

# St Mary's Catholic Primary School

URN: 122040

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Bishop of Northampton

Date-05 November 2025

## 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

1

#### 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 general norms for religious education laid down by the Bishops' Conference

Yes

The school is fully compliant with any additional requirements of the diocesan bishop

Yes

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

Fully

2

## Compliance statement

- The school is fully compliant with the general norms for religious education laid down by the Bishops' Conference.
- The school is fully compliant with the additional requirements of the diocesan bishop..
- All areas for improvement outlined in the previous diocesan inspection have been addressed in full.

## What the school does well

- St Mary's is firmly rooted in its community and is welcoming to all.
- Pupils feel valued and safe and this is evident in their relationships with each other and with adults.
- The inside and outside environment clearly reflect the centrality of Catholic life and mission to the school.
- Pastoral support for pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils are enthusiastic about the opportunities they have to lead and support each other.

## What the school needs to improve

- Make Catholic social teaching more explicit in the life of the school.
- Improve pupil achievement for the more able through the comprehensive implementation of the new *Religious Education Directory* and assessment tools.
- Extend the work of Faith Ambassadors to include all pupils in preparing, leading and evaluating prayer and liturgy in the school.

## 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**

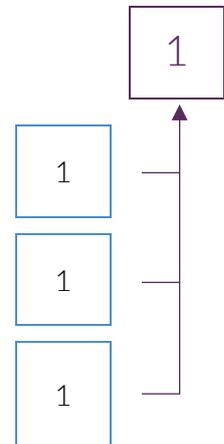
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

**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



St Mary's is a strong Catholic community where all pupils feel valued, safe and looked after. Pupils are presented with strong role models by staff and these are reflected in the relationships they have with their peers. Pupils know that this is because Christ and his teaching is at the heart of their school. They embrace the many ways in which they serve each other and the common good. They take up the roles of Faith Ambassadors and Well Being monitors knowing that they serve the mission of the Church in this way. In addition to named roles, all older children take on responsibility for the younger children, acting as 'buddies' to support them in lessons but also in prayer time; for example, they walk with them to the church and sit with them during Mass and join with them for whole school activities. All members of the community show respect for each other's views and different faiths, and all recognise that they are each made in the image and likeness of God. Pupils are keen to help the local, national and global community through their charity work with Cafod, Caritas and local food banks. They are beginning to use the terminology of Catholic social teaching to explain this work but this needs further development.

The school's mission statement is clear around the school and pupils can not only talk about what it means but say it in sign language. The school is made a welcoming community through the example of all staff, and pupils of all faiths are happy to share in an ethos which loves and cares for each member. Pupils say that they are proud to be named after Mary as 'she was brave'. They know that their classes, Fishermen, Carpenters, Farmers and Shepherds reflect important roles from the Bible and that their houses are named after saints. The environment is well planned and reflects the strong pastoral care in the school. As well as artwork reflecting words from scripture, prayer areas and statues of Mary, the school has two outside areas: the St Francis Wild garden and the Mary Garden where, as one child said, 'We can sit and be quiet'. The pupils asked to initiate a litter picking event in order to maintain the outside spaces. The Snug is another place valued by the pupils where they can take part in a weekly 'listening lunch' should they feel

the need. The school's teaching of relationships, sex and health education meets diocesan requirements.

All school leaders share in promoting the mission statement of the school. They ensure that the teachings of Christ are at the heart of their decision making and this is reflected in their policies and procedures. School governors are regular visitors to the school. Leaders work hard to promote a positive relationship with their local church, making sure that the pupils still have access to the sacraments while the local church is without its own priest. They participate in the work of the diocese; for example, pupils recently attended the diocesan schools' Mass in Dunstable. Leaders treat staff with dignity, and this is appreciated by staff. One commented, 'Staff are also given time for reflection and prayer within meetings, which creates a calm, thoughtful atmosphere and encourages shared values across the team'. Parents are valued for their contribution to the school, and they understand that they work with the school to educate pupils in faith. One reported, 'The school's Catholic life shines through everything they do, and it's clear that the values are lived, not just taught'.

## Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

### Religious education key judgement grade

#### Pupil outcomes

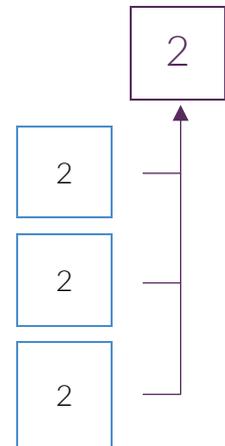
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

#### 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 enthusiasm for their religious education lessons and their participation and behaviour is good. Their religious literacy is developing and some of the classes are able to recall previous learning to help them link to new topics. Pupils are confident to ask questions of their teachers and listen sensibly to explanations. They enjoy working together and support each other to find answers or solutions. One class matched symbols to words from the book of Isaiah and pupils in Foundation Stage re-told the story of the Annunciation using small figures. As well as working together, pupils are able to work on their own; they show a confidence in approaching their work and can talk about it using some subject specific vocabulary. Work is generally well presented, with the Early Years Foundation Stage floor books a particular strength. As work matched to the new *Religious Education Directory* is being introduced into all the classes, there is an opportunity to make sure that all the pupils are being appropriately challenged in their work to make as much progress as they can. This will help to bring attainment in line with other core subjects.

Teachers have good subject knowledge and are confident in what they deliver to pupils. Each lesson, from Early Years to Year 6, begins with a prayer in order to mark it out as different from other subjects. There is also time during the lessons for pupils to reflect on the spiritual nature of what they have learned. Lighting a candle whilst learning about 'the light of the world' produced a moment of awe and wonder in the class and re-focused them on the meaning of the phrase. Pupils are presented with many different forms of learning including drama, singing, art and crafts. Some of this learning takes place in the vertical House groups which is greatly enjoyed by the pupils. These 'Wow' days include baking bread, making Jubilee candles and writing 'Letters to God'. Teachers involve all pupils in the lessons but could target pupil achievement for the more able through the comprehensive implementation of the new *Religious Education Directory and assessment tools*. Assessment is being re-evaluated alongside the introduction of the requirements of the *Directory*. Lessons are presented in a way which the pupils enjoy and respond well to.

School leaders are coming to the end of their planned implementation of the new *Directory* and are beginning to evaluate how well this is rolling out across the classes. Moving forward, it is important that this is used in a way which will support good levels of achievement for all pupils. Leaders have already shown that they are able to adapt their approach to this as necessary, for example bringing forward the last stage of implementation. Religious education is well resourced within the school and given the time it needs within the timetable. It is supported by robust policies. The subject leader ensures that professional development opportunities are used well, and that staff have access to the support they need to deliver curriculum religious education. Governors also support in this. Governors are involved in monitoring and evaluating the subject and are aware of the strengths in delivery as well as areas for development. They are committed to maintaining the enrichment activities which provide such cohesion between the different age groups and which mark memorable learning for all pupils.

## 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 are presented with many different forms of praying from Early Years Foundation Stage onwards, and all respond appropriately; they are able to reflect in silence or joyfully sing a favourite hymn. They are presented with different forms and styles of prayer including meditation, silent prayer, formal prayer and the use of scripture. All the children are confident in their knowledge of the Liturgical year, which is spoken about and reflected in their class prayer areas. They regularly attend Mass in the parish church and have a long history of acting as servers. Pupils are comfortable with the rhythm of prayer through the day and through their lessons. The role of Faith Ambassadors is highly prized amongst the pupils and those who are chosen take on the responsibility of the position with pride. They work alongside the headteacher to prepare a whole school prayer session each week and deliver another in their class. They now need to begin to evaluate this work and involve other pupils in the school in the planning, delivering and evaluating of prayer and liturgy.

Prayer and liturgy are central to the life of the school. All pupils mark the school day with well known prayers and prayer routines, usually led by the class Faith Ambassador. Prayer resources are used well to support these times of reflection and celebration. The headteacher models good practice for staff, who in turn are able to support the pupils; consequently, they are confident in their responses. One parent commented that their child, '...has so many opportunities to take part in prayer, reflection, and service, which have helped her to grow in confidence and compassion'. Pupils are prepared for the sacraments of Reconciliation, First Holy Communion and Confirmation by the school catechist who is also a governor. Displays around the school and in the classrooms provide focus and space for pupils to reflect and pray during the day. Parents are welcome in school and at the Church to pray with their children, and school leaders have plans to involve them even more.

Leaders work with local clergy to make sure that school celebrations reflect the liturgical year and mark important events within the school community. As well as all pupils attending Masses,

the Sacrament of Reconciliation is available in Lent and Advent to those for whom it is appropriate. Pupils are invited to pray the rosary and also take part in the Stations of the Cross and processions in honour of Our Lady. Where it is more appropriate, liturgical services are used, especially with the younger pupils. There is a clear plan of weekly prayer as a whole school and in individual classes with which pupils are very familiar. Leaders ensure that staff have relevant training in the delivery of prayer and liturgy and carry out monitoring. Evaluations of the provision will be made stronger by involving feedback from the pupils to the school leaders. Staff regularly pray together. The school prayer bags, relevant to the ages of the pupils, is a way of further involving families in the daily prayer life of the school. These bags, along with other resources, emphasise the importance given to prayer and liturgy by school leaders.

## Information about the school

Full name of school	St Mary's Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	122040
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	9413400
Full postal address of the school	Main Street, Aston-le-Walls, Daventry, Northamptonshire, NN11 6UF
School phone number	01295660258
Executive headteacher	Click or tap here to enter text.
Headteacher	Laura Concannon
Chair of governors	Rebecca Iley
School Website	<a href="http://www.stmarysrc-astonlewalls.co.uk/">www.stmarysrc-astonlewalls.co.uk/</a>
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Phase	Primary
Type of school	Voluntary Aided School
Admissions policy	Non-selective
Age-range of pupils	3-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	May 2019
Previous denominational inspection grade	1

## The inspection team

Catherine McMahon  
Jane Zamora

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