



St Mary's Catholic Primary School

URN: 131410

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Bishop of Clifton

09 July 2026 – 10 July 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

1

2

2

Yes

Yes

Fully

What the school does well

- Pupils take pride and share a strong understanding of their school's identity and ethos. They actively reflect the school mission, 'Celebrating Excellence through Our Faith and Learning'. They demonstrate a clear sense of belonging and willingly put their faith into action through their attitudes, choices and care for others.
- The headteacher has established a strong Catholic ethos and clear sense of identity throughout the school community. Principles of Catholic social teaching are now linked across the curriculum and are evident in the everyday life of the school.
- The school's chaplaincy provision is highly effective. Through the exemplary work of the chaplaincy team in addition to the Leaders in Faith initiative, pupils play a key role in supporting the Catholic life of the school. The chaplaincy team leader's clear vision and ambition are a driving force behind this success.
- Teachers are enthusiastic and fully committed to preparing for and delivering the Religious Education Directory. Teaching and non-teaching staff are fully supportive and actively contribute towards the Catholic life and mission of the school.
- The school treasures the well-established links with the local church and parish. Leaders work closely with the parish priest in a shared enthusiasm to further enhance the prayer life of the community.

What the school needs to improve

- Consistently use skilled questioning, for example 'I wonder....' to deepen pupils' understanding and encourage them to ask questions, listen thoughtfully to others, form their own views and reflect meaningfully on their learning.
- Ensure leaders use accurate assessment information and focused monitoring tasks and outcomes to identify priorities, drive improvements and adapt provision so that all pupils make progress.
- In response to the new Prayer and Liturgy Directory, expand St Mary's community of prayer by developing the depth and richness of staff and pupil-led prayer experiences, ensuring increasing engagement and participation across the school community.

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

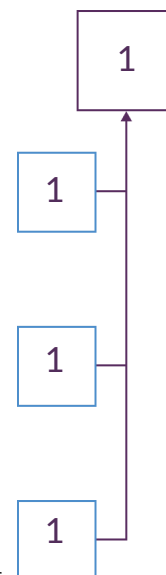
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

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 demonstrate a clear understanding and pride in the identity and ethos of their school. They confidently explain how the mission statement influences daily life, with one pupil stating they feel a duty to “act as disciples” in all that they do. Pupils have a strong sense of belonging, value the diversity of cultures, religions and languages within the school community and recognise that every person is unique and made in the image and likeness of God. They have a clear understanding of Catholic social teaching and can explain how its principles help them to “See – Choose - Act” a statement used by the mini-vinnies at the school. They are committed to putting faith into action and speak confidently about the difference they can make. Guided by their motto, ‘Turning concern into action’, the chaplaincy team leads a range of initiatives, including a sponsored sleepover for local homeless people, Cafod’s Big Lent Walk, and support for the foodbank and local families in need. Pupils have also developed their own action plan to guide this work. The school’s adoption of the diocesan Leaders in Faith initiative has strengthened opportunities for all pupils to live out their faith through service and leadership. As one parent commented, “The school feels joyful and the Catholic values are clearly proclaimed and lived.”

The recent review of the mission statement by staff, pupils and governors has renewed and strengthened the school’s commitment to its mission. This shared process has fostered strong ownership, which will grow further when the revised statement is launched. One staff member commented, “It’s a wonderful part of our school, woven and embedded so seamlessly with our whole school life.” Staff lead by example, modelling the values that underpin the school’s Catholic identity. Pastoral care and the preferential option for the poor

are significant strengths of the school. Leaders and governors make strategic decisions to ensure high-quality support for pupils and families, while the pastoral leader provides exemplary care and makes a tangible difference to the wider community. The school environment reflects its Catholic identity very well. Displays, classrooms and shared spaces, including St. Joseph's chapel area, the Peace Garden and St Christopher's room provide welcoming spaces for prayer, reflection and support. The chaplaincy team actively contributes to this provision through fundraising for Catholic social teaching resources.

The chaplaincy leader provides dynamic and inspiring leadership, resulting in thriving and well-attended chaplaincy activities. Provision for relationships and sex education is in line with diocesan requirements. Leaders and governors ensure that Catholic life and mission remain central to the school's work. The headteacher successfully fosters a strong Catholic ethos, with Catholic social teaching increasingly woven through the curriculum and daily school life. Staff benefit from diocesan training and use Faith in Learning planning to link faith, learning and Catholic principles. Leaders recognise the need to embed this work fully to maximise its impact. Pupils contribute effectively to school evaluation and improvement. The chaplaincy team monitors prayer areas and provides feedback to staff, while pupil voice influence key aspects of school life. The adoption of the diocesan Leaders in Faith initiative has expanded opportunities for pupils to put faith into action, with plans to increase participation further next year. The school values its strong links with the parish and local Church. The parish priest is a regular and valued visitor, supporting pupils' faith development through celebrating Masses and supporting learning in class. Partnerships with parents are also strong, demonstrated in events such as the annual cultural day, where families share their cultural traditions, different faiths and experiences. Through diocesan support and monitoring activities, governors are encouraged and challenged to maintain high aspirations for Catholic life and mission.

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

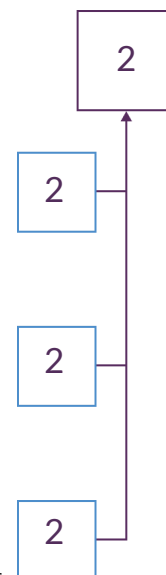
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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 demonstrate positive attitudes to religious education and speak enthusiastically about their learning. They particularly enjoy creative approaches such as drama, hot-seating and artwork, which help them engage with key concepts and themes. From the earliest years, pupils are attentive, well behaved and eager to take part in discussions and partner work. They confidently share their ideas and experiences when given the opportunity. Pupils value learning about scripture and appreciate teachers' support in helping them understand its meaning. They also enjoy learning about other faiths and benefit from encounters with their peers, parents or visitors from different religious and charitable communities, helping them develop respect and understanding. Across the school, pupils demonstrate good recall of prior learning, including scripture stories and subject-specific vocabulary. Effective use of flashback questions supports retention and contributes to strengthening religious literacy. Pupils' books show a clear journey of learning and progress over time, while best case floor books effectively capture enrichment activities, discussion and reflection. Pupils understand how well they are doing through teacher feedback and opportunities to revisit baseline questions at the end of units. They are proud of their work, although some children do not have time to reflect on, evaluate and deepen their understanding of learning in religious education.

Teachers are deeply committed to the successful implementation of the Religious Education Directory and have high expectations for themselves and their pupils. They engage positively with external training, network meetings and in-house professional development, seeking

additional support when needed. In the early years particularly, teachers use a wide range of creative and collaborative approaches, including artefacts, role play and practical activities to introduce new learning and sustain pupils' interest. Stronger practice is evident where teachers consistently use talk partners and discussion to encourage pupils to articulate ideas, express opinions and deepen understanding. Older pupils are given opportunities to explore big questions, make choices in their learning and develop independence. Effective questioning is evident in many classes, although there are occasions when questions and tasks could be more open-ended to enable all pupils to explore and justify their own viewpoints. Similarly, while examples of effective feedback, celebration of achievement and the addressing of misconceptions are evident, this practice is not yet fully consistent across all classes. Assessment information is beginning to inform adaptation and support. Challenge and targeted next steps are not in place across the school to ensure all pupils, particularly the most able, make the best possible progress.

Leaders demonstrate a commitment to the successful implementation of the Religious Education Directory, ensuring religious education has parity with other core subjects. The school has established a culture of continuous professional development, accessing regular high-quality training through the diocese and Cardinal Newman Trust, complemented by termly in-house support to deepen staff subject knowledge and theological understanding. The recently appointed subject leader is well supported by the headteacher and has introduced several initiatives to promote consistency and communicate expectations to staff. These include personalised knowledge organisers, class feedback sheets and clear non-negotiable expectations. These developments are helping staff to develop a shared understanding of effective practice. Leaders continue to monitor and evaluate their impact. The headteacher has produced a comprehensive handbook which provides clear guidance and supports the induction of staff new to teaching or working within a Catholic school. This contributes to a strong and coherent approach to curriculum delivery. Leaders have established a clear programme of monitoring activities, including lesson observations, planning scrutiny and book reviews. Governors engage in monitoring alongside leaders and participate in diocesan training. Leaders do not always use monitoring and assessment outcomes to identify priorities and further strengthen provision and outcomes in religious education.

Collective worship

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

Collective worship key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

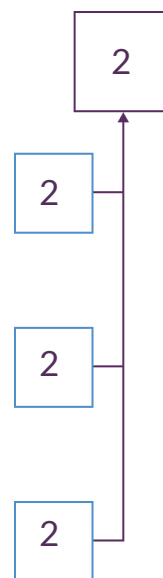
How well pupils participate in and respond to the school's collective worship

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



Pupils participate enthusiastically in a range of prayer and liturgical experiences, demonstrating positive attitudes towards worship. Behaviour is very good, with pupils showing respect, reverence and engagement. They value opportunities to gather together as a faith community and sing with passion and enthusiasm. Pupils have a secure understanding of the Church's liturgical year and confidently recognise the colours and symbols associated with different seasons. They engage thoughtfully in daily prayer and in a variety of prayer experiences linked to the liturgical calendar, including the rosary, stations of the cross and Jubilee Pilgrimage activities. From the earliest years, pupils confidently use liturgical responses, gestures and song, demonstrating familiarity with some prayer and worship traditions. Creative approaches, such as singing 'Mission: Go Out and Be the Change', further enhance their participation. Pupils across the school use a clear structure and diocesan resources to plan and lead class Celebration of the Word. They are proud of their contributions and explain that planning and leading worship helps them to feel closer to God. This reflects the positive influence on their spiritual development and on the life of the school. Pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to use spontaneous and creative forms of prayer.

Prayer and liturgy is central to the life of the school and shapes the daily experience of pupils and staff. A well-established weekly pattern includes Gospel based worship by the headteacher, pupil-led Celebration of the Word, staff-led values worship, hymn practice and a celebration assembly also attended by parents. The school's annual prayer offer is well planned, marking traditional feast days and holy days with Mass or liturgy, whilst honouring some key traditions such as rosary, the Marian Procession, Lent and Easter Stations, and a

Year 6 retreat. Pupils are familiar with some traditional Catholic prayers, though their access to the wider richness of prayer forms remains limited. The school makes effective use of its prayer spaces to support worship and reflection. In particular, St Joseph's Chapel is a valued resource, regularly used by pupils leading class Celebrations of the Word. Families and parishioners are welcomed to school celebrations and classes regularly attend the weekly parish Mass held in the chapel, strengthening links between home, school and parish. Staff demonstrate a clear commitment to prayer and worship; supporting pupils in planning and leading liturgy. Staff do not always help pupils to understand what prayer is or enable them to learn different ways to pray, including silent meditation.

Leaders and governors recognise the importance of prayer and worship and have adopted the Cardinal Newman Trust policy to support a consistent approach. Holy days of obligation, class feast days and key points in the Church's year are marked through Mass and other liturgical celebrations. Lent and Advent services, including the Sacrament of Reconciliation, are well established and the priest is keen to engage with all participants. The headteacher and chaplaincy team leader demonstrate secure knowledge of the liturgical year and ensure that worship is meaningful and accessible. Strong links between the school and parish enrich the prayer life of the community. Parishioners are welcomed to school events, and the school actively supports pupils preparing for First Holy Communion. Leaders prioritise training and formation through diocesan opportunities and ongoing in-house support. The recently introduced Cardinal Newman Trust prayer progression provides a useful framework for developing pupils' prayer experiences. The school invests in quality resources for prayer and worship, helping to create meaningful and engaging experiences for pupils. A programme of monitoring is in place to evaluate prayer and worship. Monitoring activities are not sharply focused, and the findings do not inform improvements.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Mary's Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	131410
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	8033300
Full postal address of the school	Webbs Wood Road, Bradley Stoke, Bristol, BS32 8EJ
School phone number	01454 866390
Headteacher or Head of School	Ms Charlotte Dunt
Chair of Governors	Mr Ray Egbufoama
School Website	www.stmarysbradleystoke.org.uk
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Phase	Primary
Type of school	Voluntary Aided School
Admissions policy	Non Selective
Age-range of pupils	4 - 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	23 January 2019
Previous denominational inspection grade	Good

The Inspection Team

Rita McLoughlin

Lead

David Purcell

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