

# St Mark's Catholic Primary School

URN: 124786

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Bishop of East Anglia

08–09 November 2023

## 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

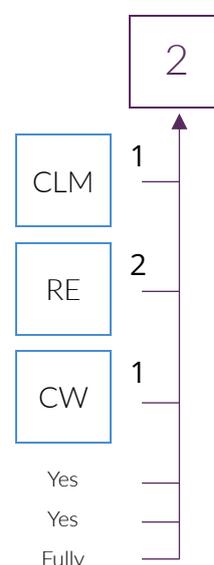
#### Collective worship (p.7)

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



## What the school does well

- Leadership is extremely strong. Leaders show faithful witness to the Church's mission in this school and have made rapid improvements so that Catholic life and mission and collective worship are now excellent.
- There is a strong relationship between the school and the local parish that enhances the Catholic life and mission of the school.
- The pupil chaplaincy team are inspirational and committed to leading future developments in prayer and liturgy.
- Pupils are respectful, kind, and courteous to each other and are enthusiastic in participating in all aspects of the school's Catholic life and mission.

- Staff are positive role models and provide the highest standard of care pastorally and spiritually.

## What the school needs to improve

- To broaden pupils understanding of Catholic social teaching and, to help pupils appreciate the reasons for their actions.
- To improve teachers' subject knowledge in religious education so that all pupils are challenged appropriately.
- To ensure marking and feedback in religious education is consistent so that pupils know how to improve and assessment data is accurate.

## 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

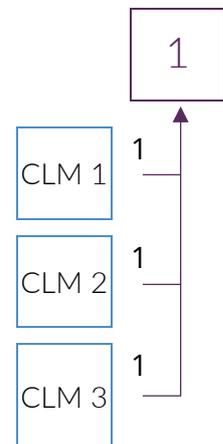
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

#### 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



All pupils understand that they are created in the image of God and can talk confidently about the school's mission and can relate it to their daily lives by being inclusive and welcoming to all. The school's pupil chaplaincy team plays a significant role within the school and has a deep understanding of the example of Jesus. They are inspirational in their leadership. As one of them said, 'We spread kindness to everyone like Jesus did and follow in his footsteps.' Pupils clearly understand the commandment of Jesus to 'Love your neighbour' and to them it is more than just words but is a consequence of their faith. Pupils are incredibly happy at school and feel safe and confident. They are truly encouraged to live out the mission of the school, which is to, 'With Jesus, live life to the full.' They do this by participating fully in all aspects of the Catholic life of the school. Behaviour of pupils is exemplary, and they show profound respect towards their teachers and each other. The older pupils support the younger pupils at lunchtime and are excellent role models for the school. Pupils embrace the variety of Catholic social teaching activities that are available to them and are always seeking opportunities to be effective in the life of others both locally and nationally. However, not all pupils understand fully why they participate in these actions.

The inspiring school mission is embraced by all members of the school community and is seen in the way staff care for pupils. This strong commitment is summed up by a member of staff who said 'Our mission is to produce happy and well-rounded children of faith and non, in order that they can serve their community and the world.' This demonstrates the commitment of staff to the mission of the school and their strong pastoral care which they have for all children. Parents support the school in its mission and say they have seen the relationship between the school and the local parish flourish. The school celebrates the rich traditions of the Catholic church

through its environment and displays and by naming each year group after an important Catholic person from the past. The school also ensures that all cultures are celebrated as seen in the success of the recent international evening. The pupil chaplaincy team has received formation training from the local parish priest and the diocesan Ignite team. The school has a comprehensive diocesan – approved relationships, sex, and health education policy and parents have been consulted on this programme and kept informed of any developments.

The new leadership team have a strong vision for the Catholic life and mission of the school and governors have strong ambitions of making the school a beacon of Catholic education. They see this as a central part of their work and have the expertise and ability to take a lead in this. Staff attend all diocesan training and engage with other Catholic schools to enhance their Catholic life and mission. More pupils are now attending Sunday Mass because of rejuvenated parish links, and the parish priest is a frequent and welcomed visitor to the school. A parent commented that 'The links between the school and parish supports me in bringing my child up as a Catholic'. The school has a broad and varied programme of charities that they support, which is underpinned by leaders' commitment to involve every child in acts of service. Leaders have introduced a new 'St Mark's curriculum journey' which emphasises the Gospel values and aims to provide pupils with the tools to develop in life supported by a strong Catholic identity. Leaders and governors' ongoing evaluation of the school's Catholic life and mission is accurate and effective.

## Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

### Religious education key judgement grade

#### Pupil outcomes

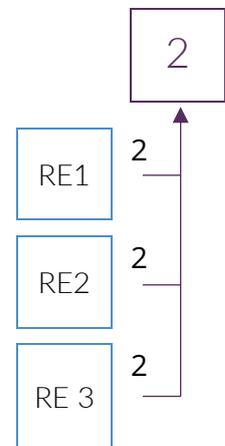
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

#### 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



Pupils enjoy religious education lessons and can effectively remember, recall, and apply the knowledge and the skills taught in lessons. Behaviour of pupils in lessons is good and most pupils respond well to the questions given by their teachers. Pupils are engaged and enthusiastic, particularly when participating in activities which involve drama, art, and discussion. Pupils deepen their knowledge by asking meaningful questions, and consequently, can talk at length confidently about what they have learnt. Pupils' work is usually presented neatly, and most pupils have a broad and wide vocabulary of religious words. They are proud of their work, and they make the best progress in lessons where the teaching is precisely matched to their needs, and a range of interesting approaches are used to help them know and remember more. Most pupils achieve in line with other core subjects. However, assessment of religious education must be more accurate so that pupils know how to improve

There is some exemplary teaching of religious education and in the best lessons teachers challenge pupils using broad and varied questioning. All teachers plan engaging and interesting lessons, and most teachers and teaching assistants have good subject knowledge. However, not all teachers provide enough challenge. Teachers give positive verbal feedback well however, written comments on pupils' work are not consistent so pupils do not know how to improve. There is a good use of adult support in classrooms; they have good subject knowledge and move learning forward through effective questioning.

The religious education coordinator has a clear vision for the subject and how they intend to implement the new *Religious Education Directory*. Leaders know the strengths and areas for development in religious education and ensure pupils receive enough time to learn the curriculum well. Adequate time and money are provided for religious education including teacher development. Leaders attend appropriate diocesan training to keep up to date with new

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initiatives in religious education. Floor books demonstrate the variety of enrichment activities used to support the teaching of religious education, and there is evidence in these books of teaching other faiths in a coherent way. The leadership team are aware that to improve the accuracy of assessment for religious education, all religious education books need to be consistently marked and feedback from teachers must be regular and accurate. Thereby, leaders and teachers will be more confident with their assessment data.

## 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

CW1

1

#### Provision

The quality of collective worship provided by the school

CW2

1

#### Leadership

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

CW3

1

1

Pupils experience a rich, fulfilling, and spiritual prayer life. The routine of praying three times a day is well embedded, welcomed by pupils and gives them a sense of belonging. A Year 6 pupil said, 'Praying in the morning helps me to start my day in a calm and prayerful way so I do well in my lessons'. Pupils make strong links between prayers and the wider community because they experience a wide variety of prayer and liturgy opportunities. At lunchtime, the whole school gathers in a calm and respectful manner to offer a thanksgiving prayer before sitting together in family groups to eat. Pupils' leadership and planning of prayer and liturgy is outstanding and inspirational for younger pupils. It helps pupils to deepen their faith. A member of the pupil chaplaincy team said, 'Being a member of the chaplaincy team helps me to build a relationship with God'. The use of prayer stations allows younger pupils to reflect on world issues like peace.

Pupils value and recognise prayer as a fundamental part of their day. They appreciate and enjoy the creative range of prayer and liturgy that is skilfully provided by staff to an exceedingly high standard. Staff are fully committed to the prayer life of the school, play an active part, and are excellent role models in leading and supporting prayer using pupils' unique talents and skills effectively. The many opportunities to pray combine to embed prayer and liturgy deeply into the daily life of the school, with a profound impact on the entire community. Pupils are taught from an early age in school to use British Sign Language when they pray, so by Key Stage 2 they are enthusiastic experts. This immensely powerful and inclusive tool shows that prayer is for everyone and involves mind, body, and heart. Prayer and liturgy is of an exceedingly high standard and all pupils' talents, skills and unique contributions are valued.

The school calendar is centred around the liturgical year and there are regular opportunities to celebrate the Eucharist. The school has an excellent prayer and liturgy policy which has an effective annual plan of provision. The impact of this policy is that prayer and liturgy are very

well organised and embedded across the school. Pupils are given a leading role in planning and evaluating prayer and liturgy. The local parish priest celebrates class Masses in school and also at the parish church. Parents are invited to attend Mass and other liturgies and are appreciative of this. The Sacrament of Reconciliation is celebrated twice a year and the last occasion this Sacrament took place in school three priests attended. Leaders monitor and evaluate prayer and liturgy very closely and gather the views of parents, pupils, and staff to review their practice. It is obvious this school is a happy and prayerful community and is a true embodiment of a Catholic community.

## Information about the school

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|--|---|
| Full name of school                            | St Mark's Catholic Primary School   |
| School unique reference number (URN)           | 124786  |
| School DfE Number (LAESTAB)                    | 9353342   |
| Full postal address of the school              | St Mark's Catholic Primary School, Stone Lodge Lane<br>West, Ipswich, IP2 9HN                   |
| School phone number                            | 01473601748   |
| Headteacher                                    | Michal Keller   |
| Chair of Governors                             | Neil Vidot  |
| School Website                                 | <a href="http://www.stmarkscatholicprimary.co.uk/">http://www.stmarkscatholicprimary.co.uk/</a> |
| Trusteeship                                    | Diocesan  |
| Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable) | N/A   |
| Phase  | Primary   |
| Type of school                                 | Voluntary Aided School  |
| Admissions policy                              | Non-selective   |
| Age-range of pupils                            | 5-11  |
| Gender of pupils                               | Mixed   |
| Date of last denominational inspection         | 23 <sup>rd</sup> September 2015   |

## The inspection team

Mr Tom Reilly Lead Inspector, Mrs Helen Armstrong 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 |