



# St Mary's Catholic Primary School

URN: 102528

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Archbishop of Westminster

10–11 October 2024

## Summary of key findings

### Overall effectiveness

The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school

#### 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

#### Religious education (p.5)

The quality of curriculum religious education

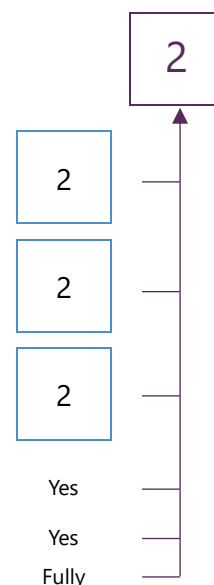
#### Collective worship (p.7)

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

The school is fully compliant with the general norms for religious education laid down by the Bishops' Conference

The school is fully compliant with any additional requirements of the diocesan bishop

The school has responded to the areas for improvement from the last inspection



## Compliance statement

- The school is fully compliant with the general norms for religious education laid down by the Bishops' Conference.
- The school is fully compliant with the additional requirements of the diocesan bishop.
- All areas for improvement outlined in the previous diocesan inspection have been addressed in full.

## What the school does well

- Staff at St Mary's are positive role models and are committed to the implementation of the mission statement, encouraging pupils to follow Jesus' teachings as they live out their mission as a family.
- Pupils' behaviour is consistently good, both in classrooms and outside, where they show care and consideration for each other.
- The Catholic character development of pupils is further enhanced by the wide range of pupil leadership responsibilities provided by the school.
- Pupils respond well to prayer and liturgy, which are integral to the school day, and they enjoy leading prayer and acting as good role models for younger pupils.
- Pupils actively engage with opportunities to develop the Catholic life and mission of the school.

## What the school needs to improve

- Ensure leaders have a clear vision for the teaching and learning of the *Religious Education Directory* and have a good level of expertise in securing this vision.
- Ensure teachers extend pupils' knowledge and understanding through effective, challenging questioning and tasks which are adapted to ensure all pupils, including disadvantaged and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, achieve the best possible outcomes.
- Further embed Catholic social teaching within the curriculum and life of the school.

## 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

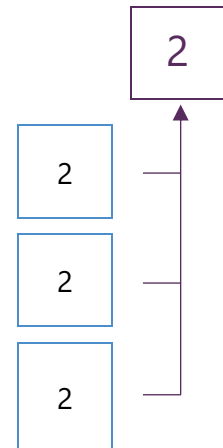
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

#### 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



All members of the school community embrace and live out the mission, 'Our school family at St Mary's wants this to be a safe, caring, creative and happy place, where we all have a fair chance to learn and grow together and to do the best we can. We do this by knowing and loving Jesus more every day and by following his teachings in a joyful way'. Pupils sing their mission statement proudly to ensure it is constantly kept alive for children of all ages. Pupils demonstrate a strong understanding of their value as unique individuals created in the image and likeness of God. They express happiness, confidence, and a sense of security within the school community. Pupils value the role of the Mini Vinnies and school council and enjoy participating in opportunities provided, such as, linking Catholic social teaching principles to responding to the needs of others locally, nationally and globally. Their active role in the school reflects pupils' increasing leadership and commitment to service. This further emphasises their engagement in the school's mission and their desire to live out their faith in practical ways. Examples of this include: their partnership with St Vincent de Paul; Mary's Meals; hosting Macmillan coffee mornings; writing cards with residents at Bridgewater Care Home and contributions to the local food bank 'Upper Room'.

The front entrance prominently displays symbols of the school's Catholic character, creating a welcoming atmosphere that reflects the school's Catholic identity and charism. The school recently held a successful Diversity Week, celebrating the cultural richness of its families and reinforcing the importance of unity within its diverse community. Staff provide pastoral care through ELSA and serve as positive role models, promoting mutual respect and care among pupils. A parent commented 'It brings peace to my heart knowing the school helps our children to be better by guiding and teaching them to have forgiveness, hope, love, faith and happiness through their teaching in classes as well as singing psalms, praying the rosary and building a community that feels safe'. The physical environment reflects the school's Catholic character, with symbols and artwork, such as depictions of Mary and her appearances. Class names also reflect this Catholic identity. Pupils have a clear understanding of the school's commitment to following the teachings of Jesus and the message of Laudato Si, where they

show care for God's creation through displays and activities around the school. Staff embody the school's mission, with one expressing, 'We nurture the whole child both pastorally and academically. This is our second home.' A well-planned Relationships and Sex Education programme meets both diocesan requirements and is firmly rooted in the teachings of the Church.

The religious education leader plays a pivotal role in enhancing the Catholic life of the school by working closely with the diocesan advisor and the Hounslow Catholic Primary Partnership. This collaboration strengthens the school's Catholic identity and supports its ongoing development. Leaders have successfully engaged pupils in achieving the Live Simply award, demonstrating the school's commitment to environmental stewardship and solidarity with those in need, aligning with Catholic social teaching on caring for our common home. Leaders also provide strong support to new staff through an effective induction process, ensuring consistency of practice across the school. Leaders and governors maintain strong partnerships with parents, evidenced by the recent relaunch of the Parent-Teacher Association, Friends of St Mary's Isleworth, which further supports the school's mission. To continue enhancing the life and mission of the school, leaders and governors need to refine their self-evaluation processes to promote deeper self-challenge.

## Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

### Religious education key judgement grade

#### Pupil outcomes

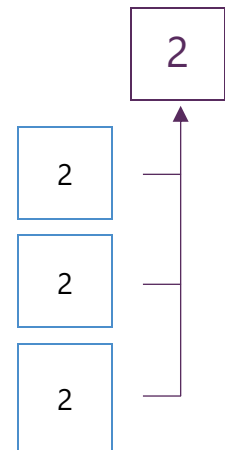
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

#### 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 at St Mary's are developing secure knowledge, understanding and skills that reflect the *Religious Education Directory*. Pupils are provided with regular opportunities to recall and retrieve information, which allows them to build on prior learning. Mini quizzes help teachers address misconceptions, reinforcing understanding. Pupils collaborate well in groups, knowing their roles, fulfilling the school's vision of better learners using the 8 enterprise skills. Subject-specific vocabulary, referred to as 'star words', are revisited regularly to enhance retention. Achievement in religious education is at least in line with other core subjects. Most pupils make expected progress in line with other core subjects from their starting point at St Mary's. While pupils can articulate their work in religious education and suggest improvements, they are not consistently challenged through effective questioning, thereby limiting deeper thinking opportunities and independence. Pupils express enjoyment in the creative tasks that allow them to demonstrate their learning, such as role play observed in both Reception and Year 5 and sequencing the story of Moses in a timeline in Year 6. Behaviour in religious education lessons is good, and pupils particularly enjoy lessons that involve creative activities.

At St Mary's teachers demonstrating a strong commitment to developing their subject knowledge and understanding how pupils learn. However, there are instances where activities lack sufficient scaffolding to enable pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities to access the learning. Pupil effort is recognised and celebrated, both verbally and through displays in classrooms, fostering a sense of pride and achievement. Accomplishments are highlighted through star of the day and in celebration assemblies at the end of each half term, promoting a culture of celebrating achievements. Teachers plan collaboratively together in year groups and have attended planning sessions to support their subject knowledge. In some year groups, targeted questioning is not consistently effective in extending pupils' responses or critical thinking. Teachers understand the significant impact that religious education has on the moral and spiritual development of their pupils and regularly make links with Catholic social teaching principles. For example, in Year 5 children wrote letters to musicians urging them to review their sustainability policy to ensure it is more environmentally conscious. Teachers are dedicated to enhancing their practice through collaborative methods such as lesson

study and working in triads led by school leaders, indicating a commitment to continuous improvement.

St Mary's curriculum for religious education is currently transitioning from the *Religious Education Curriculum Directory* to the new *Directory*. Leaders and governors need to ensure that the religious education leader is given regular opportunities to attend diocesan professional development to ensure the smooth implementation of a curriculum that is a faithful expression of the *Directory*. Religious education is well resourced, and the budget allocation is comparable to other core subjects. Whilst homework for religious education is not given throughout the school, children in the Nursery are given weekly religious education homework, laying a strong early foundation for their faith journeys. Staff appreciate the support from the religious education leader to improve their subject knowledge and the open-door culture ensures continuous collaboration, allowing teachers to enhance their subject and pedagogical knowledge and share best practice. Regular monitoring by leaders is improving, and the importance of an action plan to drive school improvement and ensure sustainable change has been recognised. Half-termly professional development sessions, led by the religious education leader, ensures subject knowledge of teachers is improved. Plans are in place to further support the religious education leader by offering additional professional development opportunities within the diocese and facilitating visits to observe best practice in other schools. Leaders ensure that pupils are provided with engaging enrichment activities such as the Year 6 visit to Rome, along with visits to other places of worship from faiths within the school community, such as a synagogue, gurdwara, mandir and mosque.

## Collective worship

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

### Collective worship key judgement grade

#### Pupil outcomes

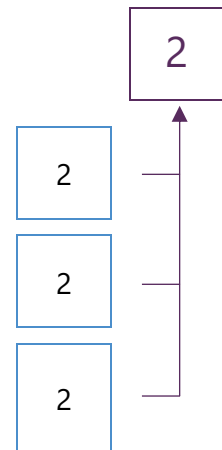
How well pupils participate in and respond to the school's collective worship

#### Provision

The quality of collective worship provided by the school

#### Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for collective worship



Pupil participation in prayer and liturgy at the school is good and reflects the school's commitment to nurturing their spiritual development. Pupils respond well to the various opportunities for prayer and liturgy, engaging with enthusiasm and showing respect during times of silent reflection which was observed during a Year 2 celebration of the word, where children were given the opportunity to speak to God silently and thank Him. The rhythm of the Church's liturgical year is carefully integrated into the prayer life of the school. Pupils experience a variety of prayer forms, and their prayer experiences are further enriched through the use of music. Pupils are increasingly confident in planning and leading their own prayers, a skill developed through the resources and training provided by the religious education leader. The Mini Vinnies act as role models for younger pupils, demonstrating leadership in prayer. Pupils enthusiastically undertake ministries and are proud of their roles within the school's prayer life. While pupils can articulate how prayer makes them feel, they are less confident in evaluating the impact of prayer on their daily lives and the actions it might inspire.

Prayer is a routine part of gatherings and key events at the school, such as rosary groups during the month of October and May. The school makes good use of its physical spaces to encourage prayer and reflection, with designated areas that support pupils in quiet contemplation. Pupils are offered the opportunity to attend weekly Mass. The religious education leader is actively working with the local parish priest to enhance pupil ministry at Mass, ensuring that pupils take an active role in the liturgy which will strengthen the school's connection with the wider Catholic community. Parents are regularly invited to join the school for Mass and on feast days, promoting good home-school links. Parents are positive about the prayer life of the school; one commented, 'My girls really enjoy daily prayers and the Bible readings, and they love going to church and attending Masses with their class'. The RE lead has invested in updating prayer resources, including class sets of Bibles and a range of diverse iconography of Our Lady, ensuring a rich and inclusive experience. Staff should now focus on enhancing pupils' ability to evaluate prayer and liturgy, enabling them to identify next steps and encouraging the use of a variety of prayer forms across all year groups.

Senior leaders, governors and the religious education leader have a clear vision for the progression of skills in prayer and liturgy and this nurtures staff and pupils' relationship with God. The school calendar reflects significant dates in the liturgical year and pupils are provided with regular opportunities to celebrate the Eucharist. The introduction of the celebration of the word, led by the religious education leader, has been well-received by both staff and pupils. Through regular modelling, the leader has enabled pupils to independently plan and lead prayer and liturgy, resulting in increasing creativity and engagement. The school is well-resourced in this area, allowing for sustained participation and good liturgical experiences. The Mini Vinnies serve as role models, regularly reading from Scripture and inspiring younger pupils to take an active role in the religious life of the school. Staff are supported in their leadership of prayer and liturgy through comprehensive resources and the subject leader's guidance, fostering increasing confidence. While the current efforts are strong, there is a need for the leadership team to continue to improve the prayer and liturgy offering through strategic action planning which will ensure long-term continuous development.



## Information about the school

Full name of school	St Mary's Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	102528
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	3133504
Full postal address of the school	St Mary's Catholic Primary School, South Street, Isleworth, TW7 7EE
School phone number	02085607166
Headteacher	Farley Marsh
Chair of governors	Ania Mason
School Website	<a href="http://www.smi.hounslow.sch.uk">www.smi.hounslow.sch.uk</a>
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	N/A
Phase	Primary
Type of school	Voluntary Aided School
Admissions policy	Non-selective
Age-range of pupils	3-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	February 2018
Previous denominational inspection grade	Good

## The inspection team

Cynthia Ní Loingsigh	Lead
Mary Ainger	Team
Stephanie Gavin	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