

# St Mary's Catholic Primary School

URN: 400090

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Bishop of Wrexham

16–17 May 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

2

#### Religious education (p.5)

The quality of curriculum religious education

2

#### Collective worship (p.7)

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

2

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

2

## What the school does well

- The school effectively promotes, nurtures and sustains a happy, caring, Catholic community where all have a real sense of belonging.
- Leaders and governors prioritise their guardianship of the school's mission, ensuring it is well understood by pupils and staff.
- The school is a joyful community, evident in the excellent relationships at all levels.
- Teachers clearly communicate the value of religious education to their pupils.
- There is a strong, effective partnership between school, home and parish which contributes well to pupils' spiritual formation.

## What the school needs to improve

- Establishment and development of child-led collective worship throughout the school that is creative and nurtures a sense of wonder and awe and improves and develops pupils' self-confidence and autonomy in their approach to prayer and liturgy.
- Further develop the school self-evaluation processes to be fully inclusive of all stakeholders focusing on pupil outcomes, provision and leadership to more accurately reflect the school's current position.
- Provision of opportunities for pupils to engage in extended writing in religious education.

## 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

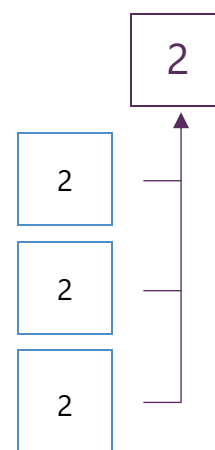
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

#### 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



The mission statement is known by the whole community and is the cornerstone that shapes the Catholic life of the school. St Mary's school is a welcoming, fully inclusive, nurturing community. Pupils can express some ways that they live the mission through the care, kindness and love they show for each other 'placing Christ at the centre of all that they are and do'. Pupils are proud to belong to this school and clearly express that they feel valued and safe and know they are part of a Catholic faith-filled community. Pupils show respect for themselves, each other and adults, which is evident in the high levels of very good behaviour in lessons and across the school. They understand that each person is uniquely created and loved by God. This was evident in relationships in the classroom and on the playground.

The Guardian Angels Group works to ensure the welfare of peers and improve school life through Acts of Kindness. They spoke enthusiastically about the new playground equipment that they identified, bought and provided for playtime. Pupils have a clear understanding of how the school teaches them to follow the example and teachings of Jesus, giving them opportunity to grow in virtue and to be the best that they can be. The newly formed Faith in Action group supported by two parishioners focuses on the Catholic social teaching of the church. These pupils are beginning to work with and share their ideas with other classes to pursue the common good, protect the planet and serve those in need. Pupils have a close link with the parish priest, who visits the school weekly, and they are regular visitors to the church. Pupils recognise that they are living out their mission through supporting charities by fundraising for Cafod, the Lighthouse shelter and the Foodbank.

Staff are good role models and bear witness to the school's Catholic life and mission. Teachers make sure that the mission statement is visible in classrooms, and it is revisited every year as part of learning in religious education. Staff know pupils and families well and these positive relationships enable them

to support the needs of all pupils including the most vulnerable. The pastoral support programme is well planned and delivered; it effectively promotes the wellbeing of pupils across the school. The school's environment witnesses its Catholic identity through classroom prayer spaces, religious displays, artefacts and the prayer garden of which the pupils are very proud, recognising it as a special Holy place. Provision for relationship and sex education (RSE) is carefully planned and firmly rooted in the teachings of the Church. All staff and governors have recently participated in joint professional development for the new RSE curriculum.

Leaders and governors clearly articulate the mission of the school and are committed to developing, supporting and nurturing its Catholic nature. The Catholic ethos is at the heart of all that motivates the school leadership team and governing body. The head teacher, who is also the religious education coordinator, is ably supported by the deputy head teacher.

There are good links between the school, parish and home which contribute to a strong family ethos. Staff participate in parish ministries and are actively involved in sacramental development programmes in the parish and neighbouring parishes. Staff and governors have participated in a diocesan professional development course this year and there is a genuine desire for further professional development at school and diocesan level. Staff questionnaires highlighted a strong supportive team approach to helping staff develop and grow. The school's self-evaluation processes need to include all stakeholders. All teachers hold the Catholic Certificate of Religious Studies and participate in some professional development. There are suitable processes and support in place for the induction of new staff which enable a greater understanding of the school's Catholic life and mission.

## Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

### Religious education key judgement grade

#### Pupil outcomes

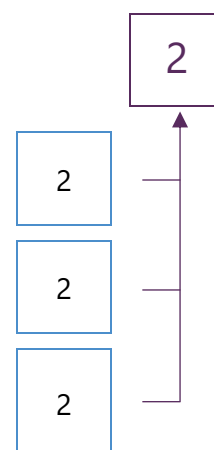
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

#### 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



Overall, standards in religious education are good. Pupils steadily improve their knowledge and understanding in religious education, making expected progress from their starting point as they move through the school. Pupils' religious literacy skills and understanding of the liturgical year are developing appropriately and they spoke about how they should live their lives based on Jesus's teachings. Pupils can articulate how the fruits of the Holy Spirit have an impact on their actions in word and deed. Pupils use and understand religious vocabulary in lessons and can answer teacher-led questions. Many are given the opportunity to share and explore their ideas and views with their Talk partners. Staff and pupils used Learning Power strategies to drive and secure learning. Pupils engaged well in the planned activities but would benefit from opportunities for extension and enrichment tasks to challenge and extend learning. Where these were provided, pupils worked collaboratively to solve problems, were allowed time and opportunity to share their learning with their peers and engaged in linked activities. In the younger classes, all continuous provision was enhanced with imaginative Pentecost activities which reinforced learning. Information Technology (IT) was used well to support learning throughout the school, for example, Pentecost animation and a compilation of a fact file on the life, journeys and writings of St Paul. In all lessons observed, pupil behaviour was very good, and they displayed interest and enthusiasm in their learning. Assessment for Learning is beginning to be developed using the driver words. These need to be shared, understood and used with and by pupils to further their progress.

Teachers plan successfully using the *Religious Education Directory* and are managing the transition from the use of a traditional scheme well. They recognise the importance of this curriculum initiative and have developed a collaborative team approach to ensure best outcomes for all members of staff. The head teacher has established partnerships with other Catholic primary schools to ensure ongoing curriculum development and quality of provision.

Book scrutiny showed progress throughout the school in pupils' religious knowledge, skills and understanding. Teachers provide opportunities for pupils to present their work using a variety of forms, such as diary and letter writing, cards and posters, however there was little evidence of extended writing. The book scrutiny and discussions showed that pupils understand the green and purple pen marking scheme to reflect on their learning and next steps, and some respond appropriately to teachers' comments and suggestions for further explanation. Learning support assistants supported and scaffolded learning opportunities well for pupils in religious education and they join afterschool pupil progress meetings to reflect on the impact of their support, which is highly valued.

Leaders and governors recognise that the school is on a journey of improvement. Head teacher, governors and staff aim to ensure that religious education has a prominent profile in the school and engage in a variety of curriculum monitoring activities, including learning walks, book scrutiny and pupil voice. The school has begun to track pupil progress using age-related outcomes, but pupil assessment data is at an early stage of development. This needs refining and developing to ensure targets are set at school, individual and class level to further drive learning and standards. Religious education has parity with other core curriculum subjects in relation to resourcing, staffing and professional development. The school self-evaluation document needs to be revised to be more evaluative, fully inclusive of all stakeholders and reflective of the school's current position. Parents feel confident in the school's delivery of religious education and are well informed about its content through parent consultations and home school IT links. Surveys were overwhelmingly positive; many highlighted that they were pleased with the skills, knowledge and understanding their children achieved in religious education.

## Collective worship

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

### Collective worship key judgement grade

#### Pupil outcomes

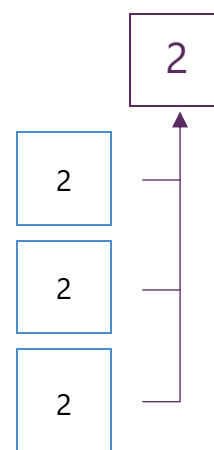
How well pupils participate in and respond to the school's collective worship

#### 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



Prayer and worship are central to the life of the school and promote an inclusive, calm and reverent environment which results in respect being shown to all members of the community, including those from other faiths and none. Whole school and class acts of worship take place regularly and reflect the Catholic character of the school. Behaviour is very good, and pupils were reverent and responded well as they participated in worship by confidently answering questions and joining in prayers enthusiastically. Pupils were offered some opportunities for personal reflection. Singing is joyous in both English and Welsh and enjoyed by pupils, as observed in the whole school collective worship when pupils signed and danced the Pentecost song. A variety of traditional prayers and Welsh language prayers are prayed confidently, in addition prayers are written by members of the school community in both English and Welsh. Pupils are encouraged to 'go forth' and to put the key messages into practice in their own lives. Suitable artefacts are used to enhance whole-school worship. Pupils work with adults to prepare and participate in worship but during the inspection, pupil-led collective worship and evaluation of prayer and liturgy was not evident. Pupils can articulate how they use prayer in their lives; one pupil commented that he would pray to God if he needed help or was sad. Opportunities to promote pupils' spiritual and moral development are provided through the regular visits to the parish with pupils taking an active part in the various ministries, such as parish welcomers, readers and hymn singing.

There is an annual planned programme for prayer and liturgy which links appropriately to the Church's liturgical year and all worship observed had scripture at its heart and reflected Catholic tradition. Leaders and staff are good role models and pray and rejoice with the pupils in lessons, throughout the day and in collective worship. Staff should engage in a programme of training to plan and deliver a creative prayer and liturgy programme that ensures pupil-led worship, enriches provision and experience and develops for pupils a sense of wonder and awe. Parents enjoy the celebration of Mass and assemblies and are pleased with the opportunities that their children are given to pray.

The religious displays around the school enhance the environment. Every classroom includes a focal point for prayer and displays of artefacts, pupils' prayers and responses throughout the school reflect the current religious education topic. The school's outdoor prayer garden is an attractive space for pupils to pray and reflect, and to celebrate God's world. The parish priest visits classes weekly to further develop the prayer life of the school and share his teaching expertise to support learning.

Leaders and governors recognise that prayer and liturgy are central to the school and as such allocate appropriate resources, as seen in the school environment, prayer areas and prayer garden. Priority is given to the celebration of the Eucharist throughout the year and pupils regularly join parishioners at Friday Mass and for holy days of obligation. The school's current policy on prayer and liturgy is currently being updated to offer more support to the prayer and liturgical life of the school. A section on pupil-led worship would enhance provision and monitoring and evaluation of this area needs to be included and developed. During the inspection the parish priest joined a whole school celebration on the Gifts of the Holy Spirit and supported and enhanced his visit with follow-up activities in a key stage 2 class. This timetabled link is greatly appreciated by the pupils and staff. Parents are very supportive towards the school, and they value highly the contribution it makes to the spiritual formation of their children.



## Information about the school

Full name of school	St Mary's Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	400090
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	6603304
Full postal address of the school	St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Longford Road, Holyhead, Anglesey, LL65 1TR
School phone number	01407763176
Headteacher	Richard Jones
<b>Chair of Governors</b>	Keith Roberts
School Website	ysgolsantesfair.co.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	January 2014
Previous denominational inspection grade	Good

## The inspection team

Mrs J.Phillips  
Mrs S.McCool

Lead  
Team

## Key to grade judgements

Grade	England	Wales
<b>1</b>	Outstanding	Excellent
<b>2</b>	Good	Good
<b>3</b>	Requires improvement	Adequate and requires improvement
<b>4</b>	Inadequate	Unsatisfactory and in need of urgent improvement