



St Anthony’s Catholic Primary School

URN: 117495

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Archbishop of Westminster

29–30 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

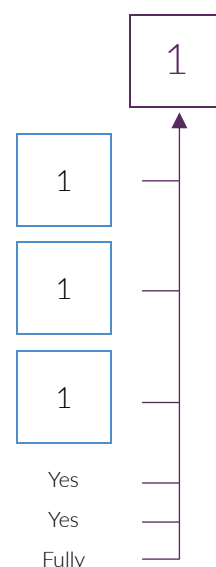
Collective worship (p.5)

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

- The school is a strong community of faith with a flourishing home-school-parish partnership where all are valued.
- The school mission statement ‘We Grow and Learn with Jesus’ is lived out by pupils who reveal their understanding of it through their love and care for others.
- Pupils’ engagement and exceptional behaviour in religious education lessons results in a deep understanding and a passionate commitment to follow Jesus.
- The many opportunities for prayer and reflection ensure that Christ is at the centre of the life of the school.
- Pupils value the school’s many opportunities to serve others and actively participate in their ministries through an excellent understanding of the principles of Catholic Social Teaching.

What the school needs to improve

- Further develop systems for assessment of pupils' learning in RE which can inform teachers' planning, allowing pupils to enhance their independence, individuality and creativity in achieving best outcomes.
- Embed Catholic Social Teaching across the school so that pupils are given further opportunities to be proactive in finding ways to respond to the needs of others.
- Continue to develop existing systems of monitoring and evaluation by both leaders and pupils to ensure that pupils' experience of prayer remains the highest quality.

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

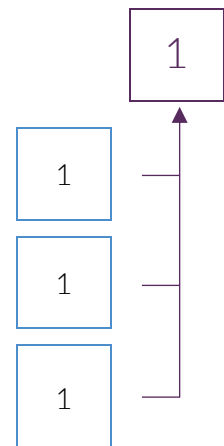
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

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



St Anthony's pupils know, understand and embrace the school's mission, 'We Grow and Learn with Jesus'. They recite the mission statement with conviction at the end of daily prayers. Pupils actively participate through membership of the pupil chaplaincy team, the Mini-Vinnies, and the Caritas ambassadors who meet together weekly at the RE club in order to seek opportunities to grow in virtue, pursue the common good and serve those in need. Pupils talk positively about the difference they make to their local, national and global communities, and they have a thorough understanding of the theology underpinning their actions. Opportunities to serve include donations to the local food bank, organising community partnership days with the parish and fundraising for charities, including Cafod and the Catholic Children's Society. A staff member commented that 'the children understand the importance of our mission and prayer at school and they truly live this out in the way they act towards each other and the roles that they take on within the school.' Pupils' behaviour is exemplary and is a sign of the deep respect they hold for all members of the school community. Visits to the local mosque and synagogue form part of their programme of learning about other faiths. One parent commented, 'My child has developed great knowledge and confidently shares his learning of both our Catholic faith and of other world faiths, with us at home.'

St Anthony's excels at being a Christ-centred school community. Parents speak warmly of the welcome provided to all families. A member of staff stated that St Anthony's is 'like a family with faith at its centre'. Another commented, 'The Catholic life of this school and our mission is at the heart of everything we do.' Staff embrace the mission of the school, which is encapsulated not only in their relationships with each other, but also in the highest levels of care and nurture they provide for all pupils, particularly the most vulnerable. The school environment bears strong

witness to its Catholic identity, with central displays focusing on the principles of Catholic Social Teaching, in addition to a new chapel and a prayer garden. Throughout the school, scripture passages and quotations by Pope Francis are linked to displays. For example, pupils' written reflections on how to bring light to the world are displayed next to a quotation by Pope Francis, 'The world and the Church need you to be beacons of light.' The provision for relationships, sex and health education is carefully planned and meets all statutory requirements. Pupils are able to speak confidently about their learning in this area.

Leaders and governors rightly see the school as a source of inspiration to the whole community and are highly ambitious about its contribution to the lives of the people it serves. They ensure that all policies reflect the Catholic mission of the school. A member of staff noted, 'The Catholic faith is fundamental to all strategic decision-making, policies, curriculum, spiritual and personal development.' The school provides support for families, as well as social and emotional support for pupils through class 'worry boxes,' and dedicated adult support for the wellbeing of staff, parents and pupils. Leaders and governors work closely with the diocese, attending relevant training and enthusiastically responding to diocesan policies and initiatives. Leaders and governors recognise the parish as being central to the Catholic life of the school, and they are committed to maintaining a flourishing partnership. The school has a vibrant parental engagement strategy comprising newsletters, the school website and information on Twitter, ensuring that parents are kept well-informed about key events in the Catholic life of the school. One parent commented, 'We feel blessed our child gets to receive such an amazing Catholic education in a setting that raises him to be a good citizen, understand his faith and want to learn more and make great progress.'

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

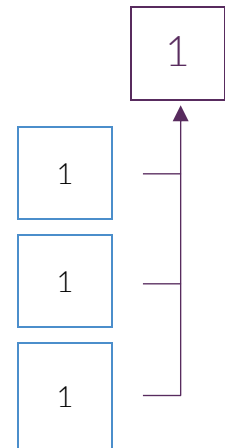
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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 are developing excellent knowledge, understanding and skills in religious education, reflecting the learning required by the *Religious Education Directory*. They demonstrate a deep knowledge of scripture, which is integral to lessons. Older pupils are able to analyse and compare Bible passages and relate their learning to their own lives. Pupils' behaviour during lessons is exemplary, signifying their full interest and engagement. Year 2 pupils were able to identify a scripture passage as the story of The Annunciation and, when the question, 'Where do we hear 'Hail, full of grace?' was asked, a pupil readily responded, 'In Mary's prayer'. The school has been focusing on the use of key vocabulary in lessons, which has resulted in pupils using subject-specific vocabulary seamlessly during class discussions. They are able to work both collaboratively and independently, ensuring accelerated progress. Effective adult support and excellent visual resources are used so that all groups are given the help they need to achieve success. Achievement in religious education is above average and is on a par with other core subjects. Creative learning methods enhance pupils' engagement and allow them to independently explore their learning through a variety of media including art, music, drama, dance and technology. Pupils are very proud of their religious education books and they produce work of a consistently high quality, with excellent presentation and evidence of creativity and challenge in learning.

Teachers are confident in their subject knowledge, and they value the influence religious education has on the moral and spiritual development of pupils. Pupils are regularly led into periods of reflection as part of their lessons, and they value these opportunities. As a result of regular professional development, through diocesan courses and support from the religious education team, teachers are highly competent in delivering the scheme of work's content. Scripture is used as a focus in lessons and pupils are encouraged to link its message to their daily

lives. Teachers' skilful questioning encourages pupils to delve deeper into their theological understanding to maximise learning. Pupils' books are well-presented and are a testament to the use of creativity in the lessons. Pupils are also given many opportunities to explore their learning through extended writing. Excellent work in religious education is celebrated as 'Wow Work' in each class. Dedicated spaces for reflection and prayer, available in the classrooms, throughout the school, and on the school grounds, promote pupils' independent reflection. Pupils' achievements are celebrated in whole-school assemblies, and their work is proudly displayed in classrooms and corridors. One parent commented, 'The RE teaching and learning at St Anthony's is truly excellent'.

Leaders and governors have ensured that the religious education programme faithfully delivers the curriculum set out in the Directory. They have ensured that religious education enjoys a parity with the other core subjects in terms of staff training, resources, and accommodation. The RE leadership team ably supports staff in planning and delivering the scheme of work so that, over time, sustained improvement in the quality of teaching and learning has occurred. Lessons are never less than consistently good, with many outstanding. Staff speak appreciatively of the generous support and the 'open-door' policy provided by the subject leaders. Thorough planning sessions secure coherence across the ages and phases of learning. Through carefully planned lessons, additional adults in class are highly effective in supporting vulnerable pupils to achieve. One pupil stated, 'The thing I love about RE lessons is that we have some music and light a candle and have some time to relax and think about God.' Action plans are shared with governors so that priorities are implemented, and the impact analysed. The link governor for religious education visits the school regularly, supporting pupils and staff in their spiritual development and providing a clear, strategic vision. Regular monitoring by the school leaders and link-governor results in accurate self-evaluation which leads to outstanding outcomes for pupils.

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 engage reverently during daily prayer times and in moments of quiet reflection. A range of ways of praying is offered to pupils, including meditation, silence and reflection, as well as spontaneous and traditional prayer. A class 'prayer bear' is sent home with Key Stage One pupils to encourage family prayer. EYFS pupils take home prayer boxes and one parent observed, 'When bringing home a prayer box from school, my child asked all members of the family to pray.' Scripture is central to prayer and is used meaningfully to deepen pupils' experience of prayer. Appropriate liturgical music is chosen during liturgies to provide a calm, prayerful atmosphere. Prayer spaces are provided both in the classrooms and in the prayer garden. A focus in Year 4 is to learn about the mysteries of the rosary and the pupils produce beautiful books illustrating their learning. Pupils work well with others, such as teachers and other pupils, to prepare and lead prayer and liturgy sessions. Whole-school acts of worship are a testament to the school's Catholic identity and mission. One parent declared that the 'school builds the Kingdom on earth inspired by the teachings of Jesus'.

Prayer supports and nourishes all members of the school and pupils are inspired by the opportunities to link prayer and mission to their own lives. Designated prayer areas provide a focus for prayer in each class. Departed members of the school community are remembered in prayer through visible reminders in the chapel and in the playground. Retreat days for each year group throughout the year are centred around prayer, art, movement and music. A holding cross passed around in class prayer circles helps to focus pupils' reflections and provides an invitation to spontaneous prayer. Year 6 pupils appreciate that their class liturgy is 'peaceful' and offers a 'time to reflect'. The school community works hard to recognise the wider Church family and, through its prayer life, helps pupils to develop a deeper understanding of the Gospel message and the call to serve. Music is central to prayer and liturgy and pupils are eager to

contribute their gifts, singing with great enthusiasm. The school works closely with the local parish priest to ensure that pupils participate in the breadth and richness of Catholic tradition. Staff are excellent role-models for pupils, participating fully, with reverence and commitment, in the prayer life of the school.

Leaders and governors ensure that pupils in the school are offered a wide range of high-quality, meaningful experiences of prayer and worship. Leaders support staff to lead appropriate prayer and worship through clear guidance in the collective worship policy. Diocesan resources using the four elements (gather, word, response, mission) are used to plan and prepare liturgies, encouraging pupils to 'go forth' in action as followers of Christ. Leaders and governors ensure that the school calendar reflects significant dates in the liturgical calendar, resulting in a wealth of opportunities for pupils to celebrate the Eucharist, in particular on holy days and feast days. Parents are welcome to attend assemblies, liturgies and Masses. One parent commented, 'My family (including grandparents) are invited to be part of the Catholic life of the school including charity work, assemblies, Masses and liturgies.' The Sacrament of Reconciliation is offered at key times in the liturgical year, in particular during Advent and Lent. Governors prioritise a generous budget for resources, for developing prayer areas, and for providing professional development for all staff. Resources are effectively allocated to ensure staff are able to develop and deliver high quality experiences of prayer and liturgy. Leaders and governors prioritise the formation of staff by giving them the opportunity to attend relevant diocesan courses, deanery meetings and moderation days. As a result, staff are skilled in leading prayer and liturgy in the classroom and in whole-school worship. Speaking about the impact of prayer and liturgy on the pupils, a parent commented, 'My children's faith has become even stronger since starting at St Anthony's.'

Information about the school

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| Full name of school | St Anthony's Catholic Primary School |
| School unique reference number (URN) | 117495 |
| School DfE Number (LAESTAB) | 9193428 |
| Full postal address of the school | St Anthony's Catholic Primary School, Croxley View, Watford, Hertfordshire, WD18 6BW |
| School phone number | 01923226987 |
| Headteacher | Elaine Harrold |
| Chair of Governors | Imogen Barrett Walsh |
| School Website | http://www.stanthonys.herts.sch.uk |
| Trusteeship | Diocesan |
| Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable) | N/A |
| Phase | Primary |
| Type of school | Voluntary Aided School |
| Admissions policy | N/A |
| Age-range of pupils | 3-11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Date of last denominational inspection | November 2017 |
| Previous denominational inspection grade | Good/Outstanding |

The inspection team

Norah Flatley – Lead Inspector

Christine Curtis – Team Inspector

Daniel Keane – 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 |