE9 1UF
School phone number	02088507835
Headteacher	Jonathan Sims
<b>Chair of Local Governing Body</b>	Gary Farrelly
School Website	<a href="http://www.stmaryrc.org.uk/">www.stmaryrc.org.uk/</a>
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	South East London Catholic Academy Trust (SELCAT)
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	17 May 2017
Previous denominational inspection grade	1

## The inspection team

Catherine Burnett	Lead
Vera Jajechnyk	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