



Catholic Schools Inspectorate inspection report for **St Mary's Preparatory School**

URN: 104972

Carried out on behalf of the Most Rev. Malcolm McMahon, Archbishop of Liverpool on:

Date: 2nd - 3rd March 2023

Overall effectiveness The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school.....	1
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.....	1
Collective worship (p.7) The quality and range of liturgy and prayer provided by the school.....	1
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	Fully

Summary of key findings

What the school does well

- The Staff at St Mary's Preparatory School provide a loving caring environment where every pupil has the chance to thrive and develop their own unique talents.
- The headteacher and subject leader for religious education are aspirational in their vision for religious education. They lead by example, supported by the governing body and wider school community.
- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. They are articulate, religiously literate and supportive of each other.
- Pupils are respectful at times of worship. They lead worship and show reverence in the way in which they gather and respond.

What the school needs to improve:

- To involve the parents more in the Catholic life of the school through the invitation times of prayer and liturgy
- In religious education develop feedback so that pupils respond to marking and know how they can improve in their work
- In collective worship use the expertise of the subject leader to provide quality development for staff so that the best practice is shared with all and impact can be monitored

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:.....

1

Pupil outcomes

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

1

Provision

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

1

Leadership

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

2



The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school is outstanding. Pupils can clearly articulate the mission of the school and have been supported by staff to translate the mission into child-friendly language for younger and older pupils. The pupils understand that they are cared for and valued as individuals and follow the teachings of Jesus. Pupils are given many opportunities to develop their talents and skills, and through these they grow in virtue. One pupil told us that, 'This school is brilliant because it gives everyone a chance to show their talents.' All pupils show a deep respect for themselves and each other. The staff strive to instil in the pupils the importance of looking after one another. This is demonstrated in how the oldest pupils support the younger pupils with their reading. Small actions have a ripple-effect that bring the whole school community to action. We heard about an example of a pupil who was taking action to clear litter on the school grounds. Whilst we were in the school, the reception class were looking forward to going to the local beach to pick up litter. These examples were evidence of the strong sense of community-outreach. Pupils have a desire to help those less fortunate. They support a range of planned charities such as CAFOD, Nugent Care, Asylum Link and the local foodbank. In addition, pupils write to the headteacher to articulate how and why a fundraising project should happen. The pupils respond to the demands of Catholic Social Teaching and particularly develop their understanding of social injustice through the Edmund Rice award offered in Year 6.

The quality of provision for the life and mission of the school is outstanding. Staff are highly committed to the Catholic life of the school and the educational mission of the Church. Staff are highly supportive of each other, and they demonstrate the school values through their relationships with one another. Staff intrinsically offer a culture of welcome to all. They dedicate themselves fully to the school and Christ is at the centre of all that they do. All stakeholders speak highly of the family atmosphere that exists within the school. Staff talk about a feeling of welcome

that greets them when they start as a new member of the team. They feel supported in their roles, particularly by the religious education subject leader. The school has a mental health action group who meet regularly to ensure the voice of all staff is listened to. The school has a welcoming Catholic environment. They recognise that this could be developed to enhance the provision even further. The school plans and delivers relationships, sex and health education using the programme approved by the Archdiocese. Parents are invited to review the content prior to the programme.

The degree to which leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the life and mission of the school is good. Leaders and governors articulate the Church's mission and ensure Christ is at the heart of the school. The subject leader for religious education has worked hard to create a strong partnership between the school and local parish. The parish priest celebrates Mass in church on special occasions. The annual Grandparents' Mass is a popular event about which the children speak fondly. Opportunities for parents to attend more occasions of prayer and liturgy in school or church would enhance the mission further. Leaders, staff and governors talk with passion about the values of the school. Governors are highly ambitious for the school and celebrate its strengths. They also provide challenge and support where necessary. Leaders and Governors are committed to providing pastoral support for the well-being of all staff. Parents are overwhelmingly positive in their comments about the ethos of the school, and they support the mission. The self-evaluation of the Catholic life of the school is led by the headteacher and religious education subject leader. The self-evaluation is shared with Governors and their input is valued.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade:.....

1

Pupil outcomes

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education.....

1

Provision

The quality of teaching, learning, and assessment in religious education.....

1

Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor, and evaluate the provision for religious education.....

1



How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education is outstanding. Teachers plan using the required programme of study. The staff develop learning through different creative activities such as drama and hot seating which results in an engaging Catholic curriculum. Evidence from lesson observations and pupil voice clearly shows that pupils are developing secure knowledge, understanding and skills. Pupils produce work of a high standard and the use of developmental marking, using pupil feedback is being embedded. Once fully established, this should help them to deepen their understanding further. In lessons pupils are highly engaged, reflective and speak with confidence about their understanding. Pupils demonstrate the ability to make links to prior learning and in some lessons, to scripture they have encountered through their learning journey. Pupils speak confidently about their learning using subject-specific vocabulary accurately. They are highly reflective. They work well independently, in pairs and in groups. Pupils' achievement is in line with attainment in other core subjects.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in religious education is outstanding. During the inspection we witnessed some examples of highly effective teaching that the school should use as models of practice when developing less experienced staff. In these lessons, teachers demonstrate high levels of subject knowledge and high expectations. They have a deep understanding of the impact that their teaching can have on the moral and spiritual development of pupils. The staff enable pupils to use this knowledge to make sense of the world they live in. Pupils respond effectively in lessons: they are engaged and encouraged to take time to reflect on their understanding to further advance their progress. The teachers and support staff use questioning effectively to challenge and support pupils to develop their learning. Planning is linked to current assessment and pupils make progress due to this. Pupils are provided with opportunities to present their work in a variety of ways. The pupils creatively use art and ICT to

share their learning. They talk enthusiastically about having the chance to develop their learning in different ways.

The degree to which the leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for religious education is outstanding. The school curriculum reflects the expectations of the Religious Education Directory. Leaders and Governors ensure religious education is comparable with other core subjects in terms of resourcing, timetabling and staffing. The leader for religious education is a role model for others. She leads with knowledge and commitment that demonstrates a clear vision for the continued development of religious education. Her own practice in all areas is of a very high standard. It would be beneficial for her to have the opportunity to share this excellent practice with other staff to develop any areas of misconception. The religious education leader has a monitoring cycle in place to identify areas of strength and development. Subsequently, professional development of staff is provided by the religious education leader. The religious education leader supports staff in moderating pupils work, providing support and challenge. Teachers who are new to the school or the profession are provided with a package of support to enable them to be fully engaged with the provision offered in a Catholic school. The religious education leader attends local cluster-meetings where good practice is shared. Leaders understand that the needs of the pupils within the school are varied, and they plan an imaginative and thoughtful curriculum offer to enrich the experience of the pupils building upon the life experiences that they have had. The governing body regularly receives reports on achievement and progress from the headteacher, providing them with a secure understanding of religious education across the school. Religious education is monitored in line with other core subjects.

Collective worship

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

Collective worship key judgement grade:.....

1

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



The degree to which pupils participate in and respond to the school's prayer and liturgy is outstanding. The school has a daily pattern of prayer that is embedded into the school day and pupils engage and actively participate with reverence. Pupils respond well to the experiences, and they were observed responding and leading prayer with joyous reflection. The school encourages pupils to develop an understanding of the liturgical calendar. The pupils are encouraged to create prayer focus areas using resources that reflect the liturgical seasons. Pupils understand their role during prayer and worship and were observed leading prayers. Pupils in older classes regularly plan for and lead prayer and liturgy regularly. This is evidenced in the class prayer and liturgy records and pupils refer to these experiences in lessons. Pupils talk confidently about how they enjoy the opportunity to lead worship for other classes. They would like to have more opportunities to lead worship for parents and carers.

The quality of prayer and liturgy is outstanding. The subject leader for religious education leads the staff team in planning using the liturgical year and key themes. Prayer and liturgy is at the heart of school life. There is a clear and well embedded daily pattern of prayer that is linked to the prayer life of the Church. The teachers develop the skills and understanding of pupils, so they know how to plan prayer and liturgy well. As a result, the pupils who have had the opportunity to lead worship are able to reflect on the experience and can talk about why they choose specific pieces of scripture and music to enhance the experience. Music is used to enhance reverence and in some collective worship, children were observed singing, so adding vibrancy to their experience. Staff use their own musical talents to enhance worship by playing instruments to accompany children. The school have plans to develop the space for worship. They plan to use areas other than classrooms both indoor and outdoor. Leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate provision for prayer and liturgy is good. The policy for prayer and liturgy is accessible

for all and is fit for purpose for new and experienced staff to follow. The religious education leader is a model of good practice as a leader of worship. Leaders, including governors, understand the different levels and skills of participation that are reflective of the age and capacity of pupils. The religious education leader has delivered training in prayer and liturgy to all staff. As a result, they understand its importance. Staff are developing their ability to enable pupils to participate in, plan and deliver worship. The next steps are for the religious education leader to model good practice to staff and pupils so that all leaders of worship have a clear understanding of the school's expectations for prayer and liturgy and so measure impact. Leaders, including governors, recognise the importance of prayer and liturgy and allocate their budget accordingly to provide good quality resources and quality experiences. An example of this is the weekly worship led by a visiting community group that immerses the pupils into stories from the Bible in a creative way. The subject leader has a clear plan to evaluate prayer and liturgy delivered by staff and pupils. This will assist on-going training and support for all staff in developing and delivering high quality provision.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Mary's Preparatory School
School unique reference number (URN)	104972
Full postal address of the school	The Mount, Blundellsands Rd West, Blundellsands, Liverpool, L23 6TF
School phone number	0151 924 6302
Name of head teacher or principal	Mr Jonathan Webster
Chair of governing board	Mrs Sheila Ward
School Website	https://stmarys.ac/prep/
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	St Mary's College Crosby Trust Ltd
Type of school	Primary
School category	Independent
Age-range of pupils	4 -11
Trustees	St Mary's College Crosby Trust
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	10/02/2015
Previous denominational inspection grade	Outstanding

The inspection team

Mrs Jude Ryan	Lead inspector
Mrs Cathie Williams	Team inspector
Name of inspector	Lead/team
Name of inspector	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