

# Saint Mary's RC Primary Academy Boston

URN: 146241

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Bishop of Nottingham

13–14 November 2024

## Summary of key findings

### Overall effectiveness

The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school

#### 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

#### Religious education (p.5)

The quality of curriculum religious education

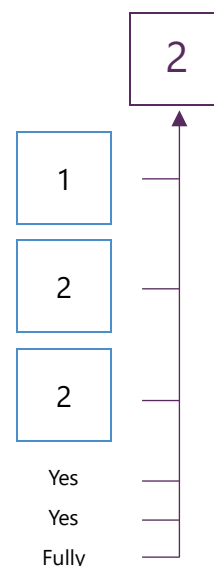
#### Collective worship (p.7)

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

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



## Compliance statement

- The school is fully compliant with the general norms for religious education laid down by the Bishops' Conference.
- The school is fully compliant with the additional requirements of the diocesan bishop.
- The school is fully compliant with regard to its previously identified areas for development, having addressed the targets set from the previous inspection.

## What the school does well

- The behaviour of pupils is exemplary. Pupils are polite and respectful towards each other and members of the wider school community.
- Support for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities is impressive. The school is a beacon for inclusion.
- Induction support for new teachers, and ongoing professional development for staff, has improved significantly since the previous inspection across all aspects of Catholic life and mission, religious education and collective worship.
- Leaders and governors are passionate and inspirational. Leadership is a strength at St Mary's School.
- Pupils participate in prayer and liturgy with reverence.

## What the school needs to improve

- Ensure that teachers' subject knowledge in religious education is secure.
- Provide opportunities for pupils to discuss their learning and verbalise opinions in religious education lessons.
- Enable pupils to confidently plan celebrations of the word with independence, according to their stages of development.

## 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

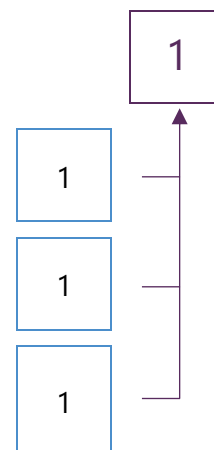
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

#### 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 take tremendous pride in their contributions to the school's mission statement, 'United in Christ. One family in God's heart'. This statement encapsulates the school's commitment to fostering a diverse and inclusive community. The integration of Gospel values is exemplary. The pupils actively participate in the designs of logos for school virtue stickers, which they proudly receive in recognition of demonstrating these virtues. Each half term focuses on a different Gospel virtue, reinforcing the importance of these principles in daily life. Behaviour across the school is exemplary. Pupils consistently engage with one another and the staff positively and respectfully. Pupils take great pride in their efforts to support the community and those in need, inspired by the teachings and examples of Christ's love. The commitment to Catholic Social Teaching has become a hallmark of the school's ethos. Pupils happily accept their chaplaincy role: this leadership responsibility not only allows them to bring their peers closer to God but also fosters their own spiritual development and connection to the wider community.

Towards the end of the last academic year, the mission statement underwent a thorough review conducted by both staff and pupils. It is already well embedded within the school. The pupils reference this mission statement within their learning and it guides their values and behaviours. Staff members embrace the Catholic life and mission of the school, actively serving as positive role models for pupils. Staff have been instrumental in supporting numerous fundraising initiatives and other endeavours which embody the spirit of community, reflecting a commitment to fostering empathetic and responsible pupils. The school environment is a testament to the school's distinct Catholic identity, featuring many beautifully presented displays. These serve not only as visual representations of the Catholic faith but also as a constant reminder of shared values and mission. Chaplaincy provision is very effective:

dedicated pupil and adult chaplaincy teams play an essential role in enriching the prayer life of the school community, facilitating spiritual growth for all. Relationships, sex and health education (RSHE) is taught using the Ten:Ten scheme of work and parents are given the opportunity to view resources relating to this subject through an online portal. The provision and commitment to supporting pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) is exceptional. The headteacher is deeply committed to providing the very best care and support for these pupils, implementing tailored strategies to help them thrive in their educational journey.

Leaders and governors are passionate about integrating Catholic values into school life. This commitment is reflected in efforts to promote the bishop's spiritual themes, which serve as a guiding principle for all. Leaders have built strong connections with both the diocese and the Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Multi-Academy Trust, working collaboratively to respond to various initiatives which enrich pupils' experiences. Recognising that parents are the first educators of their children, the school is keen to strengthen ties with families. As part of the commitment to Catholic life and mission, the school has recently introduced pupil involvement in evaluation, so that pupils are now equipped to monitor and assess practices on a half-termly basis. The school is confident that their insights will yield valuable information to further enhance Catholic life and mission. The headteacher provides meticulously detailed reports to the governing body on a half-termly basis; governors are developing their skills at asking questions and offering some challenge. All staff, including those who are new to the school, receive a focused induction programme which encourages them to engage actively with Catholic life and mission, thereby strengthening the community ethos and enriching the lives of pupils.

## Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

### Religious education key judgement grade

#### Pupil outcomes

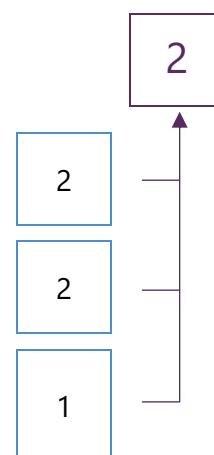
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

#### 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



The school has made significant improvements in religious education since the last inspection. The behaviour exhibited by pupils during religious education lessons is outstanding. It is evident that pupils are not only engaged but are also able to sustain concentration while completing their tasks, largely due to the enjoyment they derive from their learning experiences. Pupils are making good progress from their initial starting points. Pupils take pride in their presentation and achievements within religious education. The integration of cross-curricular work and increased creativity within lessons has resonated well with pupils, who express their enthusiasm in conversation. Pupils benefit from teachers' good subject knowledge. The high standard of presentation in both religious education and English books illustrates the importance placed by pupils on religious education as an essential component of the core curriculum.

Most teachers at St Mary's school demonstrate a good understanding of the subject matter in religious education and are dedicated to promoting effective learning experiences. Their commitment is evident in the good quality lessons they deliver, which are carefully planned in response to the current assessment of the pupils. Teachers have shown their ability to adapt learning objectives to better cater to the diverse needs of all pupils. Modifications have included changes to the 'driver words' and the planned tasks or activities. Use of additional resources, such as word banks, have been introduced to support pupils in their learning. Teachers are skilled in questioning. However, there is a reliance on gathering responses from pupils who put up their hands, rather than seeking verbal engagement from all pupils at regular intervals. Where questioning practices are more diverse, teachers can effectively adjust the pace of learning and offer further explanations, allowing for continued engagement. Pupils appreciate the rewards given for their hard work, which serve as a motivational tool to elevate standards in religious education. Pupils do not have opportunities from teachers to regularly voice their opinions and

maximise their learning through contributing to discussions. Nevertheless, lessons across the school are aligned consistently in structure, commencing with a prayer or a gathering that establishes the importance of the lesson.

The leadership team is dedicated and forward thinking. Since the last inspection they have ensured that the majority of staff are well-trained and effectively equipped to teach religious education, which has had positive results in raising educational standards. Leaders, including governors, recognise that the induction training for new staff is pivotal to this success. In order to enhance pupil engagement, leaders have also adopted a progressive approach, moving away from traditional worksheets and excessive scaffolding in exercise books. This shift allows pupils greater autonomy in presenting their work, which in turn fosters creativity and independent learning. Leaders have encouraged teachers to incorporate more variety and creativity into their religious education lessons. This has enhanced pupils' interest and has also deepened their understanding of religious topics. The leader for religious education has taken significant steps forward by developing her own data analysis system: this resource allows her to track pupil progress on a termly basis, also ensuring that any pupils who are falling behind receive the support they need to succeed.

## 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

1

2

Pupils willingly and confidently embrace participation in prayer and liturgy. They clearly demonstrate their ability to link scripture with current themes and virtues. This connection not only enhances their understanding of scripture but also reinforces the values that the school is instilling into them. Pupils express enjoyment during other significant forms of worship throughout the year, such as celebrating Mass on holy days, reciting the rosary in May or October, and participating in the Stations of the Cross during Lent, as well as engaging in Benediction, Adoration, and Reconciliation. The school uses the 'Let us Pray' resources: through this programme, pupils have become familiar with the four-part structure of gather, scripture, respond, and mission. During celebrations of the word, they experience the beauty of scripture, interspersed with moments of silence, reflection, and liturgical music. Pupils do not show independence when planning celebrations of the word, as there is a reliance on adult support. However, pupils behave respectfully during these times, and their behaviour is consistently outstanding.

Planning for prayer and liturgy reflects the diocesan guidelines. As pupils progress through the school, they become increasingly more confident in choosing appropriate readings. Celebrations of the word include traditional prayers and responses, as well as opportunities for silent reflection and the enjoyment of hymns. There is a palpable sense of joy when the pupils sing along to live music, which enhances the spiritual experience. To further support the spiritual growth of pupils, the school has designated specific spaces for prayer, including a prayer room and two outdoor areas. Staff also ensure that displays reflect faith, creating an inviting atmosphere for contemplation. Though use of a wide variety of prayer is not embedded, pupils are encouraged to participate in prayer and liturgy through a variety of curricular skills, using

role-play and expressing their creativity through artwork, and though the use of Makaton signing. This allows for greater engagement with worship.

The leadership team demonstrates exceptional knowledge and understanding of the diverse elements within prayer and liturgy. They are skilled in facilitating staff to plan and deliver engaging celebrations of the word, which foster a deeper understanding of shared values and beliefs among pupils. Leaders have recently improved the use of evaluations of prayer and liturgy by introducing a 'you said, we did' approach as part of whole-school processes. This initiative allows pupils and staff to respond directly to thoughts and suggestions, thereby enhancing the worship on offer. The headteacher and deputy headteacher regularly model to others by leading celebrations of the word and incorporating the talents of pupils to enhance these occasions. Leaders, including governors, have established an annual plan of provision, which has been upheld by the Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Multi-Academy Trust as a model for other Catholic schools. Leaders, including governors, are committed to ensuring that all staff receive the relevant training necessary to effectively deliver prayer and liturgy, and support pupils in leading these occasions. This professional development is integral to the school's commitment to providing for every child high-quality, enriching experiences of prayer and liturgy.



## Information about the school

Full name of school	Saint Mary's RC Primary Academy Boston
School unique reference number (URN)	146241
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	9253342
Full postal address of the school	Saint Mary's RC Primary Academy Boston, Ashlawn Drive, Boston, PE21 9PX
School phone number	01205362092
Headteacher	Lisa Gleed-Thornley
Chair of Local Governing Body	Maria Lewis
School Website	<a href="http://www.bostonstmarys.co.uk">www.bostonstmarys.co.uk</a>
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	Our Lady Of Lourdes Catholic Multi-Academy Trust
Phase	Primary
Type of school	Academy
Admissions policy	N/A
Age-range of pupils	4-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	16 March 2017
Previous denominational inspection grade	2 - Good

## The inspection team

Helen White  
Andrew Krlic

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