



St Mary's Catholic Primary Voluntary Academy

URN: 138015

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Bishop of Nottingham

26–27 November 2025

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

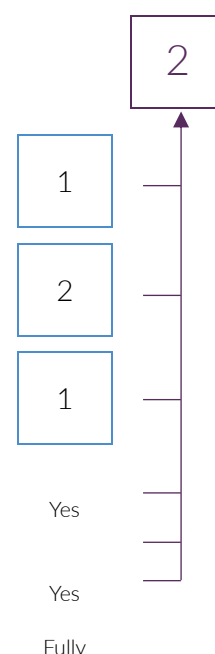
Collective worship (p.7)

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

The school is fully compliant with the 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



Compliance statement

- The school ensures that a minimum of 10% of the timetable is allocated to the teaching of religious education and follows a programme of study aligned with the requirements of the Bishops' Conference.
- The school is fully compliant with the requirements from the diocesan bishop.
- The school has fully responded to the areas of development set out in the previous inspection report.

What the school does well

- There is a clear sense of mission throughout St Mary's. Everyone in the school community articulates clearly how they strive to live out, through their actions, the Catholic virtues of the school.
- The physical environment at St Mary's is vibrant, celebrating and promoting the Catholic faith and providing pupils with a range of focal areas to enhance their own sense of Catholic life and mission.
- Pupil leadership is a strength of the school. Pupils are overwhelmingly enthusiastic to be involved in shaping the life of the school and are active participants in the wide variety of opportunities provided.
- There is a strong focus on language and vocabulary development in religious education lessons. As a result, pupils are religiously literate and communicate their knowledge of scripture succinctly.
- Well planned and rigorous systems for monitoring and evaluation are in place, leading to improvements over time in Catholic life and mission, religious education and collective worship.

What the school needs to improve

- Ensure that the Catholic curriculum is visible in work beyond religious education.
- In religious education, ensure that tasks are carefully planned to match intended learning outcomes, providing appropriate challenge and levels of independence, in all year groups.
- Include opportunities for creativity, meditation and spontaneous prayer during prayer and liturgy.

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

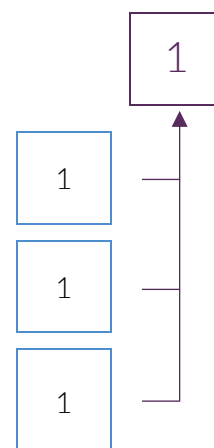
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

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 can clearly articulate the Catholic identity of St Mary's and bring this to life through their actions. They actively participate in fundraising activities for charities, such as coffee mornings for Macmillan Cancer Support and collecting food for the harvest appeal, which is donated to Oikos-Brigg Foodbank. Pupils express how they feel valued and strive to live out the mission of the Church. They say that they want to help countries which are less developed, making the world a better place because 'that is what Jesus would want us to do'. Pupils discuss how they live out the school virtues of love, justice, courage, thankfulness, faith and resilience while being 'disciples of Jesus and treating others how we want to be treated'. They understand principles of Catholic social teaching, and link stewardship to recycling, picking up litter and saving energy. Pupils demonstrate respect for other faiths and celebrate diversity: for example, bringing and sharing their own religious artefacts. Pupils enthusiastically embrace a wide range of leadership opportunities, as pupil chaplains, 'mini-vinnies' and 'wellbeing ambassadors', supporting the mental health of others.

The school's mission statement, 'We joyfully live, love and learn in the footsteps of Jesus', is central to school life, and all stakeholders live this out with purpose. Clear and regular links to scripture, through the 'word of the week' and school mission prayer, embed this further. Strong relationships are at the heart of the school, demonstrated by the warm way in which staff greet families each morning. Families feel well supported by school: 'My child is absolutely happy at school. Support given is not just for my child but also to me in times of struggle'. Staff arranged a mother and toddler session in response to a gap in the local community offer, and work with external charities help to provide resources for the most vulnerable, such as winter coats.

Pastoral care is prioritised, with staff taking on roles such as mental health lead and that of an emotional literacy support assistant (ELSA), as well as working with the charity 'With Me in Mind' to develop a mentally healthy school. The school environment is filled with vibrant displays, such as a poignant display of Mary in the entrance area. Classes create artwork linked to virtues and displays celebrate the liturgical year. Chaplaincy provision is central to the life of the school. The delivery of relationships, sex and health education follows the Ten:Ten scheme and is firmly rooted in Church teaching.

Leaders and governors are ambitious and have a clear vision for pupils to live out the mission of the school. The bishop's vision for the diocese is fully embraced through promotion of the themes of 'encounter' and 'discipleship'. Governors are regular visitors to school and regularly join liturgical celebrations. Monitoring activities with leaders, governors and the Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Multi-Academy Trust help to shape and inform the strategic direction of the school, allowing appropriate support and challenge. Leaders and governors work well with the parish priest to strengthen links and ensure that the parish is integral to the life of the school, for example through shared Masses. The impact of the Catholic curriculum is not always explicitly considered across other subject areas in school. Leaders, governors and pupils all contribute towards evaluation in a planned and systematic approach. Leaders prioritise the development of staff and plan a variety of professional development to strengthen staff skill which includes attending training through the diocese. This is appreciated by staff, who typically say, 'I feel well supported in my teaching of religious education. Senior leaders provide guidance and professional development opportunities to help me develop further'.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

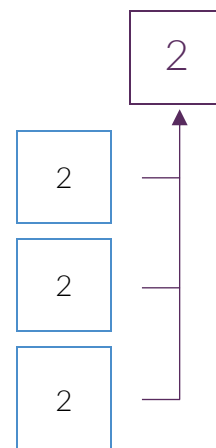
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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 from an early age have secure knowledge around key religious concepts. Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is strong, and pupils are eager to share their ideas about Jesus: 'He is a king who was born in a stable'. There is a clear focus on religious language and vocabulary development across the school, and this ensures high levels of religious literacy for pupils. Pupils with special educational needs are supported effectively with appropriate adaptations, enabling pupils to be successful. Pupils' work is neatly presented and shows a sense of pride. Opportunities for creativity include extended writing, practical activities and exploration of scripture and religious artwork which deepens pupil understanding and curiosity. Routines for behaviour for learning are consistently well embedded, resulting in high levels of engagement from the majority of pupils. Pupils show enjoyment in religious education and participate enthusiastically as demonstrated through their eagerness to answer questions. Where discussions are too long, engagement from pupils in lessons can decrease. Pupils confidently use subject specific vocabulary to explain their thoughts and relate this to their own deep sense of faith, making links with scripture and their own lives. Pupil attainment is in line with that of other core subjects.

Teachers have deep religious knowledge which enables them to confidently deliver the curriculum and make links to other areas of Catholic life. They demonstrate high expectations of pupils in lessons, and this motivates pupils to respond. Sometimes planning does not always build on pupils' knowledge from previous year groups, and adaptations do not always provide sufficient challenge. Teachers provide resources which act as prompts for pupils, such as small world nativity resources in the Early Years Foundation Stage and 'sentence stems' and word-

banks in Key Stage 2. Skilful questioning, which is carefully considered, is used to probe deeper into pupil understanding. A wide range of strategies are used to celebrate learning including religious education certificates in celebration assemblies. Teachers provide moments for spiritual reflection through 'wonder moments' and post-unit assessments, where pupils reflect on the impact of learning on their own lives. Consistent use of the 'head, heart and cloud', and 'red pen' systems, develop themes further for reflection, and pupils respond to these regularly. Tasks in Key Stage 1 are planned and delivered with appropriate scaffolds and clear explanations which enables pupils to work with high levels of independence. On occasion, tasks in Key Stage 2 do not match intended learning outcomes which limits pupils' outcomes and level of independence within lessons.

Religious education is given full parity with other core subjects in terms of professional development and resourcing. The headteacher, who is also the religious education leader, is passionate in his role to raise standards and has worked closely with the Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Multi-Academy Trust and the diocese to implement consistent systems. Leaders and governors implement a robust approach to monitoring and evaluating religious education, leading to identification of areas for development and concise actions to drive forward improvement. A wide variety of professional development opportunities are accessed through the diocese, in-house staff training, and liaison with local schools for moderation. Leaders follow the 'Come and See' curriculum, and there are planned opportunities to revisit key learning concepts. Sometimes, progress is limited as assessment is not consistently sharp enough. Leaders plan enrichment activities such as 'Open the book' assemblies and arrange visits from Cafod speakers, to further enhance the religious education curriculum.

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

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

1

Pupils benefit from a wide range of prayer and liturgy experiences and demonstrate high levels of engagement and participation. Pupils all respond appropriately to the gospel during celebrations of the word and eagerly make spiritually reflective contributions. Pupils experience different ways of praying to mark important parts of the liturgical year, including the rosary during the month of October and Mass to celebrate the birthday of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Pupil-led celebrations of the word follow a consistent, embedded structure, including the use of well linked scripture and appropriate artefacts placed on prayer tables, such as a globe linking to the theme of 'kingdom'. Provision for wider types of prayer and spontaneous prayer is less developed. Pupils enthusiastically undertake liturgical ministry confidently, and careful planning ensures prayer and liturgy is well organised. The quality of pupil evaluation is exceptional, with pupils using 'evaluation stations' leading to precise and effective feedback which leads to improvement. Pupils can discuss the mission from celebrations of the word and know how they can live this out. In whole school gatherings, pupils share ideas around becoming 'kingdom-building kids' by helping each other, showing respect and being kind.

Prayer is central to daily life at St Mary's, and the annual plan of provision clearly outlines a variety of occasions for each liturgical season. These plans carefully link to resources which enhance the school environment and reflect Catholic tradition. Routines are well embedded for daily prayer patterns, and all pupils know the school mission prayer. Scripture is carefully considered and links to the 'ordo' and 'word of the week'. For example, the chaplaincy team plan for prayer choosing scripture from the gospel of Matthew: 'But I say to you, love your enemies', which links to the theme of 'peace'. Staff are skilled in helping pupils plan times of prayer, which is reflected in high-quality celebrations of the word. However, opportunities are not always taken to enhance prayer and liturgy more creatively by incorporating different art forms. The school

has created a variety of prayer spaces which are used well, including a dedicated chapel and sacred spaces in classrooms. Staff and the school community have raised money for the development of a remembrance prayer garden in memory of a much-missed, deceased pupil. Parents and parishioners are invited to attend celebrations of the word, strengthening the home-school partnership. Parents comment that, 'St Mary's is a wonderful school - I especially love the Masses, assemblies and events we get invited to'.

Prayer and liturgy policies are well constructed. The use of the progression document for prayer and liturgy guides practice for each year group, so pupils develop high levels of independence. Leaders and governors, alongside the parish priest, work together on the annual plan of provision which incorporates a wide range of liturgical events, such as feast days and Advent carol services. The parish priest visits school to offer the Sacrament of Reconciliation for pupils. Opportunities for professional development sessions are prioritised by leaders, and staff attend sessions with the diocese, the Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Multi-Academy Trust, and within school. These opportunities upskill staff to enable them to facilitate more effective and impactful prayer and liturgy. Staff new to the school benefit from a well-structured induction, which ensures a shared understanding of the importance of prayer and liturgy. Resources for prayer and liturgy have been prioritised to ensure that they are widely available and are of high quality. Systematic and rigorous monitoring timetables are in place to evaluate provision, and these inform future actions and plans effectively.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Mary's Catholic Primary Voluntary Academy
School unique reference number (URN)	138015
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	8133323
Full postal address of the school	Grammar School Road, Brigg, Lincolnshire, DN20 8BB
School phone number	01652 653355
Executive headteacher	Click or tap here to enter text.
Headteacher	James Leech
Chair of local governing body	Margaret Eames
School Website	https://www.stmaryscatholicacademybrigg.org.uk
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	Our Lady Of Lourdes Catholic Multi-Academy Trust
Phase	Primary
Type of school	Academy
Admissions policy	Non-selective
Age-range of pupils	4-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	18 June 2018
Previous denominational inspection grade	2 - Good

The inspection team

Ruth Elmore
Alex Downing

Lead
Team

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