

# St Mary and St Michael Catholic Primary School

URN: 132501

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Bishop of Portsmouth

07–08 February 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

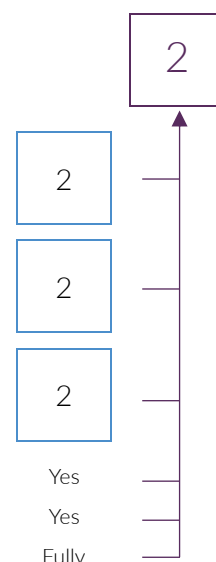
#### Collective worship (p.7)

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

The school is fully compliant with the curriculum requirements laid down by the Bishops' Conference

The school is fully compliant with all requirements of the diocesan bishop

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



## What the school does well

- St Mary and St Michael is a Christ-centred community who joyfully embrace their mission statement of 'Learning together as we follow in the footsteps of Christ.'
- Pupils and staff show a deep commitment to the mission and social teaching of the Church and this is borne out in the wide range of charitable activities the school initiates.
- Pupils show great enjoyment and interest in their RE lessons resulting in exemplary behaviour for learning.
- Pupils participate enthusiastically and reverently in a wide range of prayer and liturgical experiences.
- The school works exceptionally well with its parish, ensuring that the Church's mission is interwoven between school and church.

## What the school needs to improve

This Catholic Schools Inspectorate inspection was carried out under canons 804 & 806 of the code of canon law. For maintained schools and academies in England it fulfils the statutory requirements of s.48 of the Education Act 2005. For maintained schools and academies in Guernsey it fulfils the statutory requirements of s.35(4) of the Guernsey Law 1970.

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- Ensure that pupils can clearly articulate the mission of the school and the Church, expressing a clear understanding of their personal and collective responsibility to the social teaching of the Church.
  - Refine teacher questioning so that teachers can accurately assess pupils understanding, thereby maximising learning for all pupils.
  - Ensure that all pupils develop the confidence, understanding and skill to undertake and evaluate a range of prayer and liturgy experiences appropriate to their age and understanding.

## 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

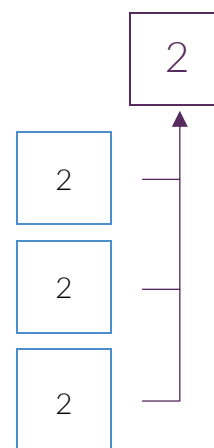
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

#### 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 know their school mission statement 'Learning together as we follow in the footsteps of Christ' and understand what this means for them, for example 'I will follow in Jesus' footsteps by being nice and sharing.' They show exemplary behaviour towards their learning as well as in their attitudes and relationships with each other and other adults and they feel happy and secure at school. Pupils understand their role in caring for those in need locally and globally, from taking part in CAFOD projects such as donating towards building a well in Pakistan to raising awareness of bowel cancer with projects such as Loud Tie Day. They know they are part of a global family and understand their responsibilities towards the less fortunate. Some pupils are also able to link this to Catholic social teaching; however the school should now work to ensure that all pupils have a clear understanding of their role in the mission of the Church and can clearly articulate the theology underpinning their actions. Pupils can explain practical ways to be good stewards of creation and understand how their efforts make a positive difference. For example, the Eco Warriors are passionate about raising awareness about climate change and demonstrate solidarity with poorer nations, recognising the injustice of how 'richer countries' use of fossil fuels is not affecting them, but it is affecting people in poorer countries. Pupils really enjoy supporting the parish in such ways as cleaning the church, helping to lead the monthly Sunday Mass and organising cake sales after Mass for a charity that they decide upon.

Staff are committed to the implementation of the mission statement across the whole of school life: they actively participate in activities that promote the Catholic mission of the school and as such are good role models for pupils. Examples include supporting a local women's refuge, St Julian's House for the Homeless and providing food hampers at Christmas. The quality in relationships and culture of welcome is very strong: one child said she would never have spoken

to the inspectors when she first joined the school, but the school has built her confidence and trust. The school environment reflects its mission and identity through explicit signs of the school's Catholic character, empowering pupils to develop knowledge of these further. Of particular note is the Global Family display which pupils pass everyday and which helps them to understand their responsibilities as stewards across the world. As a close-knit team and school community, staff know their families and pupils very well and, in turn, are committed to recognising and responding to their needs, for example, supporting families in need with vouchers, advice or counselling. Parents are supportive of the school and particularly how it helps their children to grow in faith. A parent told inspectors that 'the school has been an amazing support to our family and got us through some tough times.' The school should now ensure that the mission statement and the principles of Catholic Social Teaching are deeply embedded across all areas of school life.

Leaders including members of the school committee firmly commit to developing the school's Catholic life and mission: one member of the community commented that 'every fibre of the school is Christ-centred'. The headteacher demonstrates faith-driven leadership in her effective work to continually improve provision. This is exemplified in the care and compassion shown to the staff team where decisions are made based on Catholic social teaching and Gospel values. Leaders work closely with the parish team to ensure the school plays an active role in parish life and that school and parish are seen as one body: the priests, deacon and parishioners are frequent visitors to school, supporting staff and pupils in a variety of ways. Leaders provide staff with good quality, helpful training such as supporting them with the ethos and expectations of a Catholic school: this is of particular importance in the school's unique circumstance where they do not have the sole responsibility for making staff appointments. Self-evaluation is accurate because of reliable monitoring and leaders have identified that they now need to ensure that pupils can clearly articulate the mission of the school and the Church.

## Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

### Religious education key judgement grade

#### Pupil outcomes

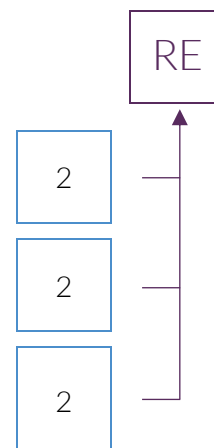
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

#### 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 show great interest and enjoyment in religious education and as a result are fully engaged in lessons and display exemplary behaviour for learning. In most lessons, pupils can work independently and explain what they are learning, recalling their prior learning and making statements such as 'Forgiveness is about rebuilding relationships - if we don't forgive, we can't build friendships, and so you will end up with no friends'. At times, pupils found it difficult to articulate their understanding of what they had learnt. They are familiar with the definition of driver words and these were seen to be utilised effectively in some lessons to support learning. Some children were also able to utilise this vocabulary within their own responses. Pupils' produce good work that is presented well and shows signs of emerging individuality and creativity, for example in a Year 3 lesson on Revelation, pupils were able to choose a parable from their own knowledge which illustrated the qualities needed by a follower of Jesus. In some classes, pupils know how well they are doing and what to do to improve their work. However, this is not consistent across the school.

Teachers are confident in their subject knowledge and able to plan so that learning is sequential. Those that are newer to the school also demonstrate this because of the good quality training and support they receive and the importance and value that is placed on religious education by the whole staff team. Most planning matches pupils' precise needs, but sometimes tasks are not sufficiently refined to challenge and extend more able pupils. Teachers mostly use questions effectively to identify pupils' understanding and in the best lessons, pupils are challenged to show how what they have learned links to their own life. In a lesson on the 10 Commandments, for example, one pupil wrote, 'The commandment, "Do not covet your neighbour's good" is going to be the most difficult because it is about jealousy, and it is a human trait to be jealous of someone or something. You can't go through your life without being jealous. I have been jealous

of a lot of things already.' However, opportunities for pupils to reflect on their learning through deeper thinking and reflective questioning are not routine and this is an area the school should work on in order to more accurately assess pupils' learning and identify precise next steps. In many classes, pupils are provided with a range of ways to present their learning, such as through art and drama, in addition to written work.

Leaders ensure that the requirements of the *Religious Education Curriculum Directory* are taught through the diocesan scheme of work. They are fully committed to the importance of religious education across the school and ensure that the subject has parity with other core subjects regarding staff training and resourcing. Through regular monitoring, the headteacher and deputy headteacher accurately identify strengths and weaknesses and then use this analysis to improve the planning and teaching of religious education. They provide appropriate support, so that all teachers are confident in their teaching of religious education: this results in good provision for pupils. All staff value the training opportunities provided to support them and can explain the impact that they have on their practice, for example, describing how they find the lesson observations extremely helpful for improving their own teaching. Leaders' evaluations of the standards of religious education are accurate and lead to an effective programme of training. For example, they have identified that further professional development needs to take place to develop teachers' confidence and understanding in preparing targeted questions for those pupils who are working at a greater depth in the subject.

## 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

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

2

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Pupils enjoy the many varied opportunities they have to participate in prayer and liturgy. They show high levels of reverence and respect and participate wholeheartedly by joining in with responses and reflecting in prayerful silence. They gather as a class or whole school community in an appropriate manner which allows them to be calm and ready to receive God's word. Catholic social teaching is regularly explored through prayer and liturgy and pupils are given a practical mission linked to the theme of the liturgy; in a whole-school liturgy led by the headteacher on the theme of healing the sick, pupils were tasked with doing something this week for someone who is sick and later in the day, one group of them made drawings for sick parishioners which they gave to a member of the parish. Pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of prayer and liturgy; they make connections between the cycle of prayer and the Church's liturgical year, such as knowing about using the Stations of the Cross to pray during Lent. Year 6 pupils are beginning to plan and lead prayer and liturgy to other classes and talk enthusiastically about choosing an appropriate bible story on which to plan and deliver worship, for example the Noah's Ark scripture with a message of keeping your promise. The school should now extend these opportunities to pupils in other year groups so that all pupils are involved in preparing and evaluating experiences of prayer and liturgy appropriate to their age and ability.

Prayer and liturgy are a central part of the school's daily life. Scripture is a key feature of all prayer and liturgy; passages used are liturgically appropriate. Pupils understand that prayer is an opportunity to talk to God and can happen anywhere, at any time. Staff are committed to being good models of prayer and liturgy and are well supported by senior leaders. They should now ensure that they are able to help pupils to routinely and confidently plan and lead well-constructed prayer and liturgy. The priests, deacon and youth ministry coordinator regularly lead prayer opportunities: for example, Lectio Divina, which the deacon celebrates with the whole

school, focusing on being contemplative in the presence of God. Staff regularly involve pupils in leading prayer: for example, in a Year 4 class worship, pupils read the Gospel and bidding prayers. There are many well-presented opportunities to pray around school and older pupils spoke enthusiastically about coming in during playtimes to pray the rosary in one of the school's prayer areas alongside some of the younger children. Pupils regularly attend weekday Mass at the church as well as helping to lead the Sunday Mass once a month, taking part in serving, singing and reading: this is warmly appreciated by parishioners and helps to strengthen parish-school links even further.

Leaders ensure that the school calendar is planned around the liturgical year and time is set aside to celebrate holy days of obligation, feast days and saints days. They have a secure knowledge of praying and are familiar and confident with liturgical sources; they work closely with the priests and deacon to ensure that liturgies are in line with the Catholic tradition and appropriate to the age of the pupils. Leaders recognise the importance of school environment to prayer and as a result there are many thoughtful displays and reflection areas around the school as well as well-kept display boards and a newly established sensory garden. Leaders offer regular opportunities for ongoing training for all staff in leading prayer. Staff new to the school are confident to ask for help, which can take the form of modelling of good practice from the headteacher and deputy headteacher as well as guidance and advice. One staff member commented that 'the school encourages a strong prayer life, fostering a focus on helping others and teaching about the Bible which provides the children with a solid foundation for their personal and spiritual growth'. Leaders should now implement a cycle of monitoring and evaluation for the school's provision of prayer and liturgy in order to further improve the provision.

## Information about the school

Full name of school	St Mary and St Michael Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	132501
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	7062014
Full postal address of the school	St Mary and St Michael Catholic Primary School, Rue Des Monts, St Sampson, Guernsey, GY2 4HU
School phone number	01481225020
Headteacher	Helen Willetts
Chair of Governors/Trustees	Canon Christopher Rutledge
School Website	<a href="http://www.stmary-stmichael.sch.gg">www.stmary-stmichael.sch.gg</a>
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	N/A
Phase	Primary
Type of school	Offshore voluntary school
Admissions policy	N/A
Age-range of pupils	5-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	20 March 2018
Previous denominational inspection grade	Good

## The inspection team

Michael Lobo  
Jeff Sendall

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