



# St Mary's Catholic Primary School

URN: 138295

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Bishop of Nottingham

05–06 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

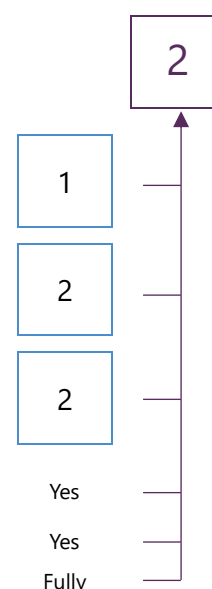
#### Collective worship (p.7)

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



Yes

Yes

Fully

## 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 follows all additional requirements of the diocesan bishop.
- The school has ensured that all areas of improvement from the previous inspection have been addressed.

## What the school does well

- St Mary's is a warm and inclusive school where every individual is welcomed, valued, and respected. The school's internal and external environment beautifully reflects its Catholic character, giving visible witness to a community rooted in faith and Gospel values.
- St Mary's enjoys a close and supportive relationship with both the parish and the St Thomas Aquinas Catholic Multi-Academy Trust. These partnerships enrich the school's Catholic life and help pupils experience faith in action.
- The headteacher's dedicated and servant-hearted leadership inspires the entire school community, ensuring that the Catholic mission is not only upheld but joyfully lived out in every aspect of school life.
- Pupils show high levels of enthusiasm and engagement in their religious education lessons, taking pride in their learning.
- School chaplains play a vital and inspiring role in the spiritual life of St Mary's, offering compassionate guidance and helping pupils and staff to encounter Christ through prayer, reflection, and service.

## What the school needs to improve

- Ensure Catholic values and teachings are explicitly integrated across all areas of the curriculum, with planned opportunities for pupils to reflect on Catholic social teaching in relation to subject content, current issues, and their own experiences.
- Ensure the full creative potential of the new religious education curriculum is used to challenge and deepen pupils' religious literacy, theological understanding, and engagement with scripture across all key stages.
- Support pupils in developing the ability to articulate and reflect meaningfully on how worship influences their personal faith journey and daily choices as missionary disciples.

## 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

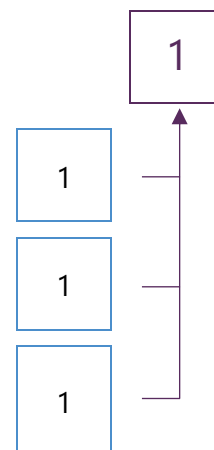
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

#### 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



The Catholic life and mission of St Mary's is a lived reality, which is clearly visible from the moment one enters the school through its warm welcome, inclusiveness and religious displays which reflect the presence of Christ. The headteacher, supported by the priests of the parish, chaplaincy leaders, and all staff, has cultivated a vibrant and flourishing faith community. A strong sense of belonging permeates St Mary's, where all fully embrace the mission, 'We grow with Jesus to be the best we can be'. One pupil described it as 'feeling like home'. Pupils are a credit to themselves and the school, living out their identity as children of God through kindness, respect, and service. Pupils actively put faith into action by visiting a local residential home and foodbank, as well as supporting fundraising for charities including Cafod. While pupils can articulate simply the link between these actions and Catholic social teaching, this is not well developed. The pupil chaplaincy team is highly valued and contributes meaningfully to the school's spiritual life through a clear and purposeful plan of action. Pupils show respect and appreciation for other faiths, and they benefit from visiting places of worship which deepens their respect, empathy, and religious literacy.

All stakeholders - pupils, staff, and governors - actively contributed to the recent review of the school's mission statement, which is now clearly understood and joyfully lived out across the community. Pupils sing the mission song with enthusiasm, expressing pride in belonging to this faith-filled school. Staff know their pupils deeply and work collaboratively to support pupils, families, and one another, fostering a strong sense of unity and belonging. Staff say that the school is 'a family, always there for each other - no one can ever be lonely at St Mary's'. Pastoral care is exemplary, particularly for vulnerable pupils and families facing challenges. A parent shared, 'This is the best Catholic school... my child receives exceptional support. Since attending

Mass through school, he's more willing to take part outside school'. Staff are respected role models who consistently embody Gospel values in their relationships and teaching. The chaplaincy team, led by chaplaincy leaders, is central to school life, ensuring inclusive and responsive spiritual provision. The delivery of relationships, sex and health education is firmly rooted in Church teaching, reflecting a holistic approach to personal development, moral formation, and Catholic identity.

Leadership and governance at St Mary's is outstanding in the strategic and holistic approach to embedding Catholic life and mission at the heart of the school. Leaders and governors work in close partnership, ensuring that every pupil and adult experiences the richness of Catholic education daily. The St Thomas Aquinas Catholic Multi-Academy Trust provides strong strategic support, enabling leaders to confidently promote the bishop's vision for Catholic education, rooted in missionary discipleship. Governors are passionate advocates for the school's Catholic identity, with the chair and other members actively involved in its spiritual life; they regularly attend liturgical celebrations and engage meaningfully with pupils and staff. Catholic life is monitored through detailed reports from the headteacher and the St Thomas Aquinas Catholic Multi-Academy Trust, allowing governors to challenge and support ongoing development. The partnership with the parish is a notable strength, nurtured through the servant leadership of the headteacher, described by the priest as 'a gem'. This leadership is evident in the care shown to every individual: 'We nurture everyone who comes in. They go out changed, knowing and showing the love of Christ'. Leaders prioritise staff formation in Catholic education, ensuring all are equipped in their vocation. Their leadership ensures the Church's mission is joyfully lived and sustained.

## Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

### Religious education key judgement grade

#### Pupil outcomes

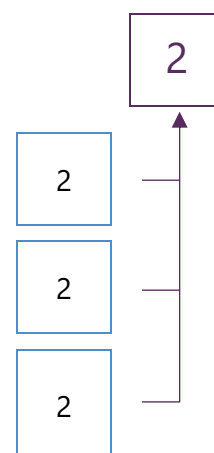
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

#### 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 and demonstrate consistently positive attitudes towards their learning. The recent implementation of the *Religious Education Directory* curriculum has been smooth and well received. Pupils respond enthusiastically to its increased challenge and depth, with one parent commenting that their child finds the new curriculum 'more challenging and fun'. Pupils are beginning to make meaningful scriptural connections, linking prior learning in the *creation and covenant* branch to current themes in *prophecy and promise*. In Year 6, pupils confidently link Moses and his covenant to the theme of promise. Few opportunities are provided for exploring these themes in greater depth which limits enhanced understanding. In younger classes, pupils are given a strong foundation; they can independently recognise images of the Annunciation and retell the story through song and drama. Pupils are religiously literate and engaged, showing enthusiasm and confidence in lessons. Teachers and support staff maintain high expectations and deliver a range of stimulating activities appropriate to pupils' age and stage of development. Across the school, pupils take pride in their work, which is well presented reflecting good progress from individual starting points. While pupils can identify how to improve their work, they are still developing the ability to articulate how their learning influences daily life.

The newly appointed lead for religious education has a clear and ambitious vision for the subject, and is already having a positive impact on teaching and learning. Staff confidence in delivering the new curriculum is strong, as a result of high-quality professional development from the diocese and the St Thomas Aquinas Catholic Multi-Academy Trust. Teachers demonstrate secure subject knowledge and consistently high expectations, ensuring that all pupils, including those with additional needs, are fully included in every aspect of religious education lessons. Teaching assistants provide skilled support, enhancing learning across the classroom. A consistent approach to lesson structure is maintained through the use of 'non-negotiables', promoting

continuity and progression across the school. Lessons are well-planned and engaging, enabling pupils to develop their religious literacy and understanding. While teaching is inclusive and effective, there is scope to challenge more able pupils to deepen their theological thinking and scriptural understanding. Teachers celebrate pupil achievement in a wide variety of ways, such as house points, 'dojos', 'RE' and 'virtue' certificates. Pupils respond well to this positive praise and look forward to the celebration assembly, to which parents are invited.

Leaders and governors at St Mary's ensured the successful implementation of the new *Religious Education Directory* through thorough preparation and accessing high-quality training provided by the diocese, the St Thomas Aquinas Catholic Multi-Academy Trust and school leaders. Religious education is given full parity with other core subjects in terms of professional development and resourcing. The subject lead, although new to the role, has already made a positive impact on improving standards. Her enthusiasm, clear vision, and commitment are evident and respected by staff. Her monitoring supports colleagues in being the best they can be, in line with the school's Catholic ethos. The headteacher and governors have been well supported in their drive for improvement by the St Thomas Aquinas Catholic Multi-Academy Trust, and this is enriched by activities that reflect both Catholic tradition and the unique needs of pupils. Monitoring of religious education by leaders and governors is regular, and improvements are evident; however, governors do not consistently engage in sufficiently deep reflection to fully support the strategic development of the subject. All staff value the headteacher's deep knowledge of Catholic education and know they can seek support and guidance from her. Leadership at all levels ensures that the mission of the Church is embedded, sustained, and joyfully lived 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

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 are provided with a range of opportunities to take part in prayer and liturgy, both individually and as part of the school and parish community. These experiences are impactful and reflect the Catholic character of the school. The pupil chaplaincy team plays an active role in supporting prayer and liturgy, and is confident in leading prayer. Pupils are extremely proud of their new prayer room, 'Mary's Grotto', which they helped to establish. Pupils demonstrate positive attitudes towards prayer and liturgy; they engage respectfully in prayer and sing joyfully during whole-school and class-based liturgies. While opportunities for silent reflection are provided, these are currently limited. Pupils experience both traditional Catholic prayers and contemporary forms of worship, including Lectio Divina, Visio Divina, and meditation, which enrich their spiritual experience. Pupils have a general understanding of the liturgical year, though are less confident in identifying specific prayers for different seasons. Each class is named after a saint, supporting pupils' understanding of the saints' role in the Church. Classrooms feature age-appropriate prayer spaces, some with handwritten prayers. Pupils show reverence for scripture and demonstrate a growing understanding of the meaning and significance of religious artefacts placed on the focus table.

Prayer is central to the life of St Mary's and is woven into the daily rhythm of school life. The annual plan of provision is carefully planned in collaboration with parish priests to ensure a rich variety of prayer forms are used throughout the year. Weekly themes are clearly linked to Gospel values, which are shared with staff to guide prayer and liturgy. Pupils recognise that peace begins with justice and that counsel helps us make choices guided by God's wisdom. Many pupils articulate practical ways to promote peace and fairness in school, demonstrating thoughtful

engagement. Prayer and liturgy are well organised, with smooth transitions and a clear liturgical structure. Pupils participate with reverence; their posture, silence, and respectful responses reflect a developing sense of awe and wonder. Pupils are given regular opportunities to evaluate prayer and liturgy, helping them reflect and improve their planning and leadership. Parents and parishioners are invited to attend celebrations of the word, strengthening the home-school-parish partnership. The strong personal faith of the senior leadership team ensures they are excellent role models, leading by example and nurturing a prayerful culture that is joyful, and rooted in Catholic tradition.

Leaders and governors are deeply committed to promoting high-quality prayer and liturgy across the school. They work closely with parish priests and the school chaplain to ensure these times are meaningful, reflective, and rooted in Catholic tradition. The newly appointed prayer and liturgy lead demonstrates a clear understanding of strengths and areas for development, recognising the need for more consistent use of the prayer and liturgy policy to ensure continuity across the school. The religious education governor and chair of the local governing body are proactive in supporting the school's prayer life, regularly attending liturgical celebrations and engaging with pupils. Teachers are strong role models, confidently leading prayer and worship, which enables younger pupils to grow in confidence and independence as they move through the school. All new staff benefit from a well-structured Catholic induction programme, which is highly valued and ensures a shared understanding of the importance of prayer and liturgy. The headteacher works in close partnership with the parish to prepare pupils for the sacraments, providing regular opportunities for Reconciliation and the Eucharist. Leaders ensure that prayer is purposeful and well-supported; staff are clearly dedicated to sustaining and enriching the Catholic prayer life of the school, resulting in pupils who engage with reverence and spiritual maturity.

## Information about the school

Full name of school	St Mary's Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	138295
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	8553433
Full postal address of the school	Hastings Street, Loughborough, Leicestershire, LE11 5AX
School phone number	01509 212621
Executive headteacher	N/A
Headteacher	Priscilla Jordan
Chair of local governing body	Jane Monaghan
School Website	<a href="http://www.stmarys-rc.leics.sch.uk">www.stmarys-rc.leics.sch.uk</a>
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	St Thomas Aquinas 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	25 June 2018
Previous denominational inspection grade	2 - Good

## The inspection team

Angela Phillips  
John Nish

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