

Catholic Schools Inspectorate inspection report for St Amand's Catholic Primary School

URN: 123224

Carried out on behalf of the Right Rev. Philip Egan, Bishop of Portsmouth on:

Date: 18 - 19 May 2023

Overall effectiveness

The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school.....

1

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.....

1

Religious education (p.5)

The quality of curriculum religious education.....

1

Collective worship (p.7)

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

1

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

Fully

Summary of key findings

What the school does well

- St Amand's has an outstanding Catholic identity. A strong Catholic witness permeates the entire school, resulting in an evangelical ethos which inspires the whole community.
- Religious education teaching is consistently of a very good standard and always prioritised. Consequently pupils have a very secure understanding of the content of the religious education curriculum.
- The prayer life of the school is inspirational. Regular worship of a very high quality means that the entire community embraces a profound life of prayer.
- Catholic leadership of the school is excellent; the personal faith of the headteacher and other key leaders in the community, including governors, act as a powerful influence on the school's direction and ethos.

This Catholic Schools Inspectorate inspection was carried out under canons 804 & 806 of the code of canon law. For maintained schools and academies in England it fulfils the statutory requirements of s.48 of the Education Act 2005. For maintained schools and academies in Wales it fulfils the statutory requirements of s.50 of the Education Act 2005.

- The school environment is unmistakably Catholic. Great care is taken to provide a variety of attractive displays and resources that explicitly define the school's character and ethos.

What the school needs to improve:

- To sustain and build upon the theological knowledge of teachers as the school transitions to the new Religious Education Directory.
- Extend the opportunities for more pupils to engage in leading and evaluating prayer across the school.

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:.....

1

Pupil outcomes

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

1

Provision

The quality of provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school

1

Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school

1

Pupils across the school clearly understand what it means to be a member of a Catholic community and fully embrace the school's mission statement. Their behaviour towards each other and other members of the community demonstrates their understanding that we are all made equal before God and loved by Him. Pupils understand that the school follows the teachings of Jesus and gladly embrace this. The school's work on Catholic Social Teaching means that pupils are fluent in being able to talk about this and the impact it should have in the world. They have also taken a leading role in choosing which charities to support, such as Cafod and Mary's Meals. Pupils greatly enjoy the visits by the local parish priest who helps them to understand their faith further. They also enjoy assisting him during the celebration of the Mass by enthusiastically carrying out a variety of tasks with a high degree of competence.

For a school which is relatively small in size, St Amand's provides a very broad range of opportunities for pupils and adults to understand the Catholic ethos and mission. The mission statement is known by all and fully lived out by each person, as evident in the way community members behave towards each other and visitors. There is an extremely strong sense of belonging within the school with all being fully valued and welcomed. This is attractive in nature and has been a key factor in the reason for many people in the school community choosing to become Catholic over the last few years. School leaders, including governors, are excellent role models and profoundly interested in the well-being of all members of the school community. They provide very strong pastoral support. The school environment strongly reflects the Catholic identity of the community and great care is taken over displays and areas such as the peace garden. The school is blessed to be close to the local Catholic parish church

and the whole school go to Mass every Thursday. The parish priest is very involved in school life and regularly visits pupils and staff to offer his support in a variety of ways. The school also supports the parish by preparing pupils for first Holy Communion. The school ensures that pupils have a firm understanding of relationships and health education through its effective delivery of the Life to the Full programme.

Leaders live out their Catholic faith with obvious passion and enthusiasm and they have a commendable commitment to ensuring that the school's Catholic mission is prioritised. They ensure that parents are fully supported and included in the life of the school and this is clear from the parental surveys, which were without exception, highly appreciative of the school. One summed up the general response by stating; *"St Amand's has played a hugely positive part in not only my son starting a spiritual Catholic journey, but also for me as a parent. It is now a big part of our lives and I'm very grateful for the support of the teachers and Fr Andrew"*. Leaders and governors have ensured that Catholic Social Teaching is at the heart of the life of the school and demonstrate this through the decisions they make and the support they give to both members of the community and various good causes outside of it. Staff are highly appreciative of the support and help they are given by leaders and gave inspectors numerous examples of how they have been helped in the past. Governors support the head teacher in a very effective manner to self- evaluate provision across the school, by regularly visiting and seeing for themselves how the school operates. Professional development and spiritual development are given high priority and governors ensure that staff are given opportunities to grow both in professional expertise and spiritual depth.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade:.....

1

Pupil outcomes

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education.....

1

Provision

The quality of teaching, learning, and assessment in religious education.....

1

Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor, and evaluate the provision for religious education.....

1

Across the school, pupils are able to confidently and articulately demonstrate their understanding of the religious education curriculum. Pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 learn about Bible stories and grow in familiarity with the teachings of Jesus. Those in Key Stage 2 build upon this knowledge by making links between various teachings within scripture; with pupils in upper Key Stage 2 deepening their learning by explaining what such teachings mean for us in our daily lives. As a result, over time their progress is consistently good and previous learning is effectively built upon. Pupils are able to reflect upon lessons in a variety of ways; theological and spiritual, as well as factual. Within religious education lessons, pupils demonstrate excellent attitudes towards learning and consistently apply themselves to the tasks given. These are various in nature with role-play, creative activities and extended written work, all used to enable the pupils to express their learning. Pupils of all ages, work with independence and are able to concentrate effectively and apply themselves as expected. The pupils' RE books demonstrate that the subject is given prominence in the school through the sheer quantity of work produced. This is of a high standard and demonstrates the impressive depth of thinking required of the pupils. It is also clear that pupils greatly enjoy religious education and in conversations with them, they were highly enthusiastic about the subject. As a result of the religious education provision throughout the school, attainment when compared with other core subjects, is above average.

Within religious education lessons, teachers demonstrate secure subject knowledge, which has been supported effectively by the parish priest. They have high expectations of pupils and plan lessons which extend them so that pupils' overall knowledge is at a deep level. In the best lessons, teachers skilfully use questioning to challenge pupils to understand their thinking and articulate what they are learning. Feedback is used well so that pupils know how they are doing in the lessons and what teachers expect of them in terms of next steps. Time is given within religious education lessons for pupils to reflect on the spiritual journey of faith they are undertaking, so their spiritual development aligns with their academic understanding of Christian teachings and principles. Religious education lessons are well planned and organised and teachers use a very good variety of resources to reinforce learning. These are adapted effectively for pupils with particular needs such as those with SEND, so all pupils are given the opportunity to succeed.

The school faithfully follows the recommended religious education curriculum within the Catholic Diocese of Portsmouth, God Matters. Leaders and governors ensure that religious education is given appropriate time across the curriculum, which is evidenced through the high quality of work in pupils' books. They also ensure the subject is given a prominent status within the school by providing resources which are comparable to other core subjects. Leaders ensure staff receive a very good range of continual professional development opportunities to support them in their teaching of religious education. The curriculum is designed to be sequential, so that pupils can build upon prior learning and increasingly grow in understanding. A broad range of enrichment activities support the religious education curriculum and further help to develop pupils' enjoyment and understanding of the subject. Governors effectively support the headteacher to evaluate standards in religious education through the Parents and Community Committee which meets regularly to discuss updates. The headteacher has welcomed other headteachers and RE managers into the school to help her moderate the school's own judgements about religious education provision and outcomes.

Collective worship

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

Collective worship key judgement grade:.....

1

Pupil outcomes

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

1

Provision

The quality of collective worship provided by the school

1

Leadership

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

1

Pupils enjoy a very wide range of liturgies and opportunities for prayer which are of an excellent quality. Pupils participate with a high degree of reverence and respect, strongly demonstrating their understanding of the significance of each occasion. Some pupils have been chosen to undertake prayer leader roles and are very involved at planning and delivering prayer for their peers and other community members. This is evaluated by other pupils and helps the prayer leaders to determine what works effectively and how they might make prayer and liturgy more successful. The prayers led by pupils are of a very good quality, relative to their age, and demonstrate the seriousness, confidence and enthusiasm with which the prayer leaders undertake their duties. The prayer leaders' work is having a very positive impact on other pupils across the school, but this opportunity has not been developed so that more pupils are able to take on such roles.

The quality of collective worship and overall prayer in Saint Amand's is extremely strong; prayer and liturgy are essential to life at the school and integral to the way the in which the school operates. There is a richness and breadth to the prayer life of the school community with contemporary as well as traditional forms of prayer used. The whole school community celebrates Mass on a weekly basis and across the year participates in forms of prayer appropriate to the season, such as the rosary in May and October, Stations of the Cross during Lent and the opportunity for Reconciliation, for those eligible, during Advent and Lent. Other forms of prayer such as Adoration, class led liturgies and prayer through song also complement these. Staff are highly committed to the prayer life of the community and are very proficient in planning well-facilitated collective worship. They use creative methods to inspire participants during prayer and provide a wealth of different experiences. Careful use

is made of the school environment with the peace garden being used, as well as the attractive school grounds and the beautiful parish church which is a short walk away from the school buildings. Families and members of the school community are very much welcomed into the prayer life of the school, and as such respond with appreciation and affection. Indeed, the school has clearly had a profound impact on the spiritual journey of many members of the community.

Leaders, including governors, have ensured that the school's policy on prayer has been planned so that it is relevant and meaningful. They understand how pupils grow in faith and are adept at planning, strong and effective liturgy, which is suited to the age and capacity of the pupils. As a result, pupils benefit greatly from the spiritual development opportunities that they are given. Staff are effectively supported in their own prayer life and in their ability to plan and deliver meaningful prayer through, for example, the recent staff retreat. They are given time and space to reflect upon their own practice in order to develop further and leaders often provide feedback to them after worship. Leaders prioritise the provision for prayer and liturgy when planning and allocating resources. Consequently, the consistency and quality of prayer and liturgy is exemplary.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Amand's Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	123224
Full postal address of the school	St Mary's Road, East Hendred, Wantage, OX12 8LF
School phone number	01235 833342
Name of head teacher or principal	Mrs Helen Ellery
Chair of governing board	Mrs Kath Oldman
School Website	https://www.st-amands.oxon.sch.uk/
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	n/a
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age-range of pupils	4-11
Trustees	East Hendred Consolidated Catholic Charities Trust
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	28 th March 2017
Previous denominational inspection grade	Good

The inspection team

Mr Jamie Carroll

Lead inspector

Mrs Roxy Ashworth

Team inspector

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