

St Mary's Catholic Primary School

URN: 140778

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Bishop of Plymouth

29 April 2026 – 30 April 2026

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 RE

Collective worship (p.7)

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

The school is fully compliant with the general norms for religious education laid down by the Bishops' Conference

The school is fully compliant with any additional requirements of the diocesan bishop

The school has responded to the areas for improvement from the last inspection

2

2

2

2

Yes

Yes

Fully

What the school does well

- There is a strong culture of welcome and inclusivity, with staff describing the school as a 'family'.
- Pupils engage well with religious education (RE) lessons and value being able to show their learning in a variety of different ways.
- Leaders and staff clearly understand the mission of the church and go above and beyond to provide for the school community, particularly those in need.
- Strong relationships lead to pupils feeling happy and secure
- Pupils' response to prayer and liturgy is respectful and enthusiastic, particularly when it comes to singing.

What the school needs to improve

- Monitor and evaluate all forms of prayer and liturgy leading to a strategy to ensure high quality and engaging acts of worship are planned consistently.
- Ensure that tasks are fully reflective of all the outcomes of the Religious Education Directory, to enable all pupils to make good progress including those working at greater depth.
- Ensure strategies are in place to enable pupils to articulate their own progress and know how to improve their own work.

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

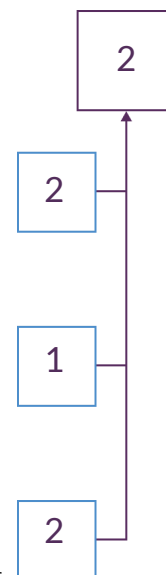
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

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 value their school deeply and take an active role in its mission, showing a strong sense of belonging and pride. They know they are cared for and appreciated, which contributes to their happiness and security. Pupils demonstrate a clear desire to care for the environment and help those in need, engaging with the principles of Catholic Social Teaching even if they cannot yet articulate the terminology. They understand the school virtues, look for opportunities to live them out, and recognise these qualities in one another. Although they appreciate the importance of learning about other faiths to show respect for all, their knowledge in this area remains limited. Behaviour is consistently good both in lessons and around the school, with pupils showing respect from the earliest years, for example, listening attentively to each other. Members of the Growing In Faith Team (GIFT team) are especially proud of their role, seeing themselves as positive role models who support others, help lift spirits, raise money for charities, and visit care homes.

The school clearly lives out the Church's mission to care for the disadvantaged, responding proactively to the needs of families through practical support such as the Shed, which provides uniform, books and food, and the Kaleidoscope Room, which offers a nurturing space for pupils with additional support or sensory needs. Staff embrace the opportunity to contribute to this mission in meaningful ways; for example, one member of staff helps pupils express themselves artistically, and all staff consistently live out the school's commitment to supporting those in need. They serve as strong role models, forming positive relationships with pupils and ensuring everyone is treated with dignity. A genuine sense of community is evident, with staff describing the school as a family that goes out of its way to look after

others and welcomes all, especially the most vulnerable. Pupils are proud of their Cornish identity and value learning Cornish words and prayers. The school environment reflects its Catholic identity through displays on Catholic Social Teaching and the school virtues, as well as prayer spaces throughout the building, including a chapel. Relationships education is thoughtfully planned to meet the needs of the community and communicated well to parents. Pupils appreciate having opportunities to talk about their feelings.

The school is well led by a headteacher who is deeply committed to ensuring the school serves its community, with leaders and governors viewing the development of the school's mission as a central responsibility. The school responds positively to diocesan policies and encourages staff to attend relevant training, including programmes for those new to Catholic education. It is beginning to strengthen its relationship with the local parish, developing links that support its Catholic identity. Leaders prioritise strong relationships with parents, communicating face to face whenever possible and also through the dojo system, with the head highly visible and accessible to all. Staff feel highly valued and well supported by both leaders and governors. The embedding of Catholic Social Teaching within the curriculum is helping pupils make meaningful connections, resulting in thoughtful work on themes such as slavery, racism, environmental concern and refugees. Governors bring valuable experience and are ambitious and conscientious, however, their evaluations are not always strategic enough to provide strong challenge. The school's self-evaluation is not yet clearly focused on Catholic Life and Mission, and although training has been provided, including on Catholic Social Teaching, its impact has not been fully assessed. New staff benefit from bespoke induction and diocesan training, leaving them well prepared to contribute to Catholic life.

Religious education

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 key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

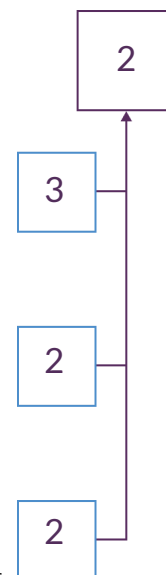
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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



Pupils engage well in their RE lessons, showing enjoyment and generally good behaviour. While some pupils are developing secure knowledge and understanding, this is not consistent across the school, meaning that not all pupils are making good progress. Most pupils recognise that faith leads to action, and a minority can articulate this clearly. Although many pupils lack confidence when speaking about their work, some, including the youngest, are beginning to use subject specific vocabulary appropriately. They are also starting to ask questions and demonstrate curiosity about what they are learning. Pupils are usually able to work independently and maintain concentration, but they do not always take the initiative in directing or extending their own learning. The quality and standard of pupils' work varies considerably, reflecting the inconsistency in their understanding and progress. Additionally, pupils have only a limited grasp of how to improve their learning, and many are unsure about the steps they need to take to deepen their knowledge or enhance the quality of their work.

Teachers value the training they have received from the diocese and feel increasingly confident in their subject knowledge. They are strongly committed to the importance of religious education and ensure that pupils are given time and space for reflection to support their spiritual and moral development. Although planning is thoughtful, it is not always linked closely enough to accurate assessment, which limits its effectiveness. Teachers and teaching assistants use questioning well to check pupils' understanding, and pupils appreciate that, as they say, "if we don't get the answer right the teachers will try to make it simpler," which helps create a supportive learning environment. High levels of motivation are evident in lessons,

driven by the consistent praise and encouragement provided by staff. From the youngest classes onwards, pupils are offered a wide range of creative ways to demonstrate their learning, including drama, art, music, puppets and figures, and they clearly value these opportunities. This variety not only engages pupils but also enables them to explore religious concepts in ways that suit their individual strengths and interests, contributing to a positive and inclusive learning experience.

The RED (Religious Education Directory) is used across the school and diocesan resources are mostly embedded, although some materials are not always used to maximise effectiveness. Religious education enjoys parity with other core subjects in terms of staffing, resourcing, training and assessment, reflecting the school's commitment to its importance. Staff value both the training provided by the diocese and the regular staff meetings, which help to strengthen their confidence and consistency. The RE leads have a clear vision for improvement, and this is beginning to bear fruit as monitoring has identified areas where further support is needed to secure consistently good teaching. Teaching assistants provide invaluable support for pupils with additional needs, and there is evidence of adapted teaching, though this is not yet consistent across all classes. Opportunities to extend Catholic Social Teaching across the wider curriculum are enriching pupils' experiences of RE, complemented by activities such as Cafod workshops, a puppet show on Elijah, and work linked to the Jubilee year. These wider opportunities help pupils make meaningful connections between their learning and the world around them, supporting both engagement and deeper understanding.

Collective worship

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

Collective worship key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

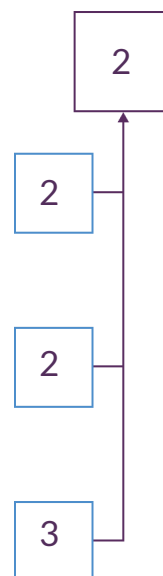
How well pupils participate in and respond to the school's collective worship

Provision

The quality of collective worship provided by the school

Leadership

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



In whole-school Celebration of the Word, pupils' behaviour is respectful; they join in with prayer and clearly enjoy singing, participating with enthusiasm. During class prayers, younger pupils confidently join in with familiar prayers and the Sign of the Cross, while older pupils write their own prayers, and all pupils have opportunities for spontaneous prayer. They are familiar with a range of traditional Catholic prayers, understand the significance of praying the Rosary, and are preparing to honour Mary in May. Pupils have also taken part in the Stations of the Cross during Lent. Pupils are beginning to plan parts of Celebration of the Word and there are regular opportunities for pupils to then deliver and reflect on how it went, offering thoughtful suggestions that lead to improvements. Pupils show care and compassion for others through their spontaneous prayers and the prayer requests they place in the entrance hall. They also use the chapel post box to share their worries with God. The Jubilee year was marked with a whole-school pledge and individual pupil pledges of hope for others, deepening their sense of responsibility and community. The developing use of prayer journals is beginning to give pupils meaningful opportunities to reflect on prayer and liturgy.

Pupils pray regularly throughout the day in class, supported by a weekly plan for Celebration of the Word and class prayer and liturgy, which are rooted in appropriate scripture passages, helping pupils make meaningful connections with their faith. Staff act as role models in prayer and liturgy, joining in with prayers and singing. Where staff lead confidently, pupils are engaged and participate well. There is a common format of planning sheets used across the school, enabling staff to guide pupils in planning prayer and liturgy, however the quality of prayer and liturgy across the school is not consistent. Pupils greatly value the visiting musician

who supports their singing, and some are able to use their technological skills to enhance prayer and liturgical celebrations. Each classroom has a dedicated prayer area with age-appropriate prayers, artefacts and, in some cases, pupils' own work. A room has also been developed into a chapel, providing a beautiful, well-resourced space for pupils to write prayers and take part in related activities; it is cared for by the GIFT team. The school is working hard to welcome parents and parishioners to prayer and liturgy and other services, including a highly successful Lenten event at the church, strengthening the sense of community and shared worship.

Although a prayer and liturgy policy is in place, it does not reflect current practice at St Mary's. Leaders understand the differing levels of pupils' skills in participating in and planning prayer and liturgy, but there is no formal strategy to develop these skills progressively across the school. Governors and leaders recognise that, with the arrival of a new priest last September, there are now opportunities to plan celebrations of the Eucharist and Reconciliation services. Training provided by the diocese and in-house has increased staff confidence in leading class prayer and supporting pupils as they plan and lead their own liturgies. However, there remains inconsistency in the quality and engagement of prayer and liturgy experiences. Leaders have a good understanding of the variety of prayer forms within the Catholic tradition and make effective use of liturgical resources, reflected in weekly Celebration of the Word and events such as Harvest, the Lent service and a day for Mary. They have prioritised prayer and liturgy by ensuring high-quality resources are available in classrooms, the chapel and throughout the school. Governors are involved in evaluating the school's prayer life, and although pupils provide feedback after individual prayer and liturgy, their voice is not yet gathered in a formal way.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Mary's Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	140778
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	9083306
Full postal address of the school	Peverell Road, Penzance, TR18 2AT
School phone number	01736 330005
Headteacher or Head of School	Mrs Nichola Teixeira
Chair of Governors	Mrs Tressa Paczek
School Website	st-marys-catholic.eschools.co.uksite
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	Plymouth Cast
Phase	Primary
Type of school	Academy
Admissions policy	
Age-range of pupils	3 - 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	01 November 2018
Previous denominational inspection grade	Outstanding

The Inspection Team

Dawn Theresa Summers-Breeze

Lead

Ann Fowler

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