



## Catholic Schools Inspectorate inspection report for St Mary's Catholic Primary Academy

URN: 141827

Carried out on behalf of the Most Rev. Bernard Longley, Archbishop of Birmingham on:

Date: 6-7 December 2023

Overall effectiveness The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school.....	2
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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	Fully

### Summary of key findings

#### What the school does well

- The leadership team is passionate about the school's mission and is inspirational in ensuring that it is evident throughout its work.
- A nurturing and inclusive nature ensures that all are welcome, especially the most vulnerable.
- Pupils enjoy religious education lessons and are actively engaged and reflective.
- Pupils are knowledgeable about a wide range of different forms of prayer and are incredibly spiritual during times of reflection and prayerful silence.

What the school needs to improve:

- Identify links between all subject areas and Catholic social teaching principles to allow pupils to experience the curriculum and articulate their learning through a Catholic lens.
- Develop the confidence and skills of pupils to plan, deliver, and evaluate prayer and liturgy sessions independently and creatively.
- Identify precisely what is expected of pupils across different year groups in religious education to sequence the learning for all pupils effectively.

## 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:.....

1

### Pupil outcomes

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

1

### Provision

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

1

### Leadership

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

1



Staff, pupils, and parents know and embrace the mission. They understand how it can help them to make a difference. This is because leaders and governors have a very clear vision for the school community and effectively communicate it. Pupils believe the school is a place with 'The Spirit of Jesus Christ in our heads, hearts, words, and actions, where we learn and grow together.' Pupils clearly understand that they are all valued as children of God and can, therefore, confidently explain that they are valued for their cultural, faith, and background differences. They say everyone is welcome in their school; they deeply respect other religions. Therefore, because pupils consciously follow Christ's example, behaviour throughout the school is exemplary, especially in how everyone treats each other with dignity and respect. Pupils engage well in the demands of Catholic social teachings and are beginning to articulate how their actions can support the responsibilities they are charged with. This is especially true in stewardship and human dignity because these have been a focus for the school. For example, a pupil explained to inspectors, 'If we don't play our part, there will be no world left for anyone.' Currently, pupils are less able to articulate how their faith can be seen in action in other principles of Catholic social teaching.

Staff truly embrace and understand the school's mission statement and are incredibly willing to support the school's Catholic ethos by acting as excellent role models. Because leaders have ensured that Christ is at the heart of the school, a community has been developed where everyone looks after each other. Parents comment that they feel comfortable at the school because of the strong culture of welcome provided. Due to this strong sense of welcome and inclusivity, the school offers excellent pastoral care for its pupils and families, especially those who are vulnerable and who are invited into school whenever necessary so their needs can be addressed and met. The school environment has been carefully organised and developed to witness the school's mission

fully and aims as a Catholic school. Pupils are rightly proud of their school environment and can confidently articulate how it demonstrates their mission and supports them in their faith journey.

Leaders are determined in their witness to the school's mission and their vocation. Consequently, all decisions are made to support this vision, ensuring that Christ is always at the heart of the school. The partnership with the parish and parents is strong, and parents feel comfortable visiting the church, especially as part of it is open for them in the mornings when they arrive at school. This partnership with the parish has also enabled pupils to enjoy visiting the church regularly, especially for the monthly 'Service of the Word', developed in collaboration between the school and priest. All school community members have a firm commitment to Catholic social teaching. As a result, there are links between these principles, religious education, and the broader curriculum. Whilst this is in its infancy, some impact can already be seen. However, it is not yet fully embedded across the whole curriculum. Evaluation of the school's Catholic life and mission is rigorous and shared with stakeholders, ensuring everyone contributes to its development. This is particularly evident in the work of pupil leaders such as the RE Ambassadors and Pupil Chaplains, who are very proud to serve the school in their roles.

## 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.....

1

Pupils enjoy their religious education lessons and are, therefore, highly engaged in their learning. This leads to most pupils, including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), making good progress as they learn and remember more of the curriculum. Data analysis shows that attainment in religious education remains strong across the school compared to other core subjects. Pupils think about the different topics covered in their learning and demonstrate understanding in how they speak about what these mean to them and how they live their lives. Pupils can talk confidently about what they have learned and can link new learning to previous key concepts they have studied. They show a good level of religious literacy when doing so. Pupils are independent in their learning and use the resources given to them effectively to think for themselves. For example, pupils use the classroom displays and other prompts provided in lessons to help them accurately find, spell, and use technical vocabulary. Work in pupils' exercise books is generally well presented as most pupils value religious education as a curriculum area, and therefore, most take pride in their work.

Staff are committed to teaching religious education and, therefore, have very high expectations. This is cascaded to the pupils who work hard to meet the expectations set for them. Planning is generally linked to previous learning. However, the tasks set occasionally do not allow pupils to meet the objectives at their deepest level. Reflection time is consistently used throughout the school to enable pupils to reflect on their learning and consider how it might affect their actions and behaviour. This allows pupils to think deeply and ensures profound spiritual and moral development. Because pupils appreciate this reflection time, they use it well to develop their thoughts and ideas. As a result of the feedback pupils receive about their learning, they can explain what they have achieved in religious education lessons concerning the learning objectives being taught. However, they can less articulate what they must do to improve the subject because feedback does not clarify this. Teachers generally use questioning well, and in the best lessons, they

use skilled questioning to move learning forward effectively and with pace for all. However, this is not consistent throughout the school.

Leaders and governors have ensured that religious education is an important subject across the school by providing relevant and high-quality training for staff and appropriate resources and time for lessons. The subject leader has a powerful vision for religious education in the school and is inspirational in her aims for pupils both at the school and as they move into secondary education and beyond. Due to her forensic approach to the evaluation and development of the subject, the approach to teaching religious education across the school is consistent and well-understood by teachers. The curriculum is generally well-planned but sometimes does not allow for sequential progression from previous learning. The subject leader has already begun work to ensure that tasks throughout the school on similar topics build on each other, but it is too soon to see the impact of this fully. A range of visits and visitors enrich the teaching of religious education across the school; pupils can explain where they have been and what they have learned from the experiences provided for them.

## Collective worship

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

Collective worship key judgement grade:.....

1

### Pupil outcomes

How well pupils participate in and respond to the school's collective worship .....

1

### 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 .....

1

As a result of all the opportunities provided for pupils, they are actively engaged and participate willingly and confidently in a wide range of prayer and liturgy experiences. Pupils have an excellent understanding of different forms of prayer and can articulate the various ways in which they pray during their time at school. They can explain the types of prayer they are involved in from a young age and confidently recall that prayers can be for praise, forgiveness, asking for help, and thanksgiving. As pupils progress through the school, they become more familiar with a range of traditional prayers, including the Angelus, which is recited by Key Stage 2 pupils at noon daily. Pupils enjoy and benefit from reflection, as evidenced by their deep reverence during sacred silence. Music is integral to the school's prayer and ministry and is used regularly in prayer and worship. Consequently, pupils sing well and are particularly actively engaged in this type of prayer. Prayer is central to the school and is embedded into everyday life. This is seen in the priority given to prayer when the school provides the first 10 minutes each day alongside other set daily prayers, traditional prayer, and more spontaneous prayer times. Pupils enjoy being chosen as prayer leaders for their class and take this responsibility very seriously.

There is a commitment to prayer from all staff, and those who particularly support pupils in leading liturgy are skilled to do so. Alongside this specific role, all staff share responsibility for leading prayer within the school and act as good role models for pupils. They understand the structure of prayer and liturgy sessions and use this structure to plan experiences for pupils to include appropriate use of scripture, prayers, and reflection. Because pupils are very familiar with this format, they participate reverently and spiritually. Around the school, prayer spaces are well cared for and usable. Pupil leaders monitor these spaces, and their ownership of them ensures they remain prayerful and appropriate for classrooms. Identified adults work well with pupils to encourage them to lead prayer and liturgy experiences for their peers, such as Advent reflection, which they do

willingly. However, pupils have less ownership over the planning process and are less confident in planning independently and creatively.

Leaders have ensured that the policy for prayer and liturgy is accessible and understood by staff. This includes a prayer progression document showing how pupils' skills should increase as they age and move through school at different ages and stages. Significant feast days are celebrated; consequently, pupils have a growing understanding of the church's liturgical year and important times. Staff appreciate the times they have to pray together and reflect on this as part of their spiritual and faith journey. This is because leaders place the highest priority on staff training and formation. Leaders are skilled and knowledgeable in planning and leading prayer and liturgy and can share this expertise with other staff to allow them to lead. When discussing worship, pupils are reflective and begin articulating how prayer can affect their lives and choices. This is because leaders have ensured a broad range of experiences and times for prayer and act as role models for other staff and pupils. Monitoring of prayer is embedded and involves pupils and adults, allowing all to have input into evaluation and developments.



## Information about the school

Full name of school	St Mary's Catholic Primary Academy
School unique reference number (URN)	141827
Full postal address of the school	Cannock Road, Fallings Park, Wolverhampton, WV10 8PG
School phone number	01902 308870
Name of head teacher or principal	Vicky Minihane
Chair of governing board	Christopher Walker
School Website	<a href="http://www.stmaryscpa.co.uk">www.stmaryscpa.co.uk</a>
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	St Francis and St Clare Catholic MAC
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy
Age-range of pupils	3 to 11
Trustees	Archdiocese of Birmingham
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	July 2017
Previous denominational inspection grade	2

## The inspection team

Michelle Walsh	Lead inspector
Rachael Batson	Team inspector

## 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