



Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School

URN: 117488

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Archbishop of Westminster

02–03 May 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 mission statement, 'Learning and loving with Christ as our teacher' is lived out by the pupils who embrace the school's many opportunities to lead and serve.
- The collaborative culture of learning, established by leaders and governors, nourishes and strengthens the school community.
- The robust and consistent approach to teaching and learning in religious education ensures that pupils learn extremely well, resulting in excellent outcomes.
- The school excels at being a Catholic community, celebrated through its flourishing partnerships with its parents and the parish.
- The school is a joyful community, enhanced by its full and active participation in high-quality experiences of prayer and liturgy.

What the school needs to improve

- To further develop pupils' personalised learning skills to synthesise what they have learned in original and creative ways.
- To further develop pupils' capacity to evaluate the quality of 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

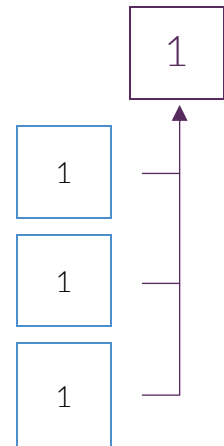
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

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 at Sacred Heart School embrace their mission of 'learning and loving with Christ as our teacher'. Pupils avidly seek opportunities to grow in virtue, pursue the common good and serve those in need by participating in a range of leadership roles, such as prayer leaders, house captains, Caritas and eco ambassadors, and class apostles. Prayer leaders run the lunchtime prayer club for younger pupils. They meet to share ideas and plan activities for these sessions, including the recitation of the rosary during May. A prayer leader explained that 'we believe that all should be as loved as we are.' Pupils talk positively about the difference they make to their local, national and global communities, and they have a developed understanding of the theology underpinning their actions, explaining that they seek to 'live in harmony with others'. Pupils fundraise for charities chosen by each individual class, as well as for Cafod and Mary's Meals, and the local food bank. Individual pupils are inspired to think of ways of helping others by initiating home activities which raise charitable funds. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary, showing a deep respect for their own personal dignity and others. Pupils can clearly express the understanding that they are made in the image and likeness of God and they are confident about expressing their relationship with him. Pupils' deep respect for others is strengthened by a programme of learning about other faiths throughout the year for all pupils from early years to Year 6.

Sacred Heart School excels at being a Christ-centred school community. Inspired by its charism of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, it strives towards 'being a heart that sees and a heart that acts'. Parents speak warmly of the welcome provided to all families. One parent states that 'the school works tirelessly to put the mission of the Church at the heart of everything they do.' A member of staff describes the school as a 'wonderful blessed school, and I am very privileged to work in

such a loving Catholic community.’ Another comments that ‘the teachings of Christ are lived out by all in our special community.’ Staff are exemplary role models. They embrace the mission of the school, which is encapsulated not only in their relationships with each other, but also in the highest levels of care and nurture they provide for all pupils, particularly the most vulnerable. One parent shares her appreciation that the school guides her child in spiritual development, ‘saying prayers and singing in the prayer garden, or visiting the church to learn more about the meanings of religious symbols and artefacts.’ The school environment bears exceptional witness to its Catholic identity with the hall mural, the chapel, prayer garden, and religious imagery, reflecting the presence of Christ throughout. The provision for relationships, sex and health education is carefully planned and meets all statutory requirements. The programme is well-resourced and promotes a holistic vision of the human person.

Leaders and governors rightly see the school as a source of inspiration to the whole community and are highly ambitious about its contribution to the lives of the people it serves. The school prides itself on providing a Catholic values-based education and governors speak committedly about the importance of discipleship. Governors are committed, well-organised and conscientious. They ensure that all policies reflect the Catholic mission of the school and have prioritised investment in this area, so that resources are targeted to support those in greatest need. The leadership team show their commitment to the principles of Catholic social teaching through the provision of a planned curriculum in this area. Leaders and governors work closely with the diocese, attending training and working in close partnership, to enthusiastically respond to diocesan policies and initiatives. Leaders are highly committed to the further development of all staff. Leaders and governors recognise the parish as being central to the Catholic life of the school, demonstrated by the flourishing partnership with the local parish. Governors speak of the ‘joy’ the partnership brings to the community. A staff member comments that ‘the school has a very close relationship with Sacred Heart Church and together this offers a very consistent and supportive environment for staff, pupils and parents.’ The school builds on this partnership by providing a vibrant parent engagement strategy comprising regular newsletters, ensuring that parents are kept well-informed about key events in the Catholic life of the school.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

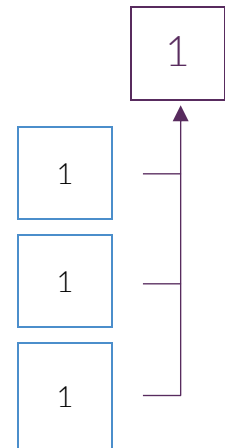
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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



Pupils are developing excellent knowledge, understanding and skills in religious education which exemplifies the learning required by the *Religious Education Directory*. At the beginning of lessons, pupils are invited to recall prior learning through reviewing 'key knowledge' about scripture, the sacraments and the saints. There is a consistent structure and excellent pace to lessons throughout the school, so that pupils are enabled to progress through their learning, fully engaged and using their knowledge, understanding and skills effectively to reflect spiritually and think theologically. Pupils demonstrate an excellent knowledge of scripture, which is integral to lessons. They are adept at relating learning in lessons to their own lives. A list of subject-specific vocabulary is reviewed in each lesson which pupils then use seamlessly during class discussions and tasks. They can work both collaboratively and independently, and their passion and enthusiasm ensures excellent progress. Effective adult support and good visual resources are used so that all groups are given the help they need to achieve success. Achievement in religious education is above average when compared with other core subjects. Creative learning methods enhance pupils' engagement and allow them to explore their learning through a variety of media. However, pupils' personalised learning skills could be nurtured further to enable them to synthesise what they have learned in original and creative ways. Presentation of pupils' work is meticulous and of a consistently high standard. Individual pupils' 'Wow' work is displayed throughout the school to celebrate pupils' learning and encourage high performance in the subject.

Teachers have a high level of confidence and are skilled and knowledgeable in the subject. They demonstrate a deep commitment and bear powerful witness to their belief in the impact religious education has on the spiritual development of pupils. This is shown in the way that pupils are regularly led into periods of reflection in lessons which they greatly value and which

leads to a deeper and more meaningful experience for them. As a result of regular professional development, through diocesan courses and support from the religious education team, planning is closely linked to high-quality assessment; therefore, well-designed lessons extend pupils' knowledge and understanding so that pupils learn extremely well. Scripture is used as an integral part of lessons which has given pupils the opportunity to become skilled at linking messages in scripture to their daily lives. A Year 3 pupil commented, 'All Jesus asks you to do is to love one another.' Teachers' probing questioning encourages pupils to delve deeper into their theological understanding to maximise learning. Interesting and challenging questions are posed to inspire pupils to become curious, interested learners. Dedicated spaces for reflection and prayer, available in the classrooms, throughout the school, in the chapel and the prayer garden, promote pupils' growing spirituality. Pupils' achievements are celebrated in whole-school assemblies, and their work is proudly displayed in classrooms and corridors. One parent comments, 'my children love RE lessons at school and enjoy telling me about everything they have been learning.'

Leaders and governors have ensured that the religious education programme faithfully delivers a sequential, imaginative and creative curriculum as set out in the Directory. They have ensured that religious education enjoys a parity with the other core subjects in terms of staff training, resources, and accommodation. The religious education team ably supports staff in planning and delivering the scheme of work so that innovative and creative teaching methods are used to promote active learning and fully engage pupils. Their vision has led to securing outstanding teaching and learning. Staff speak appreciatively of the generous support and the 'open-door' policy provided by the team and senior leaders. One staff member says, 'I believe the RE in our school is led well, enables all staff and children to be supported, and we are lucky to have a wonderful community of parents, the parish and our governors.' Thorough, collaborative planning sessions secure coherence across the ages and phases of learning. Through carefully planned lessons, and high-quality resources, additional adults in class are highly effective in supporting vulnerable pupils to achieve. Action plans are shared with governors so that priorities are implemented, and the impact analysed. The link-governor for religious education visits the school regularly, providing a clear and strategic vision for development. Regular, forensic monitoring and analysis by the religious education team and governors result in accurate self-evaluation which leads to outstanding outcomes for pupils.

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

1

1

Pupils engage reverently in a full, active and joyous prayer life. A range of ways of praying are offered to pupils, including meditation, silence, and reflection, as well as traditional and spontaneous prayer. Pupils are regularly encouraged to pray their intentions aloud, asking for help for themselves, their families, the wider community and the world, thereby demonstrating their understanding that everything is dependent upon God's abiding love. Class apostles mentor their peers in planning liturgies, and house captains plan and lead the weekly Gospel assemblies. When provided with the opportunity, pupils are skilled at using previous evaluations of sessions to improve the quality of prayer and liturgy, but further capacity should be given to this. Scripture is central to prayer and is used meaningfully to deepen pupils' experience. Appropriate liturgical music is chosen during liturgies to provide a calm, prayerful atmosphere. Pupils' singing is of the highest standard; they readily and enthusiastically sing hymns which complement liturgies. High-quality prayer spaces are provided throughout the school, in the classrooms, in the chapel and in the prayer garden. The prayer life of the school is a full expression of the Church's liturgical year. Mass is celebrated often, particularly on feast days and holy days. One parent comments, 'my children love reciting prayers and leading by example.' A parent of a child in nursery class appreciatively remarks that 'she can confidently and independently pray spontaneously and make the sign of the cross without support.'

Prayer supports and nourishes all members of the school community and pupils draw inspiration from the lives of the saints. Class prayer boxes offer the opportunity for individual prayers, which are then used during class prayer sessions. Each pupil in the school has a prayer journal in which their thoughts, reflections and prayers are recorded. Teachers designate moments of silence during prayer to facilitate deeper reflection and contemplation. Children in the early years are reminded, 'God is in the silence.' Prayer times are a cherished part of the school's daily life. The

school community works hard to recognise the wider Church family and, through its prayer life, helps pupils to develop a deeper understanding of the Gospel message and the call to serve. During a liturgy in Year 5, a pupil responded to an image of Pentecost by stating, 'Wherever you're from, you will be blessed with the Holy Spirit.' Music is central to prayer and liturgy and the school identifies pupils and staff members with creative talents to enhance liturgies. The school's excellent partnership with the local parish priest ensures that pupils participate in the breadth and richness of Catholic tradition. Staff are excellent role-models for pupils, participating fully, with reverence and commitment, in the prayer life of the school. Class collective worship books record that pupils are given regular opportunities to lead liturgies and reflect meaningfully on their experiences.

Leaders and governors ensure that pupils in the school are offered a wide range of high-quality, meaningful experiences of prayer and worship. Leaders support staff to lead appropriate prayer and liturgy through a clear, effective policy. Leaders and governors ensure that the school calendar reflects significant dates in the liturgical calendar, resulting in a wealth of opportunities for pupils to celebrate the Eucharist. Parents are welcome to attend assemblies, liturgies and Masses. In addition, parents are provided with class prayer bags and the monthly newsletter, 'Prayer at Home' both of which enrich home prayer experiences for families. The Sacrament of Reconciliation is offered at key times in the liturgical year, during Advent and Lent. Governors prioritise a generous budget for excellent resources, for developing prayer areas, such as the new chapel and prayer garden, and for providing professional development for all staff. Leaders and governors prioritise the formation of staff. Staff are given the opportunity to attend relevant diocesan courses, deanery meetings and moderation days. As a result, staff are competent in leading prayer and liturgy in the classroom and in whole-school worship. One parent, reflecting on the impact of the school's provision for prayer and liturgy comments, 'The home prayer packs and prayer newsletters encourage us to continue the good work of the school.' Another parent comments, 'The school provides a rich opportunity for my children to grow in their faith through prayer.'

Information about the school

Full name of school	Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	117488
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	9193415
Full postal address of the school	Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School, Merry Hill Road, Bushey, WD23 1SU
School phone number	01923901179
Headteacher	Anna Smith (Head of School) Linda Payne (Executive Headteacher)
Chair of Governors/Trustees	Vivienne Morgan
School Website	http://www.sacredheart682.herts.sch.uk/
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	November 2017
Previous denominational inspection grade	Good

The inspection team

Norah Flatley
Mary Ainger

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