

St Francis Catholic Primary School

URN: 141818

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Bishop of Portsmouth

05–06 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

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 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

1

Compliance statement

- St Francis Catholic Primary School is compliant with the general norms for religious education laid down by the Bishops' Conference.
- Currently there are no additional requirements of the diocesan bishop.
- The school has fully responded to the areas for improvement from the last inspection.

What the school does well

- Leaders, including governors, are outstanding witnesses to the Catholic life and mission of St Francis' School.
- Staff exemplify the values of the school through their mutual respect and collaboration, serving as powerful role models for the children and living out the Catholic ethos and mission in all they do.
- Learning behaviours are consistently exemplary.
- Strong teacher subject knowledge, alongside high expectations, help ensure attainment in religious education is outstanding.
- Children are highly engaged and participate reverently in all acts of worship.

What the school needs to improve

- The school needs to review the many value systems used to support its strong Catholic ethos, refining where appropriate, and decide how they can best be used to ensure a simplified understanding of the school's Catholic identity.
- Develop a strategic plan for provision and formation of children and staff, in preparation for the implementation of the *Prayer and Liturgy Directory*.

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

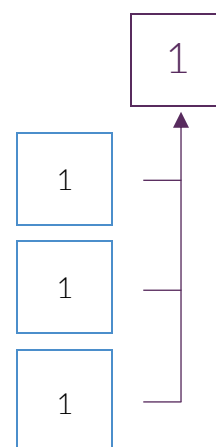
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

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 have a very strong understanding of the distinctive nature of the Catholic school and are very keen to share what the mission of their school is. Pupils are confident, knowing they are made in the image and likeness of God and that they are always trying to 'recognise Christ in everyone'. One child said: 'Everyone has a good side and we should look for that in everyone.' Pupils are given opportunities to succeed in all areas of school life. Behaviour, including learning behaviours, is consistently exemplary. There are many opportunities for pupil leadership, such as peer mediators, junior leadership team, prayer leaders and, for the younger pupils, Mini Frankies. There is a true sense of purpose, along with pride taken, as they carry out their duties. Pupils understand their responsibility to treat others with deep respect and have a strong understanding of how their actions are related to Catholic social teaching. Their response has included raising monies to support children and families locally and internationally including the TEABAG charity which supports a school in Ghana. Children can confidently articulate why their actions are important and link them to the principles of Catholic social teaching. There are many occasions to celebrate success in the school. Scholar assemblies with cap and gown, along with certificates, headteacher awards and the Special Mentions Book are highly effective in supporting pupils with good behaviour choices and valued by all.

All in the school embrace the mission statement, bearing witness to Christ in many areas of St Francis' school life. Staff exemplify the values of the school through their mutual respect and collaboration, serving as powerful role models to the children and by living out the Catholic ethos and mission in all they do. There is a strong sense of community with many staff wishing to share how they view the school as a family, and how they recognise that they too play an important part within that family no matter their role, one commented, 'We feel we are one big

family, there is a huge amount of respect for one another, with those around you being supportive and encouraging.' Staff provide supportive pastoral care for pupils. The emotional literacy support assistant (ELSA) is valued within the school community for supporting children and their parents when faced with more challenging circumstances. All areas of the school environment bears witness to the Catholic character of this community. This is evident from posters in the hall sharing scripture relating to food and drink to simple but attractive focal points and displays. The school's relationship and health education programme is well planned, valued by the staff and children, and referred to throughout school life.

Leaders, including governors, are determined in their ambition for St Francis Primary School and in their role as guardians of its Catholic life. They speak confidently, knowledgeably and from the heart about St Francis' mission. The headteacher is a model of Catholic servant leadership, who with the support of her governors and leaders leads the school with unwavering commitment to recognising Christ in everyone. The school works closely with the parish, the priest supporting the school with their prayer life, while during recent building issues the church building was used. Partnership with parents is strong, a typical sentiment being, 'The school provides the children with a wonderful education and a true sense of belonging to a very special community where kindness and hard work are encouraged and acknowledged daily. A truly lovely school.' The school is committed to all that Catholic social teaching embodies and has woven these values throughout school life. The school now needs to formalise a clear and strategic expression of the Catholic worldview across the curriculum, ensuring it is explicitly planned for and evident, when appropriate, in all subject areas. There remains a high regard for all who work at St Francis for both their wellbeing and workload. Professional development is carefully planned, often on an individual basis which staff value. The school currently draws upon many value systems, such as the mission statement, its charism, the school values and Catholic social teaching principles, to drive and support its Catholic ethos. Although all bring an extra dimension to the strong ethos of the school, some pupils can find the large number difficult to retain and apply. The school needs to review them as a whole, refining where appropriate, and decide how they can best be used to ensure a simplified understanding of the school's Catholic identity.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

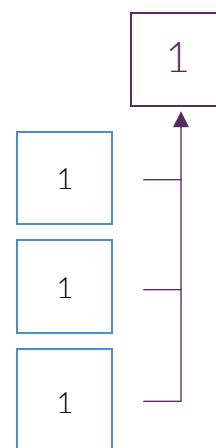
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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 have developed an excellent knowledge and understanding of their religious education, making good progress in all year groups. Where progress is strongest, teachers are highly knowledgeable, with a strong pedagogy and know their children's ability well. Attainment in religious education is outstanding. In all lessons and books, pupils have strong religious literacy, are able to confidently and accurately use religious vocabulary, able to put forward viewpoints and argue using reference to scripture, Church teaching and how they can apply it to their own lives. They enthusiastically debate issues that concern us in the world today. A strong example of this is where a class were able to consider and reflect on the impact of the media on the many issues that surround refugees in the UK. Pupils record their learning well through a variety of tasks. Learning behaviours are very well established, consistent and lead to strong progress in learning. This is displayed in work being of a consistently high standard. The engagement and enjoyment of religious education learning is also notable, with pupils remarking, 'We learn about how God wants us to be and how to be more like Him. It's good being made to think and to be challenged.'

High expectations are held throughout the school at all levels of staffing and leadership, with teachers showing a deep commitment to the delivery of high quality teaching. Planning is very effective and assessment, that is carefully considered, feeds well into this. Staff use skilful questioning to shape learning, ensuring there is support, as well as challenge for all pupils. Teachers use the school's feedback policy to good effect in religious education, shaping learning both within the lesson and encouraging further thinking before the next lesson, which pupils respond to. This is seen to a particularly high level in Year 4, with feedback both supporting and extending all pupils exceedingly well. There are many opportunities for celebration for achievement in religious education within the school such as the Scholar assembly and the

Special Mentions Book. Staff have a strong understanding of the impact the subject can have on the pupils' moral and spiritual development. This was recognised many times in parent feedback, one parent conveyed, 'I can see how my children have learned Catholic values and how they understand Christian life, thanks in large part to the education they receive at school... in everyday situations ... I notice how they make decisions that respect others and reflect the values the school works hard to instil.'

The diocesan scheme, God Matters, is used imaginatively to engage all pupils, with teachers being regularly signposted towards new ideas and different ways to enhance lessons. The subject leads for religious education have supported teachers in adapting task design to ensure the highest possible attainment for all children, including those with special educational needs. Leaders, including governors, ensure that religious education remains central to the school's curriculum. 10% of the curriculum is attributed to religious education and the pupils' books showcase the parity religious education has with the other core subjects. Staff training opportunities are very well planned and staff access diocesan courses, as well as in-house training. Governors have invested heavily in religious education leadership, which has impacted positively on staff confidence and skill, and ultimately on outcomes. This has ensured high quality continuous professional development in religious education for staff. One teacher remarked, 'RE is a core part of the school that can be found throughout our planning, discussions and learning. Consequently, while I may have entered with RE teaching being a relative weakness in my practice, I can now say with confidence that it is a real strength.' The subject leads have an inspired vision for religious education and have been relentless in ensuring standards remain high.

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 are highly engaged and participate reverently in opportunities for prayer and liturgy. Pupils come to prayer recognising the sacred space they are entering, the centrality of scripture, the rich Catholic traditions and the importance of reflection and response. A pupil commented, 'When we pray, we learn to care for others, to spread the word of God, to tell others how much He loves them.' Pupils were keen to share how they take forth the message from Friday's scholar assembly, to show the love of Christ with those at home by telling them that they love them, doing a chore without being asked or simply thanking them for how they care for them. Junior leaders and Mini Frankies work well with teachers and one another to serve the school in prayer and liturgy. The confidence in pupil ministry is notable. Ministry ranges from preparing the sacred space, giving the welcome, leading readings and prayers alongside being Year 6 prayer buddies to the youngest class. Pupils lead prayer very well. Prayer is planned for and punctuates the school day. Pupils are keen to reflect on their experience of prayer and liturgy, articulating well their experiences and how this can impact on their lives. The school partakes in the National School Singing Programme that involves musical enrichment and celebration of the faith through song, which enhances worship.

Prayer and liturgy is central to life at St Francis and is planned to ensure pupils and staff have a variety of opportunities within the Catholic tradition. Scripture remains at the heart of all worship. The choice of scripture is well-planned to meet the liturgical year and is shared with reverence; those reading recognise they are ministers of God's word. Pupils shared this means a lot to them. Music is used to enhance prayer and liturgy, with the children clearly enjoying their singing and participating fully. Space around the school is used effectively to provide and enhance worship. For example, the outdoor church used by the reception children for prayer is imaginative and engaging. Focal points in the classroom are attractive, well cared for and

powerfully simple. Staff recognise the importance of prayer in school and are committed to professional development within this area of school life. They are confident in planning worship, along with supporting pupils in their ministry of leading prayer. Pupils shared how they take the message from celebrations of the word back with them, 'We leave thinking about what we can now do for other people.'

Leaders have worked hard in developing a shared understanding and a consistent approach to prayer and liturgy throughout the school. Staff feel very confident in using this format. From this very strong basis, the school can now widen the opportunities provided to celebrate the richness of Catholic traditions with the pupils, staff, parish and families. Training has been impactful as it has been carefully considered and individually approached, with a clarity of purpose. Teachers have appreciated input and advice, 'I am now more confident in leading class prayers, supporting children. It's nice knowing I can ask the leadership any question without being judged.' School leaders have a strong knowledge and understanding of Catholic tradition and a high skill set in delivering improvement. Strong leadership has successfully improved staff confidence in delivering high quality worship within the school. The subject lead works with the school RE governor to review school practice each term. As the school continues to be ambitious in striving for high standards, school leaders and governors are aware they need to develop a clear and strategic plan for the provision of worship and the formation of children and staff, ready for the implementation of the *Prayer and Liturgy Directory*.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Francis Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	141818
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	8683335
Full postal address of the school	St Francis Catholic Primary School, Coronation Road, Ascot SL5 9HG
School phone number	01344 622840
Headteacher	Rhona Miccoli
Chair of governors	Jason Elwell
School Website	www.stfrancisprimary.org
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	Mother Teresa Catholic 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	4 May 2018
Previous denominational inspection grade	Good

The inspection team

Louise Buxton
Catherine Whatley

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