



DIOCESE OF PLYMOUTH

# Diocese of Plymouth

## Canonical Inspection Report

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.

Diocese of Plymouth Diocesan Education Service  
DIOCESAN CANONICAL INSPECTION REPORT ON THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF  
THE SCHOOL, RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AND COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

## ST MARY'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Part of Plymouth CAST  
Barn Lane, Bodmin, Cornwall

Inspection date: 7<sup>th</sup> October 2021  
Lead Inspector: Louise Buxton

Additional Inspector: Helen Armstrong

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### OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS:

**Good**

Catholic Life:

Good

Religious Education:

Good

Collective Worship:

Outstanding

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*Overall effectiveness at previous inspection:*

*Good*

### SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

This is a Good Catholic school because:

- St Mary's School is a community of faith, firmly embedded in Gospel values, and so they are passionate about making a difference, striving to create a welcoming, caring and secure learning environment in which every child is cherished and nurtured and maintaining ambition for all.

- Leaders, governors, staff and pupils are united in living out the Gospel values, which are the foundation of the school community. The school's commitment to Catholic Social Teaching is a real strength of St Mary's. It is evident in many areas of school life.
- Pupils are wonderful ambassadors for the school and speak about their school with pride. Their behaviour and attitudes are underpinned by their knowledge and living out of the school's mission statement. Pupils said, 'We have the Gospel values everywhere and we can all talk to each other about them.'
- The many parents who responded to the survey were very positive about all aspects of school life. 'The values of the school make it distinctive. I couldn't wish for better care and support. They guide my child with principles for life' is how one parent described the school and this quote encapsulates the overall parental response.
- Religious Education (RE) is well led by the subject leader and valued by all. Leaders in the school have shown a strong commitment to improving standards in RE and their efforts have been successful.
- Through an increasingly wide range of worship opportunities, the pupils are opened to God's presence in their lives and in the lives of others. The pupil chaplaincy team serve the school with enthusiasm and the school is well-served by the parish priest and deacon.

It is not yet Outstanding because:

- There are insufficient governors being able to provide a highly ambitious vision for the Catholic Life of the school. In recognising the importance of a local governing board the school needs more members in order to fulfil its role.
- While there is engagement with the Diocesan Self-evaluation Framework the school's evaluation needs to reflect the diocesan schedule relating to the grade descriptors to support sound judgement and so planning for improvement.
- Teachers need to become more highly effective in consistently planning high-quality lessons linked to pupil's current assessment and their knowledge of the individual, consolidating and extending pupil's knowledge and understanding, so that their learning is highly effective and challenge is available for all.
- High quality feed-back is still being developed in some year groups and being embedded in others. Once this is achieved it will lead to high levels of engagement, interest, achievement and progress. Pupils will then be given the opportunity to respond in a systematic and planned way which ensures pupils understand what they need to do to improve, along with providing challenge.

## **FULL REPORT**

### **What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- The full contingency of governors need to be recruited so the necessary challenge and support can be provided.
- Leaders need to engage with the Diocesan Self-evaluation process with similar rigour to the rest of the school's self-evaluation which is a coherent reflection of rigorous monitoring, searching analysis and self-challenge.
- For continued progress teachers need to be confident in planning differentiation that allows mastery of understanding and knowledge through the use of more open-ended tasks and the use of extending writing tasks for those able. Challenge must be available for all.
- Ensure consistency in feedback across the school, ensuring there is an element of challenge within each lesson. Learning will benefit from 'Big

Question' feedback becoming embedded throughout all year groups, ensuring challenge and on-going improvement through feedback.

## 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	Outstanding
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 value their school and are active participants within the Catholic Life and mission of the school to, 'Educate, Protect, Love, Serve'. Pupils are regularly involved with activities which promote Catholic Life, such as leading prayer and becoming involved in charity work.
- The Gospel values sit at the heart of this school. The pupils were keen to share how everyone works hard to live out the Gospel values, with weekly celebration of pupils who are living the values. There are on-going reminders of the Gospel through the 'Guardian of the Value', with guardians including modern day figures such as Greta Thunberg, Malala Yousafzai and Sir Captain Tom Moore that children related well to.
- Pupils are considerate to others and caring to anyone in apparent need. They are aware of the needs of others and seek justice beyond the school community through actively engaging in Catholic Social Teaching both within the taught curriculum and through links with outside organisations. CAFOD are regularly invited into school to provide workshops while children have been engaged with Fairtrade projects, Caritas in Action and other annual fundraising events. To further enhance its drive within this area the school has joined the Oscar Romero Award for Catholic Social Teaching as pupils seek to be agents of change.
- Pupils value and respect the Catholic tradition of the school and its links with the parish community, the Catholic Children's Society and the Apostleship of the Sea. Catholic tradition is also evident within the school environment with high quality displays, focal points and areas for prayer. These help pupils to understand the Catholic faith and the church's social teaching.
- Pupils show a respect for themselves and others as made in the image and likeness of God. The behaviour seen on the day in class and throughout the school was good. The pupils were polite and respectful.
- There is a strong sense of community at all levels and this is evident in the high quality of relationships throughout the school. The use of social media through Class Dojo means that the Catholic life of the school is regularly shared with families. Parents recognise the good communication of the school.
- Prayer is central to the whole community. The chaplaincy provision is exemplary in supporting and promoting the Catholic Life of the school. The parish priest and deacon support both teaching and liturgy within the school and links to the parish are strong.

- St Mary's provides the highest levels of pastoral care to all pupils and their families, and there is an explicit and concrete commitment to the most vulnerable and needy in both policy and practice. The pastoral worker works in partnership with parents – offering advice, sign posting support and seeking practical assistance, for example from the food bank.
- Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) is taught within the context of the Catholic Church. Resources from the 'Life to the Full' programme are thoughtfully designed, carefully planned, consistently well taught and celebrate Catholic teachings and principles. A parent commented, 'I feel the programme has been a positive introduction to the school and has been well received by my children.'

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

- Leaders and governors are committed to promoting the mission of the Church and the development of the Catholic Life of the school.
- The provision for the Catholic Life of the school is given priority by leaders. While there is engagement with the diocesan Self-evaluation Framework the school's evaluation needs to reflect the diocesan schedule relating to the grade descriptors to support sound judgement.
- The school has strategies for engaging with the majority of parents to the benefit of pupils, including those who might traditionally find working with the school difficult. The headteacher's vision, along with the pastoral worker is central to ensuring this.
- Parents have a good understanding of the school's mission and are supportive of it. In the recent survey one parent commented, 'They always go above and beyond for every student and parent.' Many parents referred to the values of the school, links with the parish and that it is a Catholic school.
- Whilst the few governors on the local governing body are serving the school well for the Catholic Life of the school more governors need to be recruited so the necessary challenge and support can be provided.
- New staff to the school have an awareness of its Catholic identity and their role in supporting Catholic Life. The RE subject leader provides highly valued ongoing support for all staff to improve their understanding of Catholic Life.
- The school responds well to diocesan policies and initiatives and promotes the Bishop's vision throughout the school. This is evident through engagement with the Catholic values and virtues, the RE scheme 'Come and See' and 'Caritas in Action'.

### **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	Outstanding

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

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

- Pupils, from their varied starting points, make good progress and are developing a secure knowledge of RE and growing their relationship with God. They use their knowledge, understanding and skills, to reflect spiritually, and to think ethically and theologically. In the Year 5 lesson where they were using scripture from Hosea 11:1-4 a pupil commented that 'We can not see Jesus – so we are sad- but he loves us all the time – and so we become happy.'
- Pupils in the school's nursery were learning in a meaningful way about family and the introduction to the Catholic ethos of St Mary's was very evident.
- Teachers are becoming confident in their subject expertise and have a good understanding of how pupils learn. They will actively seek out the RE lead and parish priest for supporting teaching. As a consequence, most pupils apply themselves well and make good progress. For continued progress teachers need to be confident in planning differentiation that allows mastery of understanding and knowledge through the use of more open-ended tasks and the use of extending writing tasks for those able.
- Teachers ensure most pupils are involved in evaluating how well they are achieving. This contributes to good progress and increases pupil confidence in making further improvements. In Year 6 it was evident that teacher marking, along with developing 'Big Questions' within feedback ensures challenge. The approach of 'Big Question' feedback becoming embedded throughout all year groups would ensure challenge and on-going improvement.
- Consideration is given to making teaching relevant with creative use of resources to enhance learning. In Year 1 the lesson on family saw every child contributing to the building of a model house- culminating in their realisation that they are special, unique and loved by God. There was a real sense of awe and wonder.
- Classroom displays are effective in supporting RE learning. Working walls with key words, lesson prompts and support for learning were evident in all classes. and learning available.
- Presentation of work in RE books is good. The class floor books that allow collaborative work to be shared and celebrated are of a high standard and show the progress made and the value placed on RE over time.
- While some differentiation within RE books was effective more work is required to ensure teachers plan outcomes based on RE knowledge and skills rather than just providing different tasks.

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

- Leaders ensure that the RE curriculum meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference and is a core curriculum subject reflected in the focus, time, and resourcing given to it.
- The RE subject leader is committed to her role, ensuring staff recognise the importance of the subject and feel supported in teaching it. Teachers new to the school are appreciative of their induction and the support received that has allowed them to teach RE effectively and with confidence. The RE leader has a strong vision for her subject and the ability to secure this.
- Leaders and governors have been involved in review days centred on RE provision and the Catholic life of the school. Plans are in place to resume monitoring.

## COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

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

### **How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship** **The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school**

- Pupils act with reverence and are keen to participate in Collective Worship. They reflect in silence and join in community prayer appropriately and with confidence. Behaviour during the Harvest Mass in the parish church was respectful.
- Staff are skilled in helping pupils plan and deliver quality worship. Pupils regularly prepare and lead worship with confidence, enthusiasm and with a degree of independence. The pupil prepared worship was thoughtfully planned on the theme of caring for the environment, linked to the CAFOD 'Go Green' challenge, with all engaged and reflective. Pupils are aware of the imminent climate conference in Glasgow.
- The experience of living and working in a faithful, praying community has a positive impact on the spiritual and moral development of many pupils, irrespective of ability or background. The pupil's response to prayer is evident throughout the school in displays, prayer focal points, class floor books and within the pupil voice.
- Prayer is central to the life of the school for all pupils, whatever their faith background, and forms the heart of every school celebration. Throughout school closures and periods when whole community worship was not possible in its usual form leaders were imaginative in ensuring liturgy remained central to life at St Mary's through virtual assemblies and Mass.
- Prayer and Collective Worship has a clear purpose, message and direction and provides the rhythm of the school. It is given priority in terms of planning, evaluating and resourcing; as a result, experiences of prayer and Collective Worship are of high quality. These experiences are valued by the community.

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

- Leaders have expertise in how to plan and facilitate experiences of Collective Worship that are engaging for the whole community and are of a consistently high quality. Thought goes into making opportunities accessible, meaningful and relevant to the whole community.
- School staff actively promote and enable the inclusion of pupils in planning and leading all forms of Collective Worship. The GIFT team, who are the pupil chaplaincy, are a valued group within St Mary's and its members are proud of

the role they play. One commented, 'It is like we are a teacher as we help the younger children with their praying.'

- Leaders place the highest priority on inspirational professional development, incorporating liturgical formation and the planning of collective worship. As a result, relevant staff are highly skilled and well supported to lead Collective Worship.

## SCHOOL DETAILS

Unique reference number	140773
Local authority	Cornwall
<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	3-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on roll	243
Appropriate authority	The board of directors
Chair	Vacancy
Headteacher	Alison McDonald
Telephone number	01208 73218
Website address	<a href="https://www.st-marys-bod.cornwall.sch.uk">https://www.st-marys-bod.cornwall.sch.uk</a>
Email address	head@st-marys-bod.cornwall.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	May 2015

## INFORMATION ABOUT THIS SCHOOL

- The school is an averaged sized primary school, serving the parish of St Petroc and St Mary.
- The percentage of Catholic pupils is currently 16%.
- The percentage of pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds is above the national average.
- The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and or disabilities is above the national average.
- The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic origins is below the national average.
- The percentage of pupils with English as an additional language is below the national average.
- Attainment on entry is below average.
- Any significant changes since the last inspection; new executive head teacher and new deputy.

## **INFORMATION ABOUT THIS INSPECTION**

- The inspection was carried out by two Diocesan Inspectors: Louise Buxton and Helen Armstrong.
- 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 eight Religious Education lessons to evaluate the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. 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 governor, the headteacher, the Religious Education subject leader, the pastoral worker, a group of staff and the parish priest.
- The inspectors attended a whole school Mass and a Collective Worship (led by Year 6 pupils), 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, the school development plan, the Religious Education action plan, teachers' planning and other school related documentation.