

St Anthony's Catholic Primary School

URN: 143804

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Bishop of Northampton

19–20 June 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

1

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

1

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

Fully

2

Compliance statement

- The school is fully compliant in relation to the general norms for religious education laid down by the Bishops' conference.
- The school is fully compliant in relation to any additional requirements of the diocesan bishop.
- The school has responded fully to the previous areas for improvement.

What the school does well

- The school commitment to Catholic social teaching is very strong so that those in greatest need are supported locally and globally.
- The mission statement is lived out and embraced by all members of the school community.
- Relationships and behaviour are exemplary.
- The school cares for all members of the school community very well and gives special attention and support to those experiencing difficulties.
- The strong use of scripture both in and out of lessons supports the school community in prayer, social action and religious literacy.

What the school needs to improve

- Improve challenge for more able pupils in religious education lessons.
- Improve the learning intentions in religious education lessons so it is clearer which key skills and knowledge are being learned and developed.
- Develop a strategy for the progression of prayer so pupils can deepen their spirituality and become more active participants in prayer and liturgy as they progress through the school.

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

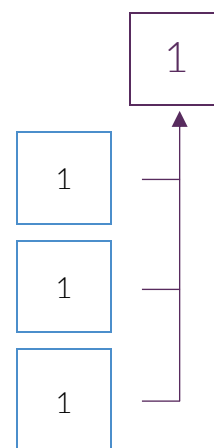
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

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 are happy and benefit significantly from the strong mission led culture of this joyous school community. All pupils benefit from the strong focus on Catholic social teaching which helps pupils make links between faith, school and their role in making the world a better place. As a result, pupils have a very strong sense of social justice and can articulate how helping others in need is linked to their faith. Pupils say they 'live' the mission 'with Jesus' by leading charity work, and that 'faith alone is not enough' and 'true compassion requires action'. The recently formed mission team are energised by this approach and are beginning to have an impact by leading community action, for example litter picking and giving clothes to people in Ukraine. Pupils greatly value their school community and know that they are cared for as children of God made in His image. There is a culture of deep respect for each other's dignity and consequently, behaviour is exemplary. One parent said, 'my children love coming to school'. Pupils respond very well to the schools' chaplaincy provision, enthusiastically taking part in ministry, for example as altar servers and readers.

St Anthony's is an exceptionally supportive, hopeful school with Christ clearly at the centre of all it does. The mission statement, 'learning, growing and living with Jesus', is known and lived across the school and visible, for example in displays such as the 'Pilgrims of Hope Tree', pledges and 'The Mirror of God's Wonderful Creation.' It is lived out in the very strong sense of community and belonging where all are welcomed and loved. Staff provide authentic witness to the mission and Catholic character of the school and opportunities for spiritual and moral development are extensive. Several parents/carers describe the staff as 'amazing'. Pupils from all backgrounds and faiths are welcomed and flourish. Jesuit virtues are promoted across the school and a variety of opportunities are provided to support those in need such as Cafod, the Slough food bank,

older people, and Macmillan. Pastoral care is very strong, and all staff take an active role in this by, for example, supporting pupils in times of bereavement by lighting a candle in the peace room. The school class charts are linked to Catholic social teaching and one parent said that the way behaviour is taught 'teaches pupils to be thankful'. The school partnership with the parish is very strong and pupils visit the church regularly. This contributes to the strong chaplaincy provision which is planned to include opportunities for pupils to use their gifts and talents well.

The leadership of the Catholic life of the school is excellent. Staff feel highly supported and say the school is 'like a family'. New staff are supported well and receive appropriate induction training, and ongoing development is provided annually for all staff. Leaders and governors ensure that policies reflect the Catholic character of the school and that the whole curriculum reflects this with some explicit links made with Catholic social teaching. Relationships and sex education are taught according to the teachings of the Catholic church and additional workshops are provided for parents as the need arises. The Catholic life and mission of the school is prioritised by leaders and governors who have an excellent understanding of the Church's mission in education demonstrating deep, authentic witness to it. Self-evaluation is underpinned by accurate monitoring which informs development. Leaders maintain very strong links with the parish and parents. Their witness to the social teaching of the Church is exemplary; pupils and families whose circumstances have made them vulnerable are prioritised, accompanied and 'held'. Leaders know their community well and are proactive in their actions, viewing this work as central to the Church's mission of Caritas.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

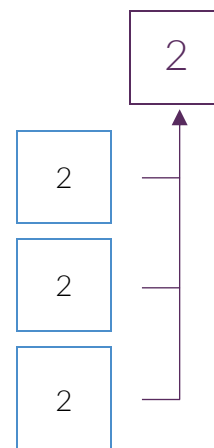
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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 participate in lessons with confidence and enthusiasm particularly creative opportunities such as 'mini books' in Year 1. One pupil said, 'religious education helps me to connect with God'. They make very good progress and achieve well in relation to other subjects. Pupils use their religious literacy to make links with Catholic social teaching and scripture, for example, in a Year 4 lesson on forgiveness when learning about Pope John Paul II. One pupil said that religious education helps them to understand 'the depths of Christianity'. Pupils make links to previous learning through the 'Faithful 4' which is embedded across the school; for example in Year 2 pupils effectively link the Sacrament of Reconciliation to Matthew's Gospel. One teacher said that 'religious education helps pupils to shine'. Pupils enjoy learning about and encountering other faiths and cultures saying 'we have the freedom to look into other religions' and articulate why this is important; 'We are all one even though we are different. We are all made in the image of God. It makes us happier.' Behaviour in lessons is exemplary because pupils are interested and engaged in their learning. However, they do not yet ask incisive questions or fully express their curiosity, particularly in lessons where key vocabulary is not explicitly shared or where learning intentions lack focus.

Teachers are highly committed and demonstrate a passion for religious education, using their knowledge of pupils' achievement to plan lessons that build on learning that has taken place before. Links to Catholic social teaching are made consistently well because of teachers' understanding of the impact religious education has on the lives of pupils. For example, in Reception, lessons on friendship link to dignity and sharing. Teachers adapt learning well for pupils with additional needs and those who speak English as an additional language and there are some good adaptations made to challenge pupils further. For example, in Year 4 teachers adapt learning and use excellent questioning skills to ensure pupils extend their responses and

make links to scripture, effectively challenging all pupils. However, this is not consistent or embedded in all practice, and where subject knowledge is not as strong, teachers miss opportunities to adapt learning for pupils who are more able. Use of scripture is a strength, and teachers effectively support pupils to make links between Catholic social teaching and scripture. Bibles are used appropriately, and scripture is visible in classrooms and around the school which enhances religious education provision.

Leaders and governors are committed and passionate about religious education and its core place in the school which enthuses all staff, resulting in teachers who are also highly committed and motivated. Leaders and governors ensure that religious education has parity with other core subjects. The curriculum is coherent and offers a very wide variety of enrichment for pupils, for example with visits to the mosque and experiencing the forest school as well as visiting the local parish church to learn about the religious artefacts and Catholic traditions. The Catholic life and RE link governor visits the school and reports to the local governing body effectively. Professional development for the new *Religious Education Directory* is supported by the Trust and its implementation is on track according to diocesan requirements. Professional development for religious education is planned regularly alongside a cycle of monitoring that informs the development plan. However, monitoring activities, and evaluation of this monitoring by leaders and governors does not yet provide enough detail to effectively support teachers in improving the way they teach in preparation for the full implementation of the Directory.

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

2

1

Pupils have an excellent understanding of the wide variety of prayer within the Catholic tradition. They talk with confidence about the liturgical year and how it is expressed, and know how to pray using scripture, silence and liturgical music. Pupils say they enjoy Visio Divino and take part confidently in communal prayer four times a day showing deep reverence and attentiveness often with prolonged periods of prayerful silence. Pupils say they like liturgical music and one pupil said that 'music makes me feel like I am in the presence of God'. They volunteer to be altar servers and to read in celebrations of the word and Mass. Pupils work well with their teachers to plan weekly 'Child Led Worship', for example Year 5 pupils confidently lead worship structured around gather, word, response and mission using the parable of the Good Samaritan, and pupil self-evaluation is encouraged afterwards. Pupils offer spontaneous prayer intentions within this time because it is planned into the structure well. Year 6 often use the outdoor space for their 'Child Led Worship'. Pupils say they enjoy this opportunity immensely and articulate well how prayer helps them and leads to action.

Exceptional modelling and engagement by staff, including the lay chaplain, is embedded across the school supporting pupils on their faith journey and in learning how to pray. Staff confidently lead prayer in classrooms, and assemblies are planned and delivered very well so that they are meaningful and prayerful. Themes are chosen carefully according to the liturgical year and other significant celebrations for the community. Music is a strength and staff encourage pupils to sing enthusiastically; for example, the St Anthony's song, written by pupils, is sung with passion and conviction by all year groups. Staff ensure that all pupils, including those with high needs, take part in communal worship and support them well so they are nurtured to develop spiritually. Prayer is central to the life of the school and parents are regularly invited. Pupils attend Mass in the parish church regularly and on holy days of obligation. In addition, significant times are

identified and celebrated, for example on St Anthony's feast day an annual school Mass takes place with the whole community which parents say they enjoy immensely, and special prayers for mothers take place in October. Devotion to Our Lady is shown through the annual crowning procession and praying the rosary. A large number of pupils are supported very well to make their First Holy Communion in close partnership with the local parish. The daily rhythm of prayer is well embedded, and the peace room is available for private prayer. Child-led worship is facilitated well by teachers; scripture is well chosen and linked to the liturgical season and prayer tables reflect this too.

Leaders and governors plan the school calendar carefully to ensure there are opportunities to celebrate the sacraments. Plans for the provision of prayer and liturgy which follow the liturgical year are reviewed by leaders as events take place throughout the year. Leaders and governors ensure that Mass is offered on holy days, and the Sacrament of Reconciliation takes place in Advent and Lent by maintaining excellent links with the parish and deanery. Resources for prayer and liturgy are prioritised, as reflected in the appointment of a full-time lay chaplain to the school. Leaders and governors provide opportunities for professional development and formation of staff, supported by the Trust, and there is a prayer and liturgy policy and annual plan of provision in place. However, the strategy for prayer progression is not yet developed.

Information about the school

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|------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Full name of school | St Anthony's Catholic Primary School |
| School unique reference number (URN) | 143804 |
| School DfE Number (LAESTAB) | 8713364 |
| Full postal address of the school | St Anthony's Catholic Primary School, Farnham Road, Farnham Royal, Slough, SL2 3AA |
| School phone number | 01753645828 |
| Headteacher | Siobhan Oppe |
| Chair of governors | Fidelma Gough |
| School Website | www.stanthonys.slough.sch.uk/ |
| Trusteeship | Diocesan |
| Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable) | St Thomas Catholic Academies Trust |
| Phase | Primary |
| Type of school | Academy |
| Admissions policy | Non-selective |
| Age-range of pupils | 3-11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Date of last denominational inspection | March 2018 |
| Previous denominational inspection grade | Outstanding |

The inspection team

| | |
|--------------|------|
| Kate Pereira | Lead |
| Jo Browne | Team |
| Jo Marsh | 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 |