



St Mary's Catholic Primary School

URN: 138292

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Archbishop of Westminster

27–28 February 2025

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

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 general norms for religious education laid down by the Bishops' Conference

Yes

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

Yes

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

Fully

1

Compliance statement

- The school is fully compliant with the 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

What the school does well

- The school's beautiful environment nurtures a deep and authentic spirituality, creating a space where everyone feels invited to participate in prayer and reflection.
- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding, both in lessons and throughout the school, demonstrating respect, kindness, and a strong sense of responsibility.

- Relationships between staff and pupils are warm, supportive, and built on mutual trust, fostering a true sense of belonging within the school community.
- Staff feel valued and supported, knowing their contributions are appreciated and that their wellbeing is a priority.
- The school thrives as a faith-filled community where learning, worship, and personal growth come together to create a joyful and inspiring experience for all.

What the school needs to improve

- Create more opportunities for pupils to actively engage with their learning by analysing and evaluating it in relation to their own life experiences.

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

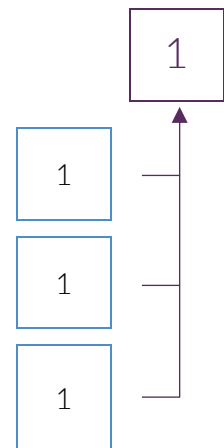
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

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



At St Mary's, pupils live their Catholic faith, embracing Gospel values in their daily lives. They feel happy, confident, and valued, knowing they are part of a caring and supportive community. Pupils' deep respect for others and active engagement in Catholic life and mission make the school a special place. They draw inspiration from scripture, recognising it as the heart of their mission. Their commitment extends beyond the school, supporting local, national and global charities such as Jimmy's Cambridge, a charity that supports people who are rough sleeping, Aid to the Church in Need and Cafod. Pupils are very familiar with the themes of Catholic social teaching (CST). They can articulate that CST comes from the teaching of Jesus. Pupils speak confidently about how their charitable work has not only helped others but has also shaped and been influenced by their faith. Pupils are very proud to take on leadership roles in school. They understand that they are stewards of creation and can cite Pope Francis' encyclical 'Laudato Si' as being an important reference for their work.

The school's mission is truly lived and celebrated, shaping a warm and inclusive environment. Staff are deeply committed to the mission, setting a shining example of care, kindness, and strong pastoral support. The school's Catholic identity is reflected in every aspect of daily life, fostering spiritual and moral growth. Pupils with additional needs receive exceptional care and support. They are fully included and able to thrive. Every pupil, regardless of their challenges, is encouraged to reach their full potential in a safe and supportive environment. St Mary's celebrates and welcomes those from various beliefs and traditions. Staff are exemplary role models for pupils as they bear witness to the school's Catholic life and mission every day. The care and attention given to the school environment is reflected in its dedication to its mission. The school and Parish work closely together to provide many opportunities for spiritual growth.

One parent summed up the school's faith filled ethos: 'The school has a big emphasis on Catholic life which makes my child feel a part of something much wider than themselves. We are very blessed to be a part of this community and school.' The provision for relationship, sex, health education (RSHE) is carefully planned and firmly rooted in the teaching of the Church. Leaders ensure that this curriculum celebrates a holistic view. Pupils engage enthusiastically with their learning in RSHE.

St Mary's leaders and governors place Christ at the heart of all decisions, ensuring the school's mission thrives. The Trust offers its leaders exceptional professional development. Leaders' focus on Catholic life and mission impacts the whole school community evident in their work with parents, parish and the diocese to create a strong, faith-filled community. Their focus on staff wellbeing, resource allocation, and high-quality education drives the school's ongoing success. The parish priest is highly valued member of the school community and greatly appreciated by pupils and staff alike. Governors have ensured there is a budget for the roles of a behaviour support mentor, mental health counsellor and have allocated funding to enable staff responsibility for vulnerable families. As a result, every pupil flourishes in this school. A parent commented 'As a parent and also parishioner of St Thomas of Canterbury, it is lovely to see the link between the school and parish: there are often displays of work by the children linked to the liturgical year and other themes the children are working on in their religious education lessons.' Leaders and governors ensure that staff wellbeing is prioritised. Staff enjoy working at St Mary's. They feel supported by leaders and the parish. One staff member recalled how 'the arms of St Mary's enveloped them' in a time of need.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

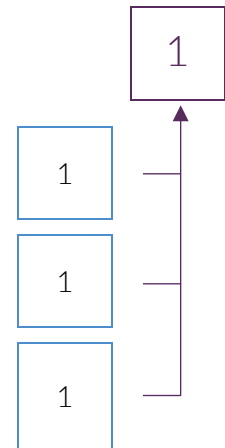
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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 develop excellent knowledge and skills in religious education, making strong progress by actively engaging in lessons and applying their learning with confidence. They think deeply about faith, ask insightful questions, and produce high-quality, creative work that reflects their enthusiasm. Their behaviour is outstanding, and they take ownership of their progress. In the best lessons observed, pupils made rapid progress as a result of insightful questioning by teachers. In an Early Years lesson, pupils were learning about helping others. The teacher linked learning with scripture and set up creative activities that both challenged and consolidated this learning. In an upper Key Stage 2 lesson on the transfiguration, incisive questioning and adapted teaching together with strong subject knowledge ensured that pupils enjoyed the lesson and made good progress. Pupils have a clear understanding of how well they are doing and know what to do to improve their work. In the best lessons seen, pupils showed independence and could synthesise what they had learned. This is not yet consistent practice throughout the school. In some year groups, pupils' learning could be further improved by analysing and evaluating what they have learned in the context of their own life experiences.

Teachers are knowledgeable and have high expectations, use effective questioning, and provide engaging lessons that encourage deep reflection. Pupils are motivated by constructive feedback and a variety of creative learning opportunities that cater to different needs, especially those with additional needs. High-quality resources and skilled support staff ensure all pupils can thrive in their religious education. In Early Years the resources used are highly effective. They engage pupils in a creative way. This provision is further enhanced by the implementation of the new *Religious Education Directory* (RED). Pupils are provided with time in lessons to reflect on their learning. In a Key Stage 1 lesson about how to get closer to God, some pupils closed their eyes as they listened respectfully to scripture. They used good religious vocabulary as they discussed

almsgiving and sacrifice. The teacher shared her own faith journey demonstrating a strong and open relationship with pupils. A staff member commented 'Our school is more than just a place of learning—it is a true family where everyone is valued, supported, and encouraged to grow in faith and knowledge.'

Leadership ensures that religious education is a core priority, with a well-structured curriculum that promotes continuous progress. The new *Religious Education Directory* is being effectively implemented in Early Years and Key Stage 1. This has resulted in a creative and engaging curriculum offer for these year groups. Leaders and governors invest in high-quality professional development, fostering excellence in teaching and learning. Strong community links, strategic planning, and ongoing evaluation contribute to outstanding outcomes for pupils and staff alike. The headteacher works closely with other Diocese of Westminster Academy Trust schools to benchmark progress. Leaders have worked exceptionally well with the diocesan adviser to evaluate their work and action further improvements. As a result of this highly effective collaboration, the strategic action implemented has resulted in outstanding outcomes for pupils. Trust leaders work highly effectively with school leaders and governors to evaluate and monitor religious education. They offer challenge and support ensuring all stakeholders are consulted in their relentless drive for improvement.

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 actively participate in prayer and liturgy, showing deep understanding and reverence. They engage in meaningful worship experiences and reflect on how faith shapes their lives. Their enthusiasm and sincerity bring the school's worship to life. In an Early Years liturgy each pupil made an individual response reflecting on their special place. This liturgy was very skilfully pitched to allow pupils to reflect and participate. Pupils in Key Stage 2 plan and lead prayer and liturgy in an exceptional way. Scripture chosen reflects the theme and pupils participate in Ignatian prayer. Pupils pray a range of prayers that are part of the Catholic tradition. They included prayers for Pope Francis demonstrating their keen understanding of the power of prayer for those in need. Pupils clearly understand how prayer and liturgy influence and are influenced by everyday life. The prayer wall in the garden is a visual expression of prayers of petition for the whole school community. This is used with ease and reverence by pupils. Pupils enjoy communal singing to further enhance their liturgies. Pupils work collaboratively to set the mood and tone for liturgy creating beautiful prayer spaces focusing on the liturgical year.

Prayer and liturgy are at the heart of this school community, woven into daily life in a way that feels both natural and meaningful. Prayer and liturgy are a joyful and essential part of school life, celebrated with care and creativity. Thoughtfully chosen scripture, music, and artistic expression enhance worship experiences. Families and local parishes play a key role in fostering a rich prayer life. Prayer spaces, both in classrooms and dedicated areas, are cherished, well-maintained, and used regularly. The exceptional prayer garden is a sacred space. The prayer wall gives a deep spiritual meaning to all who use it. Staff prayer, focusing on the reading of the day, is well attended. Staff pray spontaneously as they identify significant moments of joy and sorrow in prayer. Staff are inspiring models of exemplary practice to others by the way in which they lead and participate in prayer and liturgy. They work to ensure families are involved in the prayer

life of the school. One parent commented, 'the children enjoy reading Bible stories and talk freely to me about their faith in God. The Rosary Club is a favourite of my children, and I think it's even run by other pupils!'

Leaders ensure that prayer and liturgy remain vibrant, engaging and central to the school's identity. The policy for prayer and liturgy is regularly reviewed to ensure it is clear, accessible and meaningful for all staff. They provide staff development, strategic planning, and well-resourced opportunities for prayer and liturgy. Ongoing evaluation and feedback help create a vibrant and spiritually enriching environment. Leaders ensure that school calendar is designed to prioritise key moments in the liturgical year, offering regular opportunities to celebrate the Eucharist and the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Holy days and special occasions are thoughtfully planned so that everyone can take part in a way that enriches their faith journey. The Trust's commitment to spiritual formation for leaders highlights the deep value and importance it places on spiritual development. Leaders' deep knowledge and understanding of Catholic traditions, ensures that prayer in school is both meaningful and inclusive. Leaders listen and act upon advice given. In this way, they ensure continuous improvement, and that prayer and liturgy remain vibrant, engaging, and central to school life.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Mary's Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	138292
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	9195200
Full postal address of the school	St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Melbourn Road, Royston, SG8 7DB
School phone number	01763246021
Headteacher	Julia Pearce
Chair of governors	Ben Timms
School Website	https://www.stmarysroyston.co.uk/
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	The Diocese Of Westminster Academy Trust
Phase	Primary
Type of school	Academy
Admissions policy	Non-selective
Age-range of pupils	3-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	January 2018
Previous denominational inspection grade	Good

The inspection team

Evelyn Ward
Carol Ransom

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