

St Martha's Catholic Primary School

URN: 147415

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Bishop of East Anglia

22–23 May 2024

Summary of key findings

Overall effectiveness

The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school

2

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

What the school does well

- St Martha's school is a welcoming environment, where the Catholic faith is central to everything they do and at the core of pupils' attitudes to learning and behaviour.
- At St Martha's it is evident that staff and pupils care deeply about one another, and staff ensure that each child is nurtured to reach their full potential and to, *'be the best they can be.'*
- At St Martha's pupils recognise they are part of a Catholic community which brings responsibility towards others, locally, nationally, and globally.
- At St Martha's pupils develop a distinctive Catholic character, displaying exemplary behaviour, manners, kindness, and care for others. This is recognised and commented on by the parish, the wider community, and the schools they go on to attend.

- The head teacher and leadership team have a clear vision for the implementation of the *Religious Education Directory* and the *Prayer and Liturgy Directory* which will further enhance Catholic teaching in the school.

What the school needs to improve

- To develop pupils' understanding of Catholic social teaching so that they can make connections between their charitable work and their faith.
- To improve consistency across all types of assessment, including questioning in religious education so that every pupil makes good progress, and the subject leader can track all pupils' progress against other core subject areas effectively.
- To provide structured opportunities for pupils to lead, plan, deliver and evaluate prayer and liturgy.

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

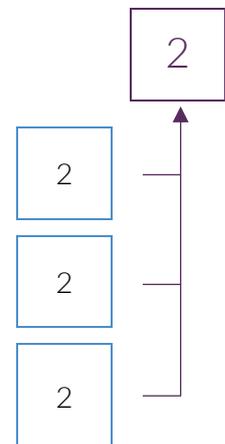
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

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 Catholic identity of St Martha's is evident when entering, there is a warm welcome and there are familiar religious artefacts in the front hall. The school is a happy, joyful place, it is calm and purposeful, and pupils are polite and courteous. Pupils are extremely proud of their school, are eager to talk and do so with confidence and knowledge. Pupils know the school mission statement motto, *'Be the best you can be'* and can relate this motto to the teachings of Jesus and how they respond to the commandment to love one another. A pupil commented *'if you respect yourself and try your best, you can encourage other pupils to do the same. Jesus wanted us to love one another.'* Pupils are knowledgeable about their charism and mission but are not yet able to make clear connections between their charitable works and Catholic social teaching. The school council promotes Catholic social teaching, through litter picks, supporting Cafod, food bank collections and other charity events and they purchased scripture cards and placed them outside for pupils to read and reflect quietly. Pupils recognise St Martha as a special saint who was a good friend of Jesus and teaches them that it is important to make space in their lives for God.

Staff report that the school is *'like a family, they support one another'*. Pupils for whom English is an additional language are supported well, and new pupils are quickly integrated into the school community with the support of the parish. Links with parents are very strong and encouraged through the parishes, the parent teacher association, and newsletters. Parents often travel long distances for their child to come to the school because *'the teaching staff are so supportive, and they try to understand individuals and will do anything to help.'* Another parent commented that the *'Catholicity runs through everything that takes place in the school.'* and *'An excellent pupil centred primary school, with so many outstanding opportunities for all students, to be part of something and make a positive contribution.'* Another wrote *'I am so very glad my children attend St Martha's. The*

staff reinforce our Catholic beliefs and the respect and behaviour we expect from our children.' The school has close links with the SVP group in the Parish and has an after school Mini Vinnies group.

Leadership is strong and the head teacher is supported by senior leaders in promoting the catholicity of the school. Governors are extremely proud of the school and challenge and support the leadership team. They visit the school for monitoring walks and provide reports. The head teacher has a good relationship with the parish priest who visits the school weekly for lesson drop-ins, assemblies, or informal visits. The leadership team support all staff through continuous professional development, and inexperienced staff or those new to Catholic schools receive support. Early career teachers feel supported by leaders through assisted planning, team teaching and observations. They reported that the school was an *'inclusive, kind community.'* They felt they could confidently seek advice from any member of the teaching staff and leadership team.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

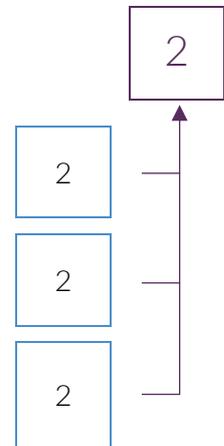
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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 enjoy religious education. During lessons pupils are engaged and remain focussed on their learning. Pupils learn through a variety of activities such as through studying different works of art and looking at how art represents passages in the Gospel, for example, St Thomas. Pupils take part well in discussions, for example, about faith and the Holy Spirit, write prayers and inspirational quotes as well as write responses to questions. Pupils support one another in lessons, by celebrating each other's contributions and encouraging less confident pupils. Pupils' standard of work is mostly in line with other curriculum areas and pupils are proud of their books which are presented well with progress over time evident. Pupils can discuss their previous learning as a firm foundation for future learning. Pupils are developing an understanding of how RE influences their thinking in other curriculum areas, and their personal responsibilities around Catholic social teaching but this is in its early stages. Some children were observed taking part in *sacred looking* which increased their knowledge of religious education and promoted some deeper questioning.

Lessons are calm and purposeful. The curriculum is planned well so pupils progress and the full requirement of teaching time is dedicated to religious education. Teachers adapt learning to suit the needs of their pupils and ensure key vocabulary is taught so pupils can develop their religious literacy. Teachers have high expectations and provide plenty of opportunities for pupils to revisit learning, encouraging them to think deeply about their work. Through training for the implementation of the *Religious Education Directory* teachers are now more confident in providing opportunities to challenge and extend more able learners, but this is early in its development. One member of staff commented 'religious education has improved dramatically recently which I am very pleased about.' Pupils are given opportunities in lessons to reflect on their own learning and common misconceptions are corrected quickly. However, questioning does not always

challenge pupils in some classes and other assessment practices, including written feedback, are inconsistent.

The head teacher is clear that religious education is the '*core of the core*', and that the Catholic ethos is woven into every aspect of school life. This clarity of approach means that all teachers are clear about the priority of *religious education*. The leadership team have empowered teachers to take ownership of the *Religious Education Directory* so that everyone is actively involved in the teaching of RE. The RE leader provides support and guidance for all staff, through a planned programme of training across the year. This high level of support and challenge ensures that the teaching of religious education is good. Leaders have sought advice from other schools and are beginning to share resources on the shared RE resources drive, provided by St John the Baptist Catholic multi academy trust. Leaders use a formal monitoring and evaluation schedule and regularly speak to the pupils about their learning in religious education. Governors know the school well and conduct RE monitoring visits and report these to the governing body. The RE leader uses this evidence to evaluate religious education with governors and staff and to plan developments. The school self-evaluation for RE is accurate and there is a comprehensive development plan for RE which is updated annually.

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

2

Pupils at St Martha's engage and respond well to prayer and liturgy and enjoy the singing assemblies. During a whole school assembly about creation and habitats, pupils showed active participation in reflective silent prayer, and enthusiastic joyful singing. Several parishioners attend the weekly school Mass because they enjoy listening to pupils' singing the Mass responses. Many pupils become altar servers in the parish after they receive their first Holy Communion and value the opportunity to go to Mass recognising that it is a special time to be close to God. One child commented *'if I am unable to go to Mass on Sunday, going to Holy Mass in school provides me with that special time to feel close to God and to be able to speak to him.'* Pupils can confidently say core Catholic prayers and all pupils are beginning to understand the rich variety of prayer available in the Catholic tradition and engage respectfully with the opportunities provided. Pupils can explain how they are beginning to take responsibility for some prayer and liturgy for example, leading the *'human Rosary'* and choosing appropriate liturgical music, looking after their prayer tables, and leading classroom prayers. Some pupils can express the impact prayer has on them: *'When we come together to pray, I feel a sense of calm within me.'*

There is clear evidence that prayer and liturgy is planned carefully throughout the year, and this enables pupils to fully engage with the Church's liturgical year. Parents are sent the yearly calendar so they can plan their attendance. The school take full advantage of the position of the parish church on school grounds and pupils can actively participate in Mass. Relations between the school and parish are very strong. Staff are positive role models for pupils and report that, *'Prayer times at our school are always reverent, reflective, and embraced as an important part of our daily routines.'* They also said, *'The children love to thank God personally for all God's creatures, climate, family members, friendships or their talents and abilities.'* During the prayer and liturgy

observed, most staff actively demonstrated good examples of engagement with pupils. This was especially noted with the younger children at Mass and during the reception class liturgy. There are many prayer spaces within the school, although pupils said they would like an outside prayer space. Resources for use on the altar are appropriate and engaging and reflect the liturgical year. Art is a strength of St Martha's and is displayed throughout the school, offering opportunities for pupils to stop and wonder. Pupils participate in a range of prayer and liturgy, for example on saints' days, for the Sacrament of Reconciliation, Mass, and class liturgies. The school have an annual '*crowning of Our Lady liturgy*' and procession involving the whole school. Pupils report it '*made them feel closer to Mary.*'

The head teacher and other senior leaders provide strong support for staff in the delivery of prayer and liturgy in their classes. Through governor monitoring visits leaders have identified further opportunities for professional development to support staff and further increase their knowledge of prayer and liturgy. Governors are beginning to add challenge around the quality and impact of prayer and liturgy and regularly visit the school. There has been an increased budget to invest in new resources for each class prayer table and a Bible has been purchased for each child. Leaders are continuing to engage with the Diocesan training on the *Prayer and Liturgy Directory* and have plans to disseminate this to all members of staff.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Martha's Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	147415
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	9263395
Full postal address of the school	St Martha's Catholic Primary School, Field Lane, Gaywood, St Martha's Catholic Primary School, KING'S LYNN, PE30 4AY
School phone number	01553774829
Headteacher	Rachel Edwards
Chair of Governors/Trustees	The Reverend Deacon Shaun Morrison Mrs Ruth Hollis
School Website	www.st-marthas.norfolk.sch.uk/
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	St John The Baptist Catholic Multi Academy Trust
Phase	Primary
Type of school	Academy
Admissions policy	Non-Selective
Age-range of pupils	4-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	30 th June 2016
Previous denominational inspection grade	Grade 1

The inspection team

Mrs Anne-Marie Price
Mrs Veronica Harvey

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