



DIOCESE OF PLYMOUTH

## INSPECTION REPORT

St Mary's Catholic Primary Academy  
Mongleath Road, Falmouth, TR11 4PW  
Telephone: 01326 314530  
e-mail address: secretary@st-marys-fal.cornwall.sch.uk

DfE Number: 908/3388  
URN: 140775

Headteacher: Alison McDonald

Chair of Governors: Mr Bob Kiszczuk

---

**This report to the Bishop of the Diocese under Canon 806 of the Code of Canon Law is also the report to the governors of the school on religious education. For Catholic maintained schools, the report also fulfils the requirements of Section 48 of the Education Act 2005.**

---

Date of inspection: 21<sup>st</sup> October 2022  
Date of previous inspection: June 2015

Reporting Inspector: Mrs C Collett  
Additional Inspector: Mrs A Fowler

## **Description of school**

St Mary's Catholic Primary School is a single-form entry school serving the parishes of Falmouth and Helston. The school is part of a Multi-Academy Trust- Plymouth CAST. Since the previous inspection, the school has appointed a substantive Executive Headteacher and has an interim Deputy Head. The school has a below average number of children deemed to have special educational needs or in receipt of free school meals.

## **Overall effectiveness of this Catholic school (summary statement)**

**Grade 2**

### **This is a good school because:**

- Senior leaders and governors are committed to providing a high-quality Catholic education for all its pupils.
- All staff are engaged in and promote the school's very clear and embedded vision and values.
- The school is fully inclusive, welcoming those from all faiths or none, and it ensures that those in need are supported, valued and treated as equals.
- The traditions and teachings of the Catholic church are clearly visible and can be seen in action through the highly positive relationships between pupils and staff.
- Religious Education and Collective Worship are planned for in a systematic manner ensuring all Diocesan and Bishops Conference requirements are met.
- Religious Education is considered a core subject in line with English and Maths and therefore is given high priority in terms of leadership responsibilities and expectations.
- The Executive Head and Religious Education lead have a good understanding of the strengths and areas for development and act as exemplary role models for the school community.
- The children are very proud of their school and speak positively about the care and support their teachers give them.

### **The capacity of the school community to improve and develop is good because:**

Senior leaders and governors are committed to ensuring that the school remains true to the principles of Catholic education where all pupils are unique and valued at the same time as wishing to deliver a high-quality all-round education. They are aware of the need for further improvements in specific areas and how to address them.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Ensure all pupils make good or better progress in Religious Education ensuring that overall learning objectives and activities scaffold or challenge pupils appropriately.
- Establish and implement robust monitoring and reporting procedures at both senior leadership and governance levels that are linked to the schools identified priorities.
- Continue to develop all pupils' ability to lead and evaluate the prayer and worship provided by the school.

### **a) The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school**

- Pupils demonstrate a strong sense of belonging to their school community. They openly refer to being part of a family that cares and supports them, especially when they or others have needs.
- Pupils take on leadership roles such as being eco-warriors or welfare ambassadors. They actively put the principles of Catholic social teaching into action by organising and pursuing campaigns for social justice; for example, ending poverty or protecting the environment. To support these campaigns, Year 6 pupils have written to members of parliament, involved parents and appeared on TV.
- The behaviour and attitudes of pupils are exemplary. They demonstrate high levels of respect and care for each other. The positive Catholic ethos encourages them to listen, praise and support each other.
- The schools mission statement and gospel values of Kindness, Compassion, Justice, Integrity, Forgiveness, Peace and Humility are central to the life of this school. Pupils understand these values and are encouraged to live them out. They value the fact that they receive awards based on living out these values which encourages them to model these values in school.

### **b) The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school**

- The schools mission statement and its accompanying values is displayed prominently around the school. Consequently, it is well known and understood by all pupils.
- The school environment reflects its Catholic identity and ethos, which underpins the daily life of the school.
- The school's website reflects its Catholic mission. It has a dedicated page to 'Catholic Life' which includes photographs and videos celebrating pupil participation in a range of activities that support school life.
- Senior leaders are attentive to the pastoral needs of the pupils and staff resulting in relationships within the school being exemplary. Parents also report on how caring and supportive the school is.
- Relationship and Sex Education (RSE) reflect Catholic teachings and principles; parents were consulted on the programme being used and training is provided to enable staff to fully understand the principles.

- Pupils and parents of other faiths are welcome, and their culture and traditions celebrated by being invited into school to share their knowledge and experiences.
- The spiritual development of pupils is supported by the close links between the school and the parish. The Parish Priest is a regular visitor to school. His contribution strengthens the pupils' opportunity to engage with their faith.

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

- Leaders and governors are deeply committed to, and effective in, promoting the Catholic life of the school. They see it as a core leadership responsibility and ensure the whole curriculum contributes to the spiritual and moral development of pupils. They embrace and promote the Bishop's vision for the diocese through active participation in diocesan initiatives and attendance at training and conferences.
- The school uses a range of strategies for engaging parents. These include daily contact at the school gate, inviting parents to events in school, newsletters and the website.
- The RE lead continuously strives to ensure that the Catholic life of the school evolves and develops and regularly provides reports to governors. Strategies to evaluate and monitor provision are undertaken but there is a need to improve this process even further so that it has a greater impact on planning.
- The RE link governor understands they have a key role to play in the monitoring of Catholic life and is a regular visitor to the school. Reports following visits are provided to the governors.

## **Religious Education**

**Grade 3**

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

- Most pupils recognise, enjoy and value Religious Education. However, they do not always make good progress across the key stages.
- The religious knowledge the pupils gain is not always built upon to enable pupils to achieve age-appropriate levels or greater depth.
- Pupils with special educational needs are fully included in lessons and activities and progress is comparable with other pupils.
- Pupils respond well to the 'Big Questions' showing that they can think ethically and make links between religion and life. This needs to be utilised further as a means of accelerating and extending pupils' progress.
- Work in the pupils' books show that Religious Education is treated as a core subject in relation to allocation and presentation is of a high standard

- Teachers recognise that pupils need to develop their religious literacy and encourage them to do so during lessons.

**b) The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education**

- Teachers are well organised in their planning and delivery of RE. They endeavour to engage and motivate pupils through use of a range of activities such as role play, hot seating, art or use of outside visitors. However, consideration needs to be given as to how effective these are in enabling good progress to take place during a lesson.
- Additional adults are used effectively in terms of engaging with and supporting pupils in the completion of activities and recording pupil comments during discussions to aid evidence of pupil learning.
- The school follows the diocesan recommended scheme 'Come and See' and the curriculum is planned in accordance with delivery across each year group. The school needs to review how teachers use the scheme in order to ensure there are clear links between lesson learning objectives, the tasks set and the teachers marking. Too often tasks set do not enable the learning objective to be achieved and marking is therefore not accurate.
- Teachers regularly mark pupils' work. However, it is not always linked to progress in RE or as effective as it could be in providing next steps for pupil improvement.
- Pupils need opportunities and guidance to become better skilled at self-assessment, so they understand the progress they are making.

**c) How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education**

- The RE curriculum is fully compliant with Bishops' Conference requirements and the assessment procedures are compliant with the requirements of CAST.
- Senior leaders recognise the need to track the progress of pupils and have set up a data tracking system to achieve this. They are aware that this system is in its early stages and at present is not being used effectively to support pupil progress.
- The RE lead has undertaken monitoring activities such as pupil conferencing, book scrutiny and lesson visits and has drawn up an annual action plan identifying areas for development. She is aware that a more robust and regular process for monitoring and evaluation linked and reflected in the annual action plan would improve the effectiveness of bringing about accelerated improvements.
- Governors are conscious of their responsibility for monitoring and evaluating pupil progress and the provision of RE. The link governor regularly visits and has provided some generic reports following the visits. However, there needs

to be a more rigorous and evidence-based reporting system implemented to ensure priorities are identified, tracked and addressed.

## **Collective Worship**

**Grade 2**

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

- All pupils act with reverence and respect during worship. They engage, listen carefully and join in with prayers and singing. The focus of prayer responds to the events and needs in the world for example, the recent passing of the Queen and the war in the Ukraine.
- Pupils are given the opportunity to pray together regularly throughout the day and over the week. Each class has a focal table, which reflects the topic currently being studied and the liturgical year.
- In pupil discussions pupils expressed the importance of coming together for Collective Worship and that it was an opportunity to hear more about God and his teachings.
- The Mini-Vinnies take great pride in taking the lead and being given the responsibility of assisting in the planning and delivery of Collective Worship. Pupils not part of the Mini-Vinnies did feel that it would be good if it could be opened to pupils younger than Y5 and to ensure the development of spiritual leadership for all pupils this should be considered.

### **b) The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school**

- Prayer is central to school life for all pupils, whatever their faith or background. Praying together is part of the daily experience of pupils, and whilst traditional prayers are said, pupils are regularly given the opportunity to write their own.
- Collective worship is well planned by the RE lead and all staff are involved in its delivery ensuring that all are taking responsibility for this aspect of school life and prayer is seen to be for all.
- The RE lead supports pupils' leadership through providing a framework for planning that reinforces the key elements of a liturgy.
- There are good links with the parish and the parish priest is a regular visitor to the school.
- Although the sacramental programme for First Holy Communion is parish based the school supports the programme through offering the school as a venue and celebrating the actual event.

**c) How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the prayer life of the school.**

- Leaders and governors sustain and nurture the prayer life of the school community and ensure provision and opportunities for prayer and Collective Worship are in place. There is evidence of ongoing development in the RE leads action plan.
- The ability to be able to deliver Collective Worship is well supported through training and regular conversations with the RE lead and the parish priest.
- Whilst there is a high importance placed upon the delivery of good Collective Worship and prayer, processes for the evaluation and impact are not yet in place. However, leaders understand the importance of such and have plans to address this.

**Summary of Parental Questionnaires**

*There were 38 parental questionnaires received. The majority of parents responded very positively about the school believing the school 'to be kind and caring and having the children at the heart of all they do' and having a 'strong sense of respect instilled in its pupils and good values' and being a school which 'helps them grow into good humans'*