



# Archdiocese of Plymouth

## Canonical Inspection Report

### **ST MARY'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL**

#### **Part of Plymouth CAST**

Devon Road, Poole, BH15 3QQ

Inspection date:

12<sup>th</sup> February 2020

Lead Inspector:

Maureen O'Leary

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#### **OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS:**

**Good**

Catholic Life:

Good

Religious Education:

Good

Collective Worship:

Good

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*Overall effectiveness at previous inspection:*

*Outstanding*

#### **SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS**

This is a Good Catholic school because:

- Inspired by the headteacher's vision, all staff and governors are focused on promoting the Catholic Life of the school.
- The school and CAST values, which are rooted in Gospel values, are well known and understood by pupils. These values underpin the behaviour and attitudes of both staff and pupils.
- Teachers enjoy teaching Religious Education and pupils enjoy their learning. Religious Education is well taught and consequently, pupils of all abilities make good progress in lessons.
- Prayer is an integral part of each school day. Careful planning has ensured that a variety of prayer experiences are provided. These nourish and support the whole school community in times of joy and sadness.
- School leaders are well supported by governors, the parish and the Plymouth CAST.

It is not yet Outstanding because:

- Self-evaluation procedures for Catholic Life, Religious Education and Collective Worship are not robust and rigorous enough to result in well targeted improvement planning.
- Teachers are not highly effective in using pupils' current assessment in Religious Education to plan lessons.
- Pupils of all ages are not given opportunities to initiate and plan Collective Worship.

**FULL REPORT****What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Ensure that targeted improvements to Catholic Life, Religious Education and Collective Worship are the coherent reflection of rigorous, focused monitoring and searching analysis.
- Improve teachers' confidence and skills to use the recently introduced assessment procedures to inform lesson planning in Religious Education.
- Building upon the pupils' confidence and ability to lead Collective Worship, train teachers to support and guide all pupils to initiate and plan Collective Worship.

**THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL**

<b>The quality of the Catholic Life of the school</b>	<b>Good</b>
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school	Good
The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school	Good
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision of the Catholic Life of the school	Good

**The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school.****The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school.**

- Pupils and staff genuinely value the Catholic identity of the school. They are proud of the school community and appreciate its distinctive Catholic identity.
- In all classrooms and communal spaces, the Catholic faith of the school is truly promoted and celebrated, such as, class prayer spaces and a values trail, which was designed by pupils. The combined work of the site manager, the deputy head and the RE Lead has also provided a beautiful shrine to Our Lady at the centre of the school, which reminds everyone that she is the patron saint of the school.
- Staff have worked diligently to ensure pupils have a comprehensive understanding of the school and CAST values. As a result, pupils can enthusiastically explain how they use them to guide their behaviours and aspirations.
- The reviewed school mission statement, "Inspiring each other to learn in the light of Christ," clearly expresses the educational mission of the Church. Although many of the younger pupils are unable to recall this statement, they do live out its sentiment in their words and actions.
- Pupils and staff would benefit from a renewed understanding of the school mission statement and how it links to the school and CAST values.
- The behaviour of pupils in class and around school is good and they readily support each other at work and at play.
- Pupils are respectful towards the adults that work with them. They appreciate the care and kindness that adults show to all pupils but especially those pupils who may find learning difficult.
- The school makes very good provision for the pastoral care of its most vulnerable pupils. As a result, these pupils are able to take as full a part in school life as possible.

- When things go wrong, pupils are quick to offer advice to their friends about the best way to behave (often based on the school values), to say sorry and to forgive each other. They understand that this is how Jesus would want them to behave.
- Older pupils have leadership roles as Mini Vinnies, school council representatives, eco council representatives, play leaders, school librarians, house captains and prefects. In these roles they are able to support and shape the Catholic Life of the school.
- All pupils understand that Christians are called to help others. As a result, they are keen to support a wide variety of charities. Charitable fund raising supports local, national and international charities, such as the Poole Foodbank and CAFOD. These events are often led by the Mini Vinnies.
- Teaching about the Pope's encyclical, Laudato Si, has ensured that the school community is keen to appreciate and protect the world and all its resources as a gift from God.
- Groups of pupils have been involved in the school's evaluation of Catholic Life. For example, the school council has helped in writing the new anti-bullying policy and the Mini Vinnies have diligently monitored class prayer spaces.
- Although most pupils have a clear understanding that they should use their gifts to help others, they have a limited understanding of vocation. Specific teaching about vocation is provided in Year 4 (as part of Religious Education) and this should now be given to all pupils.
- The school has recently introduced some new diocesan approved resources to teach Relationship and Sex Education. This aspect of the curriculum should be a focus for monitoring as this scheme of work is delivered.
- The school works well with the local parish. For example, the Mini Vinnies attend the parish St Vincent de Paul Tea and Chat events, the school supports the parish fayres and members of the parish are part of the local governing body. The parish priest and deacon are very regular visitors to the school. Staff and pupils appreciate their ongoing support for the Catholic Life of the school.

### **How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision of the Catholic Life of the school**

- The headteacher has made sure that the promotion of Catholic Life is at the heart of school development. Placing it as the first priority in the school development plan has meant that all staff and governors are aware of its centrality to school improvement.
- Although Catholic Life is monitored in a variety of ways, the analysis of this monitoring does not lead to well targeted improvement planning. The school would benefit from a baseline assessment of all aspects of Catholic Life. This would enable leaders to prioritise the areas that need to be developed and which should be the focus for future monitoring.
- New staff receive training and support from the Plymouth CAST, the Diocesan Education service, the Religious Education subject leader and the headteacher about how to understand and support Catholic Life. The Religious Education subject leader and the school handbook provides very practical and ongoing support to all staff.
- Staff training about the school and CAST values has led to very effective teaching for pupils.
- Parents overwhelmingly appreciate that the school offers a distinctively Catholic education for their pupils, where there are strong links to the local parish. Parents who spoke to the inspectors were grateful for the pastoral care that is offered to all pupils but especially those with special educational or emotional needs.

- The Catholic Life governor is a regular visitor to school, as are many other governors. Through these visits and the headteacher's report governors have a good overview of the strengths of the school.
- Leaders and governors work well with the Plymouth Cast and have ensured that they implement all of the diocesan Bishop's decisions.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

<b>The quality of Religious Education</b>	<b>Good</b>
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education	Good
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education	Good
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education	Good

### How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education

- Teachers enjoy teaching Religious Education and have good subject knowledge. This helps them to plan lessons that engage pupils, helping them to learn in a variety of ways.
- Pupils have opportunities to write in depth, to use art, craft and drama while learning in Religious Education. Older pupils particularly welcome the occasions to explain and justify their answers and to share their own point of view. As a result, they enjoy their learning.
- Pupils' work shows that they make good progress in each key stage. More able pupils are challenged to show a deeper understanding of their work, for example demonstrating an understanding of Biblical writers' intent. The use of 'pink' tasks also provides greater challenge.
- Less able pupils and those with special educational needs are well supported to learn successfully. Additional adults are generally used effectively to support targeted pupils. Skilful mentoring of individual pupils allows them to access the appropriate learning. Occasionally, these adults can be under used during whole class discussions.
- Through teachers' questioning and the type of tasks set in Religious Education, pupils are regularly expected to apply their learning to their own lives and the lives of others. As a result, they can confidently explain how their learning influences their behaviour and aspirations.
- The quality of pupils' work is comparable and sometimes better than their work in other core subjects. They generally take pride in their work, taking care to present it neatly. They feel that Religious Education is a special subject because they learn about God.
- Teachers create calm and purposeful learning environments for pupils. They regularly praise pupils for their achievements, encourage them to develop their answers further and give them space to ask 'big questions'. As a result, pupils feel well supported and behave well in lessons.

### How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education

- Leaders and governors have ensured that Religious Education meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference and the requirements of the diocesan Bishop.
- Leaders' and governors' monitoring of Religious Education provides them with a general oversight of standards, but it doesn't clearly identify specific areas that require improvement. Self-evaluation of the subject would benefit from more rigorous and robust monitoring and evaluation which informs improvement planning.
- The subject leader is ambitious to improve teaching and learning in Religious Education. She gives valuable ongoing advice and encouragement to staff, which they value. She attends diocesan and cluster training to inform her knowledge of current best practice and diocesan expectations.
- Leaders and governors have ensured that the subject leader is adequately supported and resourced to lead the subject.

### COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

<b>The quality of Collective Worship</b>	<b>Good</b>
How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship	Good
The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school	Good
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship	Good

### How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship

- Prayer is a valued and integral part of each school day and event. Throughout the week pupils are able to experience a variety of prayer and worship, which may include a Gospel liturgy led by the headteacher, weekly meditation, pupil led class prayers, Mass and celebration assemblies.
- Pupils described prayer to the inspectors as, "A way of communicating with God" and, "A way of getting to know God better." This attitude to prayer was modelled by all pupils as they reverently took part in a Gospel assembly during the inspection.
- Staff choose themes for worship that reflect the liturgical seasons of the Church, relevant feast days and topical events. They plan Collective Worship that is relevant to pupils' lives and which is easily understood by them. Consequently, pupils are engaged in these times of prayer and have a good understanding of the Church's year.
- Over the last year, many aspects of whole school Collective Worship have been greatly enhanced through music and singing. As a result, pupils sing with wonderful enthusiasm and sincerity. During the inspection, all pupils sang joyfully, enhancing the pupil led liturgy.
- Pupils are given the opportunity to voluntarily visit the school chapel during the year to pray the Rosary or the Stations of the Cross. These services are led by the pupils who are part of the Mini Vinnies. A number of pupils attend and value these times of prayer and reflection. Pupils cherish the chapel as a special place, but few pupils have a clear understanding of the significance of the tabernacle.

- Staff have supported pupils to be confident leaders of prayer and worship in their own classrooms. As a result, they are keen to carry out their role when it is their turn on the class prayer rota.
- Building on this confidence, staff now need to support pupils to not only lead but to also initiate and plan class Collective Worship, in an age appropriate way.
- Other adults, including parents and parishioners, are made welcome to attend school Masses and liturgies. These events are promoted on the school website and parish newsletter.
- The school supports pupils who are prepared for the sacraments by parish catechists, by attending celebrations throughout the year, such as the Sacrament of Reconciliation, Family Days and Holy Communion Celebrations. Celebrations also take place when the children receive the sacraments for the first time at school, where the Mini-Vinnies make cards and the pupils are presented with prayer books.

### **How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship**

- The headteacher is able to lead the whole school in meaningful worship based on the Sunday Gospel. The pupils feel that during worship she, "Brings us closer to God." She routinely plans going forth activities at the end of Gospel assemblies, which challenge pupils to live out the school values.
- School leaders ensure that prayer, in its many forms, is planned into every school day. Staff, especially those new to teaching in Catholic schools, are supported to lead Collective Worship.
- Current monitoring and evaluation of Collective Worship is mainly informal. It provides a general oversight of standards but doesn't sufficiently identify areas for improvement or inform improvement planning.
- Leaders and governors have ensured that the provision of Collective Worship meets the requirements of the diocesan Bishop.

### **SCHOOL DETAILS**

Unique reference number	140777
Local authority	Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole
<i>This inspection was carried out under Canon 806 of Canon Law and under Section 48 of the 2005 Education Act.</i>	
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy
Age range	4-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on roll	389
Appropriate authority	The board of directors
Chair	Ann Harris
Headteacher	Helen Armstrong
Telephone number	01202676207
Website address	<a href="http://www.st-marys.poole.sch.uk/">http://www.st-marys.poole.sch.uk/</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:office@st-marys.poole.sch.uk">office@st-marys.poole.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	April 2015

## **INFORMATION ABOUT THIS SCHOOL**

- The school is a two form entry Catholic primary school in the Borough of Poole. It serves two parishes: St Mary's in Poole and St Anthony's in Broadstone
- The percentage of Catholic pupils is currently 75.8%.
- The percentage of disadvantaged pupils is below the national average.
- The percentage of pupils with special educational needs is broadly in line with the national average.
- The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic origins is above the national average.
- The percentage of pupils with English as an additional language is above the national average.
- Attainment on entry is below average.
- Significant changes since the last inspection – the school has a new RE Lead, new Deputy Headteacher, new Diocesan inspection framework.

## **INFORMATION ABOUT THIS INSPECTION**

- The inspection was carried out by two Diocesan Inspectors: Maureen O'Leary & Julie-Anne Tallon.
- The focus of the inspection was on the impact, quality and leadership of the school's provision of Catholic Life, Religious Education and Collective Worship.
- The inspectors observed teaching across 14 Religious Education lessons to evaluate the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. All of these lesson observations were conducted jointly with senior leaders.
- The inspectors completed a work scrutiny and held discussions with pupils to evaluate their understanding of Catholic Life, the impact of Religious Education teaching on their learning over time and their experience of Collective Worship.
- Meetings were held with a group of governors (including the chair of governors & the Catholic Life link governor), the headteacher, the Religious Education subject leader and the parish priest. A number of parents spoke to one of the inspectors on the playground.
- The inspectors attended a whole school Collective Worship and undertook a learning walk to look at aspects of learning and teaching in Religious Education, the presentation of the Catholic Life of the school and pupils' behaviour.
- The inspectors reviewed a range of documents including the school's self-evaluation, data about pupils' attainment and progress, Analyse School Performance (ASP) data, the school development plan, the Religious Education action plan, teachers' planning and learning journals.