



# St Mary's Catholic Junior School

URN: 142226

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Most Rev. John Wilson, Archbishop of Southwark

03–04 July 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

- Pastoral care has a significantly positive impact on the lives of the school community.
- Pupils are kind, respectful and thoughtful and are excellent ambassadors of a Catholic school.
- Pupils want to do well and engage with learning in every religious education lesson.
- The partnership between governors and school leaders is strong and the driving force behind strategic planning across the school.
- Prayer and liturgy are central to the daily life of the school.

## What the school needs to improve

- Implement the new model of leadership of religious education so that there is more effective monitoring and assessment of learning.
- Introduce an action plan for prayer and liturgy that will include pupils in the planning and preparation of liturgies in all classes.
- Use a wide range of questions in religious education lessons to offer challenge for higher level thinking for more able pupils.

## 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

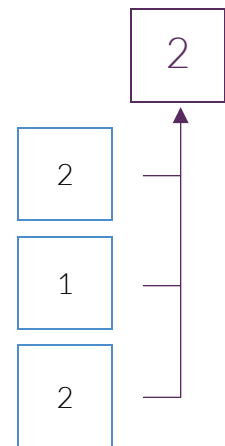
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

#### 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



Pupils flourish in this kind and welcoming Catholic family. They value the Catholic life and mission of the school as evidenced by their respect for and commitment to helping others. Pupils are happy and speak very warmly about members of staff. The commitment to justice and the needs of others is evident everywhere, allowing Catholic social teaching to become embedded in the daily life of the school. For example, a pupil said, 'God gave us the world and he is entrusting us with it'. Pupils respect the dignity of others and work together for the common good. Faith leaders enjoy their role and understand they are there as role models for other pupils. One pupil said, 'We think about our mission in life. It is to follow Jesus'. Pupils are proud of the part they play though they know they can do more to make sure their undoubted desire to serve is used to help younger pupils. This school empowers pupils to have a voice and to understand that their opinions matter, for example, the school council who are elected by their peers. They have actively support Cafod and promote foodbank collections to support the local community. Their response shows a deep understanding of the preferential option for the poor.

The words of St Oscar Romero, 'Aspire not to have more, but to be more', are the foundation of the school's mission. It is a community that puts others first. The strong joyful ethos is obvious from the moment one enters the school. People genuinely want the best for others. Staff totally commit to serving each other and pupils. A teacher said, 'I am proud to be a member of the team.' The impact is further seen in those teachers who are former pupils or have children in the school. There is a tremendous commitment to the most vulnerable and needy in both policy and practice, particularly the care shown to disadvantaged pupils, for example, providing buttered bagels at breaktime. Difficulties are dealt with sensitively and with care in the Rainbow Room. It is a safe space that gives pupils time to be calm and talk. There is unstinting support for families. It is an inclusive school that welcomes all abilities and has a high regard for their pastoral needs. The school environment is an abundance of bright and exciting displays that reflect the Catholic character of the school. The programme for relationships and sex and health education is in place. Parents are happy with this.

Leaders and governors are very committed to the mission of the Church. They understand deepening the Catholic life and mission of the school is their vocation. The impact of their leadership is evident in the way people show kindness towards each other. Governors are proactive in supporting the head teacher and holding him to account. They know the school well through regular visits, the effective work of the link governor and the learning and well-being committee. Staff are overwhelmingly positive about the school. They enjoy the family atmosphere created by leaders. Staff appreciate the opportunities they have to develop professionally and recognise that leaders are considerate of their workload and well-being. The school effectively engages with all parents and carers to the benefit of pupils. Parents say they feel included and involved. As a result, parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school and have a good understanding of the school's mission. School leaders understand the value of a close relationship with the parish and are working hard to encourage more fruitful links that will strengthen the Catholic life of the school further.

## Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

### Religious education key judgement grade

#### Pupil outcomes

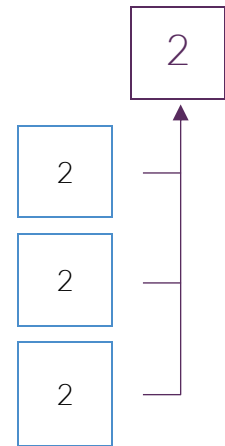
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

#### 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 approach their lessons with interest and enthusiasm. They settle quickly and continue to concentrate well throughout the lesson. Pupils engage positively in lessons by working quietly with partner talk and in small groups. Some pupils prefer to work independently and do so to good effect. Pupils are calm, happy and motivated because of the way teachers support and encourage them with praise. Pupils are becoming more religiously literate in all years appropriate to their age because of the emphasis on key vocabulary associated with scripture and Catholic social teaching. In one lesson, pupils showed their understanding when speaking confidently about stewardship. In another lesson, pupils discussed fair-trade issues to develop an understanding about the dignity of work and the response to the option for the poor. Current school data shows that overall, most pupils' attainment, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, is good and in line with other core subjects. The school is highly effective in supporting pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Pupils are supported through careful planning that enables teaching assistants to support given to them in their work. As a result, pupils are well supported to access the same curriculum as their peers.

There is a culture of ambition and high aspiration for learning in religious education that permeates throughout the school. Everybody wants to do their best. Teachers have consistently high standards for learning and conduct. Pupils rise to these expectations with mature and respectful behaviour and are rightly proud of their achievements. The way teachers plan lessons is consistent across the school which ensures pupils can benefit from a prompt, constructive start. It further reflects teachers' understanding of how to engage pupils and help them learn. They use their developing subject knowledge well as evident in the use of scripture and key vocabulary. Recap of prior learning is a strength and ensures an effective opening that sets the tone for the lesson. Teachers use questioning during lessons as part of their assessment of learning. However, opportunities for pupils to learn at greater depth are missed. Teachers share and celebrate pupils' work in lessons and in their exercise books. An assessment process is in place but is being developed to ensure an accurate picture of outcomes that leads to appropriate intervention and challenge.

Leaders and governors are fully committed to raising outcomes in religious education. The strong partnership between leaders and governors ensures very focused and well-planned improvements across the school. Governors know the school well and understand which areas of teaching and learning need developing. Plans are in place to ensure more strategic, distributive model of leadership of religious education. Governors are effective in their role in both supporting and challenging senior leaders. They are informed through the head teacher's reports and regular learning walks. The link governor is active in monitoring standards of teaching and learning. She provides detailed feedback to governors through a learning and well-being committee. Leaders' and governors' self-evaluation of religious education shows that assessment is in place, although they have identified this in the school development plan as an area for change to a more distributive model. Monitoring of teaching and learning in religious education needs to be further embedded to ensure leaders and governors can analyse, evaluate and develop best practice. School leaders work effectively with colleagues from the St Mary's Catholic Schools Trust who provide appropriate training. Professional development opportunities are valued by staff and are accessed enthusiastically by them. A teaching assistant appreciated the support in becoming a higher learning teaching assistant.

## 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 understand prayer is a special time and an opportunity to spend time with God. A pupil said, 'God is who I see first'. They participate in prayer and liturgy sincerely and reverently as evidenced in the assemblies and prayers at the start of religious education lessons. The way they respond both enthusiastically with joyful song and reflect silently shows they understand that being at prayer is a special time. In an assembly, pupils helped create a quiet, spiritual environment. They were dignified, quiet and thoughtful. They listened carefully and were keen to answer questions. Being a member of this faithful, praying community has a positive impact on the spiritual development of pupils. Pupils say prayer is important and they know it should lead to being kind to others. They should now be given further opportunities to take more responsibility in preparing and leading liturgies. Starting with the sign of the cross, pupils learn traditional prayers, but they are well used to offering their own prayers through the class prayer book. Pupils have a good understanding of the Church's seasons and feasts and should be encouraged to be involved in caring for prayer spaces in the hall and around the school

Through the provision of a range and variety of prayer opportunities, it is clear that prayer and liturgy are at the heart of daily life for all members of the community, irrespective of a person's faith background. These experiences include the start of every religious education lesson where pupils gather to pray and reflect together. The themes chosen for worship reflect a good understanding of the Church's year and the Catholic character of the school. Routine prayers are complemented by music and singing that make such occasions spiritual and joyful. A parent said, 'it promotes a prayerful environment to support my child's spiritual growth and development.' All staff are exemplary role models in their prayer and worship practice. They participate fully and ensure lessons start spiritually. The calendar of provision is clearly planned according to the Church's liturgical seasons and appropriate to the differing ages of the pupils. Provision for prayer and liturgy is enhanced by being able to attend a weekly Mass in the parish. This provision must be further developed with the parish priest. Each class has a prayer garden, although pupils say they are not regularly available for individual use.

Leaders and governors have a clear vision for prayer and liturgy in the school. They clearly understand it is a core responsibility as Catholic leaders. They know it is an essential factor in growing a spiritual ethos across the school. Governors understand that prayer is how all members of the community can be with God. They ensure provision is detailed and accessible for everybody. As a result, prayer and liturgy have a positive impact on the school community as seen in the way people sing and reflect. Governors ensure they are fully informed of the quality of provision through visits to the school and reports from the link governor. School leaders review provision and practice across the school and there is good evidence to show the impact of monitoring, resources and training, for example, by supporting a designated prayer and liturgy lead. The spiritual formation of pupil faith leaders will add to this provision. Links with parents are very strong. This is seen in the welcome parents receive when coming to the weekly class liturgy. One teacher commented, 'The school is very supportive when it comes to the religious life and prayer life of the children.'



## Information about the school

Full name of school	St Mary's Catholic Junior School
School unique reference number (URN)	142226
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	3062097
Full postal address of the school	St Mary's Catholic Junior School, Sydenham Road, Croydon, CR0 2EW
School phone number	02086884893
Head teacher	Andrew McDonald
<b>Chair of Governors/Trustees</b>	Janinne Stebbings
School Website	<a href="http://www.stmaryscatholicprimaryschoolstrust.co.uk">www.stmaryscatholicprimaryschoolstrust.co.uk</a>
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	St Mary's Catholic Primary Schools Trust
Phase	Primary
Type of school	Academy
Admissions policy	N/A
Age-range of pupils	7-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	16 March 2017
Previous denominational inspection grade	2

## The inspection team

Damian Fox	Lead
Maria Liddy	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