

Our Lady Star Of The Sea Catholic Primary School

URN: 135246

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Bishop of Shrewsbury

09–10 October 2024

Summary of key findings

Overall effectiveness

The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school

2

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

2

Religious education (p.5)

The quality of curriculum religious education

2

Collective worship (p.7)

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

2

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

Yes

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

Yes

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

N/A

Compliance statement

- The school meets the requirement of the Bishops' Conference as it devotes at least 10% of the taught timetable to the teaching of religious education.
- The school is fully compliant with the additional requirements of the diocesan bishop. Its Admission Policy is in line with the diocesan policy, the schemes for religious education, and relationships, sex and health education are the required schemes and personal, social, health and economic education is delivered through a Catholic lens.
- There were no areas for improvement identified in the previous inspection. Therefore, the school is fully compliant.

What the school does well

- At Our Lady Star of the Sea Catholic Primary School a sense of community and a culture of warm welcome are tangible, providing a calm place for all.
- The school is nurturing and caring, providing excellent pastoral support for pupils, their families, and for staff.
- All within the school community feel secure and valued.
- Leaders, governors, and staff are rigorous in their honest self-evaluation of strengths and areas for development.
- Leaders and governors act with humility in their provision and their service to Catholic life and mission, religious education, and collective worship.

What the school needs to improve

- Plan and implement strategies to strengthen links between the school, families, and local parishes to develop increasing engagement of pupils in the life of the parish.
- Develop the role of assessment in religious education, ensuring feedback supports all pupils in understanding what they have done well and what they need to do to improve.
- Embed the new prayer and liturgy policy, monitoring and evaluating this to ensure pupils progressively develop their skills in prayer and in leading and participating in 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

2

Provision

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

2

Leadership

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

1

2

Pupils of Our Lady Star of the Sea Catholic Primary School know and understand that they are called to follow Jesus. Each year classes review the mission statement, 'Love one another as I have loved you'. Pupils show respect for themselves and each other, referring to the mission statement as their guide. One said, 'it doesn't matter if we are different'. They respect those of other faiths and none. Pupils say staff will help and support them. From the earliest age, children say how they are each special and loved by God. Older pupils explain their commitment to Catholic social teaching, 'it's our responsibility to care for people who need help,' and 'we should all care for our world'. Pupils studying *Laudato Si* comment on how some human activity 'destroys our environment'. Pupils actively participate in events in their parish and town, and support global organisations such as Cafod, which support those in need. They enjoy the many opportunities the school provides for them to celebrate aspects of the Church's year and our lives. For example, the whole school takes part in the local 'Walk of Witness' during Holy Week. Pupils' behaviour in class and around school is good.

This is a fully inclusive school, and supportive of all families from various cultures and belief traditions. The mission statement is lived out daily in the excellent sense of community and cultural welcome extended to all. Staff commitment to the school's Catholic ethos is strong; they understand and voice how the word of God impacts on everything that is done for all members of the school community. A sense of calm and purposefulness is evident throughout the school. Relationships are strong at all levels. Pastoral care provided by staff, sometimes with the support of the parish, is of the highest level and is much appreciated by pupils and their families. One parent comments, 'the school shows support and encouragement to our children in many ways'. Throughout the school, engaging displays, resources, and the provision of safe spaces reflect the

school's commitment to nurturing and caring for all its pupils. In addition, the school plans many enrichment activities, which pupils and staff say are a great support to their well-being and to their spiritual and moral growth. Relationships, sex, and health education (R(S)HE) is fully in line with statutory and diocesan requirements.

Leaders and governors are fully committed to developing the school's Catholic life and mission, living out their mission statement every day. They ensure there are strong links to the local parish through support of parish events. The whole school attends church for Mass for special feasts and celebrations. They promote and deliver high quality pastoral care for pupils and their families. Leaders are excellent role models, nurturing and developing staff, evident in the strong, distributive leadership for Catholic life and mission, religious education, and prayer and liturgy. They are committed to a working partnership with the diocese and local schools, and governor and staff training and development is of a high quality. Staff appreciate the exemplary pastoral care they experience. For instance, a staff training day and mission workshops are cited as nurturing and uplifting experiences for all. Leaders and governors ensure that the whole school curriculum reflects Catholic teaching and tradition. In English, once per half-term, the book studied in reading comes from the Catholic tradition or is linked to Catholic social teaching. Governors prioritise the development of the Catholic life of the school and consider the views of parents, staff, and pupils when they evaluate this, offering dedicated support and challenge to the leadership team.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

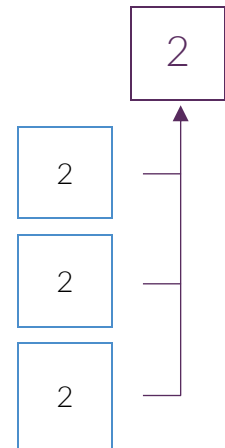
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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



In line with the demands of the *Religious Education Directory*, pupils across the school develop secure knowledge, understanding and skills in religious education. They respond eagerly to teachers' use of three questions at the start of lessons to assess pupils' recall of previous work. This helps pupils to think deeply about their learning, and to ask relevant and sometimes searching questions of their peers and adults. Pupils' behaviour in lessons is generally good; they begin lessons ready to learn and are engaged in what they are doing. In discussion, pupils reflect on their learning and say how their daily actions are a response to this. For example, one pupil comments, 'We treat other people as we would like to be treated because Jesus wants us to do that'. In general pupils' attainment is good. Most pupils' work is well-presented and they say they enjoy their learning in religious education, particularly when they are able to work creatively. Pupils talk about using class feedback books with their teachers. They understand that this addresses what has been done well and what needs to be better. However, individual pupils are not always clear about what they need to do to improve.

Teachers' subject knowledge is good and they are generally confident, using a variety of strategies to ensure pupils learn well. Religious education is a high priority across the school and teachers' commitment to this is evident in their work with pupils. Teachers adapt their planning in religious education so that work is presented in a range of creative ways to support and challenge all pupils. In most lessons, questions are used effectively to assess pupils' understanding of what they are learning, and tasks may be adapted to ensure pupils make progress. However, sometimes pupils' misconceptions are not challenged. This means that some pupils do not always understand what they are being asked to do. Celebration of pupil effort is evident throughout the school and this motivates pupils to do well. Feedback on pupils' learning and responses to tasks is recorded in class feedback books. Teachers understand how pupils'

learning in religious education affects their views of the world they live in. They plan lessons so that pupils have time to reflect on how their learning helps to support them spiritually and morally in their daily lives. Other adults are used effectively to support and enhance pupils' learning in group and individual tasks.

Leaders and governors ensure that the school is fully compliant with national and diocesan directives and that the religious education curriculum meets the requirements of the *Religious Education Directory*. They are rigorous in ensuring that religious education has full parity with other core subjects. For example, high quality resources support and develop the aims of that curriculum, both in lessons and throughout the school. Professional development is a strength of the school. Leaders, including the committed religious education coordinator and her team, and governors, are enthusiastic about ensuring staff have access to ongoing diocesan, cluster, and in-house training. Staff have received diocesan training for the new religious education curriculum resource, 'The Vine and the Branches'. Staff say they feel supported in their development of understanding, knowledge, and skills. The school has a successful record in coaching and mentoring staff. Induction of new staff includes supporting them in teaching religious education, however, this could be further developed. Leaders and governors have a regular programme of self-evaluation which informs their decisions on actions to support and enhance teaching and learning. For instance, the enrichment activities provided by the school to support learning in religious education are engaging and wide-ranging.

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

2

Provision

The quality of collective worship provided by the school

2

Leadership

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

2

2

Pupils in this school respond well to the many opportunities of prayer and liturgy provided. Pupils reflect in silence, actively participate in times of prayer, joining in with traditional prayers and singing well-known hymns and songs with enthusiasm. They engage in a range of ways of praying during class and school times of prayer and in parish celebrations. Their knowledge of prayers grows as they move through the school. Pupils listen respectfully to the words of scripture. They are able to talk about various times of the liturgical year, describing celebrations held during Advent and Lent and that, 'October is a month we pray the Rosary'. Pupils recall celebration liturgies, such as on the recent joint feast day of St Vincent de Paul and Our Lady Star of the Sea. They are developing their ability to lead times of prayer and work well with teachers and with each other to plan these. As they progress through the school, pupils demonstrate their increasing independence in leading class and school prayer and liturgy. Pupils are supported in evaluating what they have planned, becoming more able to do this independently as they move towards Upper Key Stage Two.

The school provides a wide range of meaningful and engaging prayer and liturgy from the Catholic tradition for pupils and staff. For instance, in May, pupils who have made their First Holy Communion lead the procession for the crowning of Our Lady's statue. Scripture, relevant to the liturgical season, is an intrinsic part of the prayer and liturgy taking place throughout the year. This contributes to the active participation of pupils and adults. Staff are fully committed to leading and supporting good practice and support others in gaining knowledge and confidence. In turn, staff support pupils to plan and lead prayer and liturgy. During significant times of the year such as Lent, Easter, Advent and Christmas, the school plans prayer and liturgy in school and in church, in which parents and carers can participate. In school pupils are prepared for the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist. The whole school and families have opportunities

during the year when they can celebrate the sacraments together. Parents comment that they welcome this and enjoy being invited into school to 'Stay and Play' and 'Stay and Pray' with their children. Prayer tables in classrooms and the prayer garden provide spaces where pupils can pray together or individually.

Prayer and liturgy are integral to the life of this school and the recent policy is in line with the *Prayer and Liturgy Directory*. Leaders' awareness of the different ages and capacity of the pupils is evident in how pupils' skills in prayer are built upon and developed as they progress through the school. Careful planning ensures that key dates and liturgical seasons are celebrated in school or church. Leaders and governors place staff professional development and training as a high priority. They provide regular opportunities for staff to develop their confidence and skills and their support for pupils. As a result, staff engage well in the prayer and liturgy offered by the school. Staff appreciate the skill and dedication of the headteacher, religious education coordinator and other senior leaders who support them in taking on ministries such as prayer leaders, readers, and musicians. Resources are allocated in line with other core subjects. High quality artefacts and art enhance the prayer and liturgy in the school. Leaders and governors regularly review the quality and impact of prayer and liturgy and seek the views of pupils. However, this needs to be further developed so that improvements are planned and embedded.

Information about the school

Full name of school	Our Lady Star of the Sea Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	135246
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	8963815
Full postal address of the school	Our Lady Star Of The Sea Catholic Primary School, Capenhurst Lane, ELLESMERE PORT, CH65 7AQ
School phone number	001513290814
Headteacher	Louise Finlay
Chair of governors	Patricia Reilly
School Website	www.ourladystar.cheshire.sch.uk
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	3-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	15 November 2017
Previous denominational inspection grade	1

The inspection team

Carol Morgan
Claire Marrin

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