



Catholic Schools Inspectorate inspection report for St Catherine's School

URN: 102936

Carried out on behalf of the **Most Rev. Cardinal Vincent Nichols, Archbishop of Westminster** on:

Date: 26-27 January 2023

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The school is fully compliant with the curriculum requirements laid down by the Bishops' Conference	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
The school is fully compliant with all requirements of the diocesan bishop	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
The school has responded to the areas for improvement from the last inspection	Fully

Summary of key findings

What the school does well

- Leaders articulate the school's mission, inspired by St Catherine of Siena, with clarity and conviction.
- Pupils' attitude to religious education is good and they demonstrate a sound knowledge of the religious education curriculum throughout the school.
- Prayer and worship form a central part of school life at St Catherine's and this results in purposeful learning and respectful relationships.
- The school's strong sense of community ensures a fully inclusive learning environment.

What the school needs to improve:

- The school's encouraging motto, *Non Verba sed Facta* (Not Words but Deeds) needs to become fully embedded throughout the school by encouraging pupils to proactively take a leading role in putting their faith into action.
- Pupil opportunities for independence, challenge and creativity in lessons need to be implemented consistently throughout the school.
- Assessment and moderation across the school is not yet rigorous enough and needs to be more carefully monitored.

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.....

1

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

1

Leadership

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

1



Catholic life and mission at St Catherine's school is outstanding. Pupils are proud of their school and value the distinct Catholic identity and charisma, inspired by St Catherine of Siena. They understand the words of their mission, 'Be who God wants you to be, and you will set the world on fire' which is underpinned by a set of values deliberately chosen to form pupils of 'confidence and compassion, ready for service and leadership in the world.' The school's many committees, including the School Council, Big Sister mentoring programme, Eco Club, Equalities Society and the Alpha group, ensure that pupils understand that they are cared for and valued and, as a result, they are happy and feel secure. The school's support for charities such as Mary's Meals, the Pakistan flood appeal, NHS charities and Shooting Stars, shows a commitment to responding to the demands of Catholic Social Teaching in supporting those locally, nationally and globally. These are beginning to be incorporated into everyday life and through the curriculum; however, pupils are not yet taking a leading role in pro-actively finding ways to respond to the Church's mission, and pupil voice in this area needs to be actively encouraged and strengthened. This will support them in being able to fully articulate their mission in action. Pupils highly value the Chaplaincy provision and many pupils actively participate in the variety of opportunities for prayer, dialogue and reflection on offer.

There is a strong sense of community and welcome at St Catherine's where pupils of all faiths and none are highly valued. The school's expression of their mission through the inclusion of every pupil is a real strength of the school. In discussion with a group of students in Year 13, pupils of various religions were able to express their gratitude for the inclusive culture of the school where open dialogue and respectful relationships supported them in their faith journey. This was also reflected in the parent survey where one parent commented, 'We are a non-faith family but we value and respect St Catherine's mission and Catholic education. Our daughter is learning great values she will use throughout her life.' Staff are exemplary role models for the pupils and embrace the school's mission with integrity. This is evident in

their involvement in, and commitment to, the school's faith life and the school's aim to provide a 'whole school chaplaincy.' Staff and pupils value the various retreats offered by the school as opportunities for spiritual and moral development. The programme for relationships, sex and health education has been expertly planned in line with diocesan requirements and, as a result, pupils are able to confidently articulate how their learning positively influences their attitudes and actions.

Led by the Headmistress's clear and ambitious articulation and commitment to the Church's mission, leaders and governors have ensured that Christ is at the heart of this school. Strategic planning around the development of the new school mission has been fastidious and has resulted in it becoming an increasingly lived experienced for all staff and pupils. Leaders engage actively with the diocese and the school puts itself at the service of the diocese in a variety of ways, including supporting a local primary school with the secondment of the school's Assistant Chaplain. Leaders place great importance on staff professional development and induction, and this was echoed in a meeting with staff new to the school who spoke highly of leaders' commitment to ensuring religious education is at the core of the curriculum. Leaders ensure links with local parishes are strong and it is evident that the school places great emphasis on the celebration of the sacraments. Governors visit the school regularly and are fully supportive of the Headmistress's commitment to a strong and inclusive Catholic community.

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 generally make good progress across the school from their starting points in religious education (RE). They enjoy learning, are reflective and engaged. They are religiously literate and can speak confidently about key concepts using subject specific vocabulary in both written outcomes and discussions. There are inconsistencies, however, in achievement between the younger pupils and those students in Key Stage 4 and 5 whose attainment is noticeably stronger and on par with other core subjects, particularly at GCSE and A level. Pupils, notably in Prep, are not being given ample opportunities for challenge and classwork is not rigorous enough. Activities often limit the pupils' opportunities for writing at length. Pupils are not given enough opportunities to apply their knowledge and understanding of beliefs and practices to everyday life and lessons often lack creativity and opportunities for independent research. The progress of pupils in Prep is not yet measured against appropriate benchmarks; the school is making a conscious effort to remedy this by working closely with other deanery schools and the diocese. Pupils, with the exception of those at GCSE and A level, are vaguely aware of how well they are doing in RE and this needs to be addressed through a more rigorous and consistent assessment and feedback policy.

Teachers create a positive climate for learning and, as a result, behaviour is exemplary and pupils are eager to participate in lessons. Teachers have good subject knowledge and are committed to delivering a good standard of religious education through the delivery of the *Religious Education Directory*. Sequential planning from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3 is still developing to ensure progress is linked to assessment. Pupils in all key stages respond well to questioning and challenge and demonstrate good levels of religious literacy. Lessons are predominantly directed by teachers and pupils are not yet given enough time for independent research and reflection. Creativity in religious education through, for example, art, drama, music and ICT remains underdeveloped. In the best lessons observed, pupils were offered opportunities to recognise the impact religious education has on their spiritual and moral

development. In a Year 5 lesson where pupils were able to use ICT for research, they could confidently articulate how the life of their chosen saint had a particular meaning for them. Similarly, in a Year 10 lesson on the Triune God, students were actively engaged, independently exploring ways in which music enhances liturgy through a variety of music, sung and spoken.

Staffing and recruitment in the RE department has been challenging of late, and leaders in the senior school are to be commended on ensuring that religious education remains at the core of the curriculum and a faithful expression of the *Directory*. The Headmistress has maintained a clear and ambitious focus for religious education and has been unswerving in the direction of travel she has set out to achieve. The vision and expertise of the recently appointed head of religious education is beginning to show impact across the school in terms of curriculum development and strategic planning. Leaders have forged excellent links with outside agencies and external speakers to promote teaching and learning and to provide enrichment within the RE curriculum. Leaders and governors self-evaluation of religious education now needs to become increasingly rigorous where strategic action and focused planning lead to outstanding outcomes.

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

1

The attention given to collective worship at St Catherine's promotes a calm and purposeful learning environment which permeates the school and results in mutually respectful relationships between pupils and staff. Due to the increasing number of opportunities for pupil engagement, for example, the Worship Band, the Alpha course, assemblies and Mass, pupils take part with confidence, respect and reverence. The school is developing pupil leadership in collective worship and the introduction of initiatives such as the Big Sister mentoring programme and Friday club has served to unite pupils across the school in prayer and worship. Pupils from all faith traditions and none take part in opportunities for inclusive liturgy and prayer experiences, and this demonstrates the authentic inclusiveness of St Catherine's. Collective worship is increasingly more pupil-led although this still needs further discussion and planning. There needs to be a greater focus on awe and wonder, periods of contemplation and meditation and simple 'moments with God' instead of worship that might reflect a typical RE lesson. Collective worship should be less teacher directed with pupils taking ownership of planning, preparation and self-evaluation. The impact of authentic pupil-led liturgy and prayer will enhance the experience for pupils and staff and encourage pupils to articulate how these experiences influence and inspire them to action.

St Catherine's provides numerous opportunities for planned prayer and liturgy and there is a daily pattern of prayer. Staff show commitment to leading acts of worship and use their talents to enhance prayer and liturgy in the school. Masses on holy days, celebration of the sacraments and attention to the patterns of the liturgical year are prioritised in the school's calendar of collective worship. They encourage visits to support the liturgical life of the school, for example, the relics of St Bernadette Mass, the Catholic Children's Society service at Westminster Cathedral as well as the programme of retreats. The school's Chaplaincy provides a place for all pupils to gather and reflect and pupils regard this as a sanctuary in their busy lives. Many of the retreats offered to the pupils take place in the school's Chaplaincy and are highly regarded by pupils. Form prayers in the Senior School, Senior School pupil-led assemblies and acts of collective worship in Prep are part of the school's routine.

Leaders and governors have a clear vision for building up the skills of pupils to prepare prayer and liturgy and to develop and nurture whole school collective worship. They have planned the school's calendar in line with the liturgical year and set aside time to celebrate the Eucharist at key points in the school year. A highlight of the school's calendar is the celebration of their feast day, St Catherine's day, with a Mass and festivities to which the whole school community is invited. Parents are also offered many additional opportunities to experience and participate in collective worship and value the opportunities their children are given to develop their spiritual life. The school's Chaplain and Assistant Chaplain play a pivotal role in assisting staff and pupils to lead experiences of prayer and liturgy and provides high quality opportunities that are engaging, of a high quality and relevant. A quote from the staff survey gathered during the inspection states, 'As a non-Catholic I enjoy the opportunity of collective worship. There are many wonderful moments I have experienced with staff and students alike where I have been moved by the words of a prayer or the sentiment/message of an assembly.' As a result of outstanding leadership in collective worship, the voice of the pupils clearly articulates how much they enjoy being at St Catherine's and how they will continue to grow in their faith as they move on to their lives beyond school.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Catherine's School
School unique reference number (URN)	102936
Full postal address of the school	Cross Deep, Twickenham, TW1 4QJ
School phone number	02088912898
Name of headteacher or principal	Johneen McPherson
Chair of governing board	Sylvia Hamilton
School Website	https://www.stcatherineschool.co.uk
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	
Type of school	All-through
School category	Independent
Age-range of pupils	5-18
Trustees	
Gender of pupils	Female
Date of last denominational inspection	28-29 September 2016
Previous denominational inspection grade	Outstanding

The inspection team

Monica McCarthy	Lead inspector
Winnie Greer	Team inspector
Maureen O'Donohue	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