CATHOLIC SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

THE NATIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE INSPECTION OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS, COLLEGES AND ACADEMIES

St Mary's Catholic Primary School

URN: 112338

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Bishop of Lancaster

31 January–01 February 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	No
The school has responded to the areas for improvement from the last inspection	Fully

What the school does well

- A strong, happy, family culture where everyone is welcome
- A secure Catholic ethos that is lived out by all
- A dedicated staff led by a devoted and enthusiastic team of leaders and governors
- Developing strong links to the parish and the community
- A committed, inspirational acting headteacher who engages well with all stakeholders

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 Wales it fulfils the statutory requirements of s.50 of the Education Act 2005.

What the school needs to improve

- to continue to develop wider links with the community and parish and extend pupils' understanding and knowledge of leadership in Catholic mission and responsibilities as part of modern-day society.
- to embed clear, thorough and effective methods of assessment so that teachers can consolidate and extend pupils' knowledge and understanding.
- to develop and embed a structured whole school prayer and liturgy programme which deepens the understanding of the shape and meaning of the Church's liturgical year, incorporating different ways of praying and a wider variety of traditional Catholic prayers.

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

2

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

Pupils understand the distinctive nature of St Mary's and spoke to inspectors about the Catholic uniqueness and mission of their school. Pupils feel valued and cared for at St Mary's and have positive relationships with the trusted adults in school. Pupils stated that they love coming to school and that Catholic values help them with their life choices in and out of school. They were able to speak about the school's commitment to the teachings of Jesus and could recount stories from the bible. To extend this further, pupils need to be taught how to embrace their personal responsibilities, pursue the common good and to serve those in need. The reasons underpinning these actions need to be more fully understood. Pupils show respect for each other and know the importance of being kind and caring to everyone. A Year 6 pupils explained to inspectors, 'We are all made by God in our own unique way and should never feel we need to change, because God loves us as we are'. The behaviour of pupils in lessons and around school is very good. Pupils told inspectors how they enjoy learning with the parish priest, who is a regular visitor into school. They described their recent visit to church, learning about parts of the Mass through role play.

The school's mission statement has been recently reviewed to make it more child friendly. It is visible around school. Staff are committed to living out the school mission statement, 'Jesus told us to love God and love one another'. They promote and take part in activities reflecting the life and mission of the school, striving hard to serve the school and local community. The school's Community Club recently arranged a craft session with the elderly at a care home, led by staff and pupils. Each class has its own charity for the year and staff and pupils work together to support those in need. Christ is at the heart of St Mary's school and the caring, nurturing, Catholic culture is evident in all areas of this joyful, welcoming community. Other

cultures and beliefs are embraced and respected. Staff are positive role models for pupils and the love and care they show for pupils is testament to the school's Catholic life and mission. The school provides a safe haven for all, including the most challenging and vulnerable pupils. The environment is beautiful and reflects the school's distinct Catholic nature. The parish priest supports staff and pupils in their faith. The provision for relationships, sex, health education meets all diocesan and statutory requirements, using appropriate resources. Inspectors were able to see clear evidence of this teaching and learning in every class.

Governors and leaders are thorough in exercising their duty as guardians of the Catholic life and mission of St Mary's. Although they are relatively new, they have the skills and knowledge to drive the school forward. They are clear about their responsibilities to prioritise the Catholic life of the school and many strategies are in place to communicate this to the community. They have accessed appropriate training. For example, the latest Religious Education Directory training, Governance Conference, and New to Catholic Education courses. They have worked hard to strengthen links between the parish and the school, and this practice needs to continue. Relationships between school and families has greatly improved, with clearer communication and support now in place. This is evidenced in the parental questionnaires. Governors and leaders are committed to Catholic social teaching and ensure opportunities are created to support those in greatest need, both locally and globally. They are highly ambitious for the Catholic life of the school and its priority is identified on the school development plan. Staff feel supported and valued. School supports new staff and has an effective induction programme in place.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

2

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

Pupils at St Mary's are engaged in lessons, demonstrate excellent behaviour and state that they generally enjoy their learning. They show, and are able to articulate, a developing knowledge and understanding of age-appropriate content, as set out in the *Religious Education Directory*. Inspectors saw work of a consistently good quality and presentation, in line with other core subjects. The wide variety of tasks included, combinations of individual, paired and group work, 'freeze frames' and drama along with pupils sharing work with other year groups. These enabled pupils to think deeply about the individuals and situations they were in and in some cases, relate them to their own everyday life. Religious literacy develops as children move through the school. Inspectors heard children in Key Stage 1 referring to Jesus as 'the Son of God' and naming some of his miracles and disciples. In Key Stage 2 children recalled some of the Beatitudes and could explain how Jesus, 'died for us to forgive our sins'. They could describe the crowd in the feeding of the 5000 as being 'spiritually hungry' and were able to explain 'eternal life' and 'nourishment for our souls.' This demonstrates St Mary's pupils' familiarity with Bible stories and language. Offering more variety in the way pupils can record their work, moving away from writing frames and allowing more individuality and creativity, would meet the differing needs of all pupils. Marking and feedback in religious education meets the requirements of the school's policy, but children cannot fully articulate what they need to do to improve further.

Teachers are committed to religious education and its value beyond the classroom. They have a high level of subject knowledge and are confident in their delivery and support for their pupils. Using a range of age-appropriate techniques, teachers are skilled at keeping pupils focused and thereby enhancing their learning. Inspectors observed good, and in some cases very good, questioning during lessons which, along with some use of yellow dot challenge questions in

books, help clarify and deepen pupils' understanding, which subsequently develops their learning. The good allocation of support staff means that children with any language barriers and additional educational needs are included in all aspects of learning. Assessment procedures are part of the school's self-evaluation. Clear, thorough and effective methods of assessment need embedding, so that teachers can consolidate and extend pupils' knowledge and understanding further.

Leaders and governors have ensured that the curriculum directory is embedded across school. Three classes have recently begun to adapt their teaching in-line with the updated *Religious Education Directory* and are using a new scheme of work to support with this. Leaders and governors are increasingly aware of the demands associated with this and relevant staff feel supported. Curriculum religious education has full parity with the other core subjects and staff are provided with high quality resources and access to continued professional development. Leaders have a shared vision for the school and, as a result staff feel very well supported in their roles. All staff understand that their contributions are worthwhile and valued. Leaders and governors have a developing level of monitoring, analysis and self-challenge of religious education, which is part of the school's self-evaluation cycle. As relatively new governors, they are working closely with senior leaders and staff, and scrutiny is becoming more frequent and rigorous. Recent governors' minutes demonstrate a deep level of challenge is being adopted and that knowledge and understanding of standards and progress is developing. Engaging enrichment activities have been provided to enhance pupil learning, with visits from other faith leaders to provide workshops, and positive learning experiences.

Collective worship

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

Collective worship key judgement grade

2

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

Pupils respond well to the prayer and liturgy experiences in school, both leading them and being part of them. Older pupils are confident to lead prayer and liturgy and are able to select appropriate scripture readings to enhance their chosen theme of the worship. They were able to discuss the purpose of self-evaluation and how this can lead to improvement. Pupils were observed in all classes, including the nursery, participating in prayer and liturgy, responding to scripture, saying traditional prayers, singing hymns, engaged in prayerful reflection and using appropriate symbols. Pupils are aware of different ways to pray and had some knowledge about the Church's liturgical year. Inspectors observed some pupils given time to reflect silently and share what their prayer means to them. Pupils and staff work well together to enhance prayer and liturgy across school and pupils are willing and keen to assist the parish priest during class and whole school Mass. Pupils were able to share with inspectors the ways in which their prayer and liturgy experiences help them with their life choices in and out of school. This should now be extended to provide opportunities to explore how their prayer and liturgy can inspire them into action locally and globally.

Planned prayer and liturgy is central to life at St Mary's school. There is a daily pattern of prayer and older pupils are encouraged to lead with confidence. Scripture is used within the services and readings are selected carefully to link to the theme or the chosen weekly mission. Staff are excellent role models and participate fully in prayer and liturgy, both class based and whole school. They help pupils to plan appropriate and well-structured prayer and liturgy, using their own gifts and skills. All classrooms have a prayer space, and this is cared for and conducive to prayer. Plans are in place to incorporate the newly constructed prayer cottage into a designated area for quiet prayer and reflection. All areas around school reflect the Catholic nature of the school and these are welcoming and inviting to all in school. St Mary's school

works well with families to develop the prayer life of pupils. Prayer bags and travelling nativity sets have recently been introduced and these extend prayer and liturgy into the family homes of the pupils. Inspectors observed some meaningful feedback from parents in the books that families evaluate their experiences in. School should continue to engage with families and the local parish to develop these links further.

The school has a policy on prayer and liturgy and there has been a lot of work to develop the skills of staff to support pupils to build on their skills in prayer and liturgy. School Masses are regularly celebrated, and Holy Days of Obligation and saint days are observed. Pupils walk to nearby St Mary's Church for Mass but more recently, Mass has been celebrated in the school hall and inspectors observed this. The sacraments of Holy Communion and Confirmation are celebrated, and school discussed Reconciliation being offered to pupils in school which the parish priest was receptive to. Leaders and governors ensure that effective professional development is identified and put in place and as a result all staff demonstrated knowledge and understanding about the importance of prayer and liturgy. The acting head teacher, who is the subject leader for religious education, has a secure knowledge of how to drive the school forward in prayer and liturgy. The leaders and governors prioritise funds for resources and training to ensure high quality experiences of prayer and liturgy. Leaders and governors have all been involved in self- evaluating the school and have a shared vision to ensure that prayer and liturgy remains a priority at St Mary's.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Mary's Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	112338
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	9423414
Full postal address of the school	St Mary's Catholic Primary School , Holden Road, Salterbeck, Harrington, Workington, CA14 5LN
School phone number	01946830433
Headteacher	Mrs D Douglas, Acting
Chair of Governors	Paul Glaister
School Website	http://www.stmarys-harrington.cumbria.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	2-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	October 2017
Previous denominational inspection grade	2 - Good

The inspection team

Michelle Holden	Lead
Alan Parry	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