

St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Morecambe

URN: 119622

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Bishop of Lancaster

25–26 April 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

No

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

Fully

2

What the school does well

- Strong experienced associate head teacher with a dedicated and hardworking staff who are all committed to helping and supporting all pupils to be the best they can be.
- Strong subject leader who is knowledgeable and passionate about Catholic education; driving standards forward and preparing St Mary's to embrace the new *Religious Education Directory* in the new academic year.
- Inclusive, welcoming school where everyone is nurtured and valued.
- Catholic ethos permeates across all areas of school with Christ very much at the centre.
- School places a huge priority on the wellbeing of all, with the aim of ensuring everyone feels valued and encouraged to be the best person they can be.

What the school needs to improve

- To embed a whole school consistent approach to Health, Relationships and Sex Education which meets the diocesan and statutory requirements.
- To build a provision of religious education to ensure opportunities are given for challenge and deeper learning, with leaders and governors being more involved with monitoring and scrutiny.
- To further develop the skills of staff to provide opportunities to reflect upon and deepen understanding of spiritual growth during scriptural reflections and prayer and liturgy. Leaders and governors should become more involved in monitoring and challenge in this respect.

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

2

Provision

The quality of provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school

2

Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school

2

2

The pupils are able to talk about the distinct nature of St Mary's and what makes it different and speak of how they are taught how to follow in Jesus' footsteps. Pupils are proud to be part of the school's Catholic family and enjoy coming to school. They were able to speak about their responsibilities to act as God wants us to. They spoke to inspectors about their understanding of living a faith-filled life. Pupils feel safe and cared about in school, stating they could go to any member of staff with a concern, knowing they will be listened to and helped. They were knowledgeable about the school mission statement, explaining they had been called by God to make a difference for themselves and others. One pupil sought out inspectors to share his kind deeds, explaining that his actions towards others showed his love for God. Pupils spoke about their responsibilities to help those in need and spoke of how the Mini Vinnies group leads everyone in making cards and gifts for the vulnerable people of their community. Pupils at St Mary's are respectful to each other and were able to discuss school behaviour expectations, describing consequences for good or unacceptable actions. They explained how regular visits from the parish priest visits help them to understand how God can help them in their lives.

The school mission statement is visible in all classrooms and is lived out by all in school. Staff are fully committed to the mission statement with intrinsic links during lessons and prayer and liturgy being observed. St Mary's is a welcoming school, with Christ at the centre, embracing and supporting all cultures and beliefs. Staff are excellent role models and the respect and support they have for each other is evident as they work effectively as a team to help and support each other. Pastoral care for the pupils and staff is a priority, with external support being used to further enhance wellbeing and mental health across school, following the recent changes and turbulence that have impacted this school community. The associate head

teacher has made a huge difference, and the school is beginning to rebuild onto an upward trajectory. The environment is well cared for and depicts the distinct nature of a Catholic school, with artistic talents being used to enhance the school displays. The parish priest provides spiritual support to pupils and staff and is a regular visitor into school. Health Relationships and Sex Education does take place in school but needs to be more consistent with regular monitoring to underpin respectful relationships in order to meet diocesan and statutory requirements.

Governors and leaders are committed and passionate about St Mary's. After significant changes, there are some new additions to the governing body who are still learning their roles. The Catholic life and mission is viewed as a priority with the religious education governor taking the lead on this, regularly liaising with the subject leader. Leaders and governors promote the bishop's vision for the diocese with clear plans in place to become a part of the academy trust. The staff feel looked after by leaders and governors and there is an explicit and concrete commitment to the physical and mental wellbeing of staff. The associate head teacher is highly valued by the governors, and they are aware of their responsibility to look after her wellbeing. The governors are kept informed by the school about the Catholic curriculum and the school improvement plan has a clear Catholic life and mission focus. This is regularly reviewed and evaluated. The governors have an understanding about the self-evaluation process and are planning to use the self-evaluation document as a tool to challenge and identify further improvement. Effective professional development is identified, and staff have received relevant training from the diocese and local clusters. Induction processes are in place and ensure new staff are supported and valued.

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

2

Provision

The quality of teaching, learning, and assessment in religious education

2

Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for religious education

2

2

Pupils are aware of what makes them special as a Catholic School and their role within it. They speak about their work and school with a confident sense of pride. Pupils are proud of their mission statement: 'Called to Make a Difference'. Teaching and learning supports it, linking it to scripture passages and giving pupils secure knowledge of how it impacts on them. They strive to reflect it in their lives, for example through fundraising. Children in Year 6 take immense pride in demonstrating their learning by being a Mini Vinnie 'It is our way of making a difference.' a pupil stated, linking it to how God helps them and to various scripture passages. Pupils are developing secure knowledge, understanding and skills required of the *Religious Education Directory*, using prior learning, and questioning to develop this. The vast majority of pupils are religiously literate, are engaged in their learning, developing and using specific religious vocabulary showing progression across school. Behaviour in lessons is good as a result of enthusiasm and engagement in learning leading to independent working, confidence to express opinions, and they are able to use Bibles as a resource and locate bible stories from scripture references. To further develop pupil outcomes and progress, leaders and staff now need to ensure that through feedback and marking, pupils know and understand how well they are doing, what they need to improve and can articulate how they have made progress.

Teachers have confidence and strength in their subject knowledge and share this with pupils, demonstrating their commitment to and value of religious education, using examples of own faith experiences, linking to learning, encouraging, and providing pupils to do likewise. Pupils' effort is often celebrated. Pupils speak proudly of going to show their work to the head teacher and it being put in the Proud Book. Questioning draws out additional knowledge and understanding, as does time for discussing as a whole class, reflection on scripture passages and sharing opinions. Various techniques are used to interest and engage pupils. For example,

props, pictures, scripture, video clips, *In the Role* activities, and the encouragement for pupils to link learning to their own lives. Staff use individual class saints, the school mission statement, and values to support and develop pupils' spiritual and moral development, linking these appropriately in lessons. To further develop provision, leaders and staff must now ensure there is sufficient opportunity for creativity and challenge in planning and delivering the curriculum, enabling all pupils to demonstrate religious knowledge, understanding and skills in a variety of ways, regardless of literacy skill.

Leaders and governors ensure that curriculum religious education is a faithful expression where resources are purposefully selected. Through the introduction and implementation of the Religious Education Directory, this needs to be monitored and tracked to ensure continuity and consistency across school. Leaders and governors ensure that standards in religious education are comparable to those in other core subjects. Staff attend training both externally and provided by the subject leader. Through work scrutinies and talking to pupils about their learning, it is clear that pupils take pride in their written work and see this as important. Leaders and governors now need to ensure that whole school policies such as those on homework, feedback and marking are equitably applied to religious education so that pupils know how well they achieve, how they can progress further, deepen their understanding, and take ownership for their learning. The subject leader for religious education has a clear vision and drive and whilst elements of this vision are still evolving her expertise and passion, together with her deep faith commitment, should ensure this drives standards forward.

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

3

2

Pupils respond respectfully and reverently to prayer and liturgy experiences. They responded confidently in whole school liturgy and joyful singing was heard throughout the inspection. The older pupils are confident to lead and take part in class worship, with younger pupils selecting objects to use as a prayer focus. This now needs to be developed further with staff modelling how to create opportunities for deeper reflection and spiritual growth. Pupils could share their knowledge about the Church's seasons and were able to talk about the liturgical colours of each one. Pupils enjoy praying and could share how prayer has helped them both in and out of school. This can be developed further by helping pupils understand how prayer can lead to action in the world. Pupils are keen to take part in liturgical ministries in Mass, within school and church. They are also able to evaluate their prayer and liturgy sessions and record their evaluations in their class prayer journals. Pupils were able to share how their school values help them with their daily choices and strengthen their relationships with each other and with God.

Prayer is central to life at St Mary's and there is a daily pattern of prayer that staff and pupils can detail. This reflects the liturgical seasons with appropriate resources in line with the Catholic Church. Prayer and liturgy sessions observed demonstrated a wide variety of ways of praying, including scripture, hymn singing, questioning and traditional and spontaneous prayer. Staff model good prayer and liturgy experiences and inspectors witnessed calm and purposeful environments, using seasonally appropriate scripture passages. Staff encourage older pupils to prepare and lead prayer and liturgy using the *gather, listen, respond, and go forth* prompts. All the classrooms have well cared for dedicated prayer areas and displays appropriate to the season. The school values are displayed around school and are lived out by the children and staff at St Mary's. The school prayer room is used regularly as part of the daily

prayer and liturgy sessions and provides a respectful area conducive to prayer. There are many communal areas around school that provide a space for private prayer. School invite families into seasonal liturgies, such as Holy Week assemblies and Advent services. Further plans are in place to include parents and families in school prayer experiences.

St Mary's has an up-to-date policy on prayer and liturgy, and this is accessible and useful to relevant staff who are able to use it as a reference point. Leaders and governors are developing an understanding about the skills and participation required for effective prayer and liturgy. A whole school calendar is in place with opportunities for Mass, including Holy Days of Obligation and significant patron saints. The Sacrament of Reconciliation is offered to pupils in school during the seasons of Lent and Advent. Plans are in place to further develop the skills of staff in preparing liturgical opportunities. Leaders offer opportunities for professional development and the subject leader attends diocesan training when required. The subject leader has a secure knowledge about Catholic traditions and plans are in place to return to regular monitoring and observations across school. Governors now need to continue to be more involved in school and become the critical friend to school leaders and staff. Understanding of the new curriculum directory and inspection framework will support governors in extending their knowledge of expectations and facilitate the probing, monitoring, and challenging questions. St Mary's is well resourced with prayer and liturgy materials and governors allocate sufficient funds to this area, recognising the importance of prayer and liturgy experiences across school.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Mary's Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	119622
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	8883707
Full postal address of the school	St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Coniston Road, Morecambe, LA4 5PS
School phone number	01524489020
Headteacher	Carol Hind (Acting)
Chair of Governors	Rev Darren Carden
School Website	www.st-marys-morecambe.lancs.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	4-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	Click or tap here to enter text.
Previous denominational inspection grade	Click or tap here to enter text.

The inspection team

Michelle Holden
Annalisa Howarth

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