

# Catholic Schools Inspectorate inspection report for St Mary's Catholic Primary School And Nursery, Crewe

URN: 111342

Carried out on behalf of the Right Rev. Mark Davies, Bishop of Shrewsbury on:

Date: 08-09 March 2023

Overall effectiveness The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school.....	1
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.....	1
Collective worship (p.7) The quality and range of liturgy and prayer provided by the school.....	1
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	N/A

## Summary of key findings

### What the school does well

- There is a tangible sense of family and welcome, which fully reflects the school's mission and core values. The mission statement motto 'Working together in faith and education' is at the heart of St Mary's school.
- Leaders are passionate about making the school the best Catholic school that it can be.
- The engagement with families is a strength of the school. The head teacher is a visible and proactive presence in the school. Staff go the extra mile to reach out to vulnerable families.
- Pastoral care is outstanding, and pupils flourish in this diverse and inclusive school. Pupils are happy and feel safe and loved.

- The partnership between the parish and the school is exemplary and is valued by the whole school community.

What the school needs to improve:

- Embed Catholic Social Teaching into the full taught curriculum.
- Ensure extended writing is a regular feature in religious education lessons.
- Develop a clearly defined progression of skills in pupil led prayer and liturgy, including the planning and evaluation of these.

## 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



Pupils at St Mary's, regardless of their own personal faith, are rightly proud to belong to this very diverse Catholic school. It is evident from conversations with pupils that they can clearly and confidently express their understanding of the school's distinctive Catholic identity and mission. This is because the mission statement is visible and is constantly referred to throughout the school day. Pupils can give examples of how the school's core values influence their decisions and actions. They readily welcome and accept new pupils to the school, and as one pupil put it, they do so 'because Jesus wants people to be treated fairly'. Pupils know that they are loved by God and valued as unique individuals in this inclusive community. Pupils show great respect for each other, and their behaviour is exemplary at all times. Pupils with additional needs thrive in this school because their needs are quickly identified and appropriate support is put in place so that they can access fully all that the school has to offer. The school's 'Peace' choir, which is renowned locally, is one example of how pupils share their God given gifts with the wider community, whilst promoting Gospel values. Pupils readily take on leadership roles within the school, such as Mini Vinnies, School Council and Prayer Leaders, and it is clear from talking to pupils, that they have a strong sense of justice and a deep respect for those of other faiths and none.

The school's culture of welcome, which is clearly articulated by its pupils, is humbling. It is a clear expression of the commitment of all members of the school community to the most vulnerable members of society. This school goes the extra mile to ensure that it is a safe haven for those who need it. All staff are exemplary role models, and this means that relationships at all levels are outstanding, and bear witness to the school's mission. From talking with school staff, it is clear they love working in this school. Staff agree that the strong sense of family and teamwork has a positive impact on their well-being, which in turn, benefits the school's provision for its pupils. Staff fully

embrace the school's mission statement. The school's environment, including displays in classrooms and communal areas, is inspirational in its effective and explicit reference to the school's Catholic identity. The pastoral care of pupils is given the highest priority by school leaders meaning that pupils have the best chance to flourish. The school's provision for relationships and health education meets statutory and diocesan requirements.

The school's head teacher is passionate about and ambitious for the school. Her energy and commitment inspire other leaders, including governors, who are therefore aspirational for the school. Governors show great commitment to the school, and being regular visitors, they know the school very well. Leaders are inspirational witnesses to the Gospel who ensure that Christ is at the heart of the school, and this is recognised and valued by staff and pupils. Staff induction is particularly strong, and staff speak highly of the professional and personal support offered by leaders. As a result, staff morale is high. There is an excellent relationship between the school and the parish, and this is a strength. The school acknowledges that parents are the first educators of their children and has built up a range of strategies to engage parents fully in the life of the school. Whilst the school does make some links with Catholic Social Teaching across the curriculum, these could be made more explicit across the full breadth of the curriculum.

## Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade:.....

1

### 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.....

1

### Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor, and evaluate the provision for religious education.....

1



Pupils say that they love their religious education lessons, and they are developing a secure knowledge and understanding. They are confident to talk about what they know in lessons and in conversations with inspectors. Work in pupils' books and in assessment tasks show that pupils are making good progress from their varying starting points, and some are making outstanding progress. Pupils take pride in their work and say that they enjoy creative tasks. For instance, in lessons about Jesus' entry into Jerusalem, pupils can put themselves into the position of the religious leaders and make statements and ask questions such as, 'He is lying. We are closest to God,' and 'Who does he think he is, fooling all these people?' and then freeze frame them appropriately. Pupils can work independently and behaviour in lessons is exemplary. This means that learning can move on at a good pace. Discussions with pupils show that they understand the school's marking and assessment systems, and the marking in their books, which is always responded to by the pupils, clearly helps to deepen their understanding. Pupil workbooks are well presented, and this reflects the status placed on the subject by the school.

Teachers have high expectations of their pupils, and this starts with the youngest children in the nursery. The school's recent work on metacognition is having a positive impact on pupils' ability to know more and remember more. The year group team planning of lessons means that there is consistency across the year groups. Pupils with additional needs have their work adapted so that they can fully access the core learning objectives. Well briefed teaching assistants support learning very well. Teachers use skilful questioning and have confident subject knowledge. The teaching across the school is at least consistently good. Teachers say that they enjoy teaching religious education, and as one teacher wrote, 'religious education is my favourite subject to teach, and this is partly due to the children's mature understanding and deeper thinking in religious education which they learn to cultivate from a young age here at St Mary's.' Teachers routinely and regularly

give pupils time and space for reflection in lessons. Although a wide range of creative tasks are planned by teachers, this does not include the opportunity to write at length. School leaders have already identified this as an area for development but have not brought about actions to address it yet. Resources, including IT, are of a high quality, and this engages pupils throughout their lessons.

The school's two subject leads are tireless in their pursuit of excellence in religious education. Their commitment to supporting the professional development of staff, alongside very good engagement in the training offered by the diocese, means that staff are always kept up to date. Teachers readily acknowledge the support of leaders, and as one said, 'The head teacher leads the culture of the school with her passionate deep faith and energy'. Leaders and governors ensure that the religious education curriculum is faithful to the *Religious Education Directory* and that there is full parity with other core curriculum subjects. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school and as one parent wrote, 'An amazing school that ensures lots of time is spent with each student to ensure they understand. The school helps them to learn and grow.' Governors receive detailed, regular updates from school leaders about religious education, and thanks to their monitoring visits to the school, and the termly 'Governor Discovery' days, governors know the school very well. This means that governors can challenge school leaders and hold them to account.

## 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 .....

1

### Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for collective worship .....

1

Pupils are deeply engaged in and responsive to the prayer life of the school. This is demonstrated by the number of pupils who put themselves forward as prayer leaders. They are confident to share with inspectors their strong sense of faith and the importance of belonging to this diverse Catholic school. One pupil said without hesitation that she had put herself forward as a prayer leader because she 'wanted to spread the Word of God'. In discussions with inspectors, pupils were extremely proud of their faith, and very articulate about how prayer shapes their daily lives and gives them opportunities to be responsive to the needs of others. This shows their active and conscious participation at an age-appropriate level. Pupils say that other pupils who are not of the Catholic faith are always respectful in prayer gatherings, and this was the experience of inspectors during inspection. Pupils are reverent and sing joyfully. They volunteer for reading scripture readily and do so with confidence. Pupils appreciate moments of meditative silence as well as contemplation to quiet music, as evidenced in a very appropriate period of reflection during a lesson on the Mass in Year 2. Pupils work very well collaboratively with other pupils to prepare liturgical prayers, making the most of the talents of the group. They are guided by adults where needed, but the prayer leaders demonstrate how skilful they are when given opportunities to be independent and use their own ideas and prayers. Pupils know traditional prayers by heart and there is a daily pattern of prayer throughout the school, which includes praying the Angelus.

Prayer and liturgy are, without doubt, central to the life of the school. As such, they are routinely part of all gatherings of staff and pupils, and at significant moments in the life of the school. Staff say they value the time they spend together in prayer as it gives them 'time to reflect together and go forth on our mission'. Staff make sure that pupils know the cycle of the liturgical year by constantly referring to it and ensuring that from Year 1 upwards, a copy is at the front of each pupil's religious education book. Senior leaders and the subject leads are role models of excellent practice

and use a range of art forms and music to enhance the experience of pupils and staff. This can be evidenced by the Service of Reconciliation which took place during the inspection, where Rembrandt's 'The Prodigal Son' was used very effectively for the pupils to respond to. During this service, the awe and wonder of the Year 4 pupils was palpable. The links with the parish are exemplary, as shown by the commitment of two members of the clergy coming to school each day for three days during Lent and Advent, to enable all Key Stage 2 pupils to be offered individual confession. There are lovely prayer spaces in all classrooms as well as meeting rooms and the staff room. All these use high quality resources.

The school has recently reviewed its policy for prayer and liturgy, and it is fit for purpose in that it provides a useful reference point for staff. However, it does not include a clearly defined progression of skills for pupil led liturgical prayer. Leaders and governors ensure that there is a full calendar of opportunities to celebrate the Eucharist. This includes holy days of obligation and other important days in the school's year. Leaders and governors show their commitment to the provision of high-quality prayer and liturgy through their long-standing monitoring and evaluation programme.



## Information about the school

Full name of school	St Mary's Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	111342
Full postal address of the school	Dane Bank Avenue, Crewe, CW2 8AD
School phone number	01270 260620
Name of head teacher or principal	Mrs Cathryn Wright
Chair of governing board	Mr James Duncan
School Website	www.stmaryscrewe.co.uk
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	N/A
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age-range of pupils	3-11
Trustees	Diocese of Shrewsbury
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	22 <sup>nd</sup> November 2016
Previous denominational inspection grade	Outstanding

## The inspection team

Julie Johnson	Lead inspector
Carol Morgan	Team inspector
Kevin Toms	Team inspector
Name of inspector	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