

St Francis Catholic Primary School

URN: 400723

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Archbishop of Cardiff-Menevia

14–15 May 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

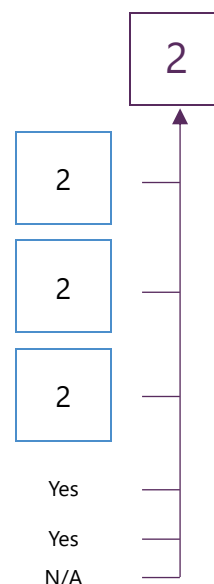
Collective worship (p.7)

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



Compliance statement

- 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.
- Due to the length of time since the last inspection, whether or not the school has responded fully to the areas for improvement from the last inspection is not applicable.

What the school does well

- St Francis Catholic Primary School is an inclusive, welcoming school community, where the Catholic faith is integral to all that they do.
- Good relationships and pastoral care are a strength of the school, leading to a strong sense of community. Pupils are proud to be part of their school.
- The behaviour of pupils and their positive attitude towards their learning are excellent. They are ready to learn.
- The manner in which the Catholic social teaching principles have been embedded into the life of the school is a strength. They are a key part of the school's work to help pupils to develop a deep understanding of justice, dignity, and the common good.
- The role of the 'Faith Ambassadors' and the work of the Mini Vinnie and Cafod pupil-voice groups are highly valued. They are passionate about the ways they actively participate in and contribute to the community; responding to the needs of others locally, nationally, and globally.

What the school needs to improve

- Ensure the quality of teaching in religious education (RE) is consistent across the school, so that all lessons have pace and challenge and give opportunities for pupils to fully meet the expected outcomes.
- Create a robust system to monitor, evaluate, and review the school's work in all three inspection areas. It should involve all relevant stakeholders and result in the identification of clear priorities and plans for improvement.
- Expand the range of opportunities for prayer, including spontaneous, reflective, and creative prayer, to deepen pupils' spiritual development and ensure a sense of awe and wonder is present in their opportunities to encounter God.

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

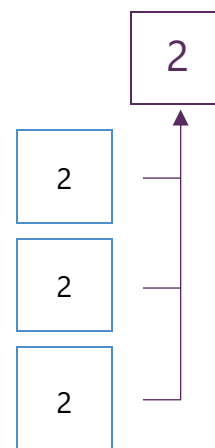
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

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 at St Francis Catholic Primary School understand the distinctive Catholic identity and mission of the school, actively living out their school mission statement, 'Together with Jesus we love and learn'. The role of the 'Faith Ambassadors' and the work of the Mini Vinnie and Cafod pupil-voice groups are highly valued, and pupils speak passionately about their leadership roles and the ways they actively participate in the community; responding to the needs of others locally, nationally, and globally. For example, the Faith Ambassadors lead regular Celebrations of the Word linked to Catholic social teaching principles and have organised a wide range of opportunities to help those in need, including raising money for Greenacres, a local animal rescue centre, and Sandy Bear, a local children's bereavement charity. In addition, pupils can articulate aspects of the theology underpinning their actions, for example through demonstrating a preferential option for the poor through charitable works such as 'Rainbow Day' for Noah's Ark charity, the Cafod Big Lent Walk, and Odd Socks Day for Children in Need. The behaviour of pupils is excellent in lessons and throughout the school. They are happy, confident, and proud to be members of St Francis Catholic Primary School.

St Francis is an inclusive, welcoming school community, where the Catholic faith is integral to all that they do. The quality of relationships across the school is very good, and a strong culture of inclusion is firmly in place. The pastoral care staff show for pupils, each other, and the most vulnerable in the community bears witness to the school's Catholic life and mission. In addition, staff actively support pupils as they participate in those activities which reflect the life and mission of the school and the service it offers to the community. Examples include making Christmas cards, singing Christmas carols at the local residential home, and collecting food donations for those in need. The school environment reflects its mission and identity through explicit signs of the school's Catholic character. For example, the prayer garden is a quiet, reflective space which was designed and developed by previous Faith Ambassadors. Displays in communal areas, notably those reflecting the development of Pupil Profile virtues and Catholic social teaching principles, demonstrate pupils' knowledge and understanding in these areas, although more care and attention given to these spaces would enhance their quality. The provision for relationships and sexuality education meets statutory and diocesan requirements.

The head teacher and all leaders and governors are committed to the development of a strong and cohesive Catholic community and have a keen sense of vocation, ensuring that Christ is always at the heart of decisions made. Leaders work well in partnership with the diocese and with partner Catholic schools. Recently, this has involved establishing a cluster improvement group and leading the cluster in exploring the Catholic social teaching principles through shared learning experiences, Celebrations of the Word, and implementation of the new *Religious Education Directory*. Diocesan requirements and initiatives are implemented appropriately. Leaders and governors recognise the principle that Catholic schools are at the service of the local church and seek to work well with the local parish. Different classes regularly attend weekly Mass at the church. Governors regularly contribute to the Catholic life and mission of the school. The governors who spoke with inspectors are passionate about their role and want the best for pupils. They are frequent visitors and facilitate the Mini Vinnie and Cafod pupil-voice groups. Parents are very supportive of the work of the school. Leaders and governors show high levels of respect for the dignity and well-being of staff. However, a culture of regular monitoring, evaluating, and reviewing, which includes the active involvement of governors, parents, and pupils, is underdeveloped.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

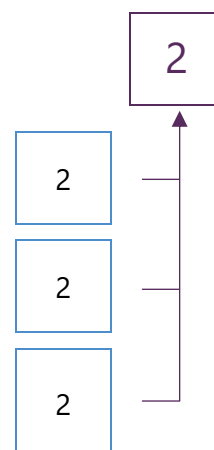
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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 their learning and approach their lessons with interest and enthusiasm. The adoption of the *Religious Education Directory* is in its early stages and pupils are becoming more secure in their knowledge and skills. As a result, a majority of pupils can speak with confidence about what they have learned and confidently use appropriate religious vocabulary. For example, pupils could discuss the fruit of the Holy Spirit, self-control, and give examples of how they apply it in their lives. Most pupils work independently and take initiative in their learning. They concentrate well and respond with enthusiasm to the range of learning activities provided, including oracy, art, and digital opportunities. This was particularly evident in the Early Years class, where, through role play, they could articulate that 'the Holy Spirit has come; Jesus kept his promise'. Nearly all pupils engage in lessons and show a willingness to improve their knowledge and skills. However, pupils have a limited knowledge of how well they are doing and of what they need to improve. This leads to pupils producing work that is inconsistent in its quality and presentation.

Teachers are generally confident in their subject knowledge and show an understanding of how pupils learn, appropriate to the phase in which they are teaching. Teachers show a strong commitment to the value of religious education (RE) and communicate this effectively to their pupils. Pupil effort is often celebrated, leading to good levels of motivation in their learning. The older children in Years 5 and 6 follow the role model of the class teacher by affirming their peers when a pupil responds well to a question. Teachers recognise the impact that RE has on the moral and spiritual development of pupils. Nearly all teachers give pupils space and time for reflection in lessons; pupils clearly enjoy this time. Teachers provide pupils with the opportunity to present their learning in a variety of ways; oracy, role play, creativity, and appropriate use of IT enhance pupils' learning across the school. Support staff are highly effective when working with individuals or groups of pupils; they know the pupils well and ensure that they work to their potential. During the inspection, teaching was varied across the school. In some lessons observed, where pace was slow, questioning closed and current assessment was not considered; opportunities were missed to move the pupils' learning forward and maximise their potential to achieve the expected outcomes.

Leaders and governors ensure that the RE programmes are selected for their ability to deliver the curriculum aims set out in the Directory. They also ensure that professional development opportunities are available for all practitioners in relation to subject and pedagogical knowledge. This has been carried out in partnership with the diocese, with the federated partner school as well as the wider Catholic cluster of schools. The subject leader for RE is very enthusiastic and has a clear vision for teaching and learning and the continuing roll out of the Directory. RE is identified as a core subject and is prioritised and timetabled appropriately. A newly implemented assessment system allows teachers to track the attainment of individual pupils. However, this is in its early stages and assessment data is not analysed to inform future improvements. Leaders ensure that pupils are provided with engaging enrichment activities. However, the activities do not always challenge learners enough to achieve their potential. Processes for monitoring, evaluation, and review are underdeveloped. Evaluation activities do not take place regularly enough and do not involve all stakeholders. Self-evaluation also needs to be more strongly focused on the areas of development, actions and impact to lead to further improvements in the school.

Collective worship

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

Collective worship key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

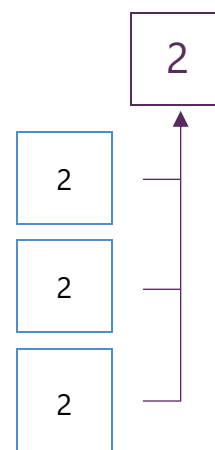
How well pupils participate in and respond to the school's collective worship

Provision

The quality of collective worship provided by the school

Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for collective worship



Collective worship at St Francis is an integral part of school life. Pupils respond positively to opportunities for prayer and worship provided by the school. They are prayerful and reverent, and pupils join in readily with prayer and song. Acts of worship such as those for the Harvest celebration, Christingle service, Ash Wednesday, and the Feast of St Francis, help pupils to live the liturgical year. Faith Ambassadors speak enthusiastically about leading the regular Celebration of the Word, focusing on Catholic social teaching principles. They respond to the scripture heard with heart-felt responses and consider how the word of God impacts on the way they live their lives. For example, in Nursery and Reception, having listened to the story of Pentecost, pupils were able to suggest ways that they could tell the good news of the Holy Spirit by creating a video and writing letters to their families. Pupils are supported to plan and lead prayer for their peers with the gather, listen, respond, and go forth format. The level of independence in preparing worship increases from the youngest to the oldest pupils, who display confidence in their role. During the pupil-led worship observed, pupils were proud to take part and read well. For example, Years 5 and 6 pupils independently and confidently led their time of prayer, focusing on the importance of Mary during the month of May, and all Years 5 and 6 pupils participated reverently. Evaluation of the quality of prayer and liturgy delivered by the pupils would allow collective worship experiences to develop even further.

Prayer and liturgy are part of school life and there is a daily opportunity for pupils to pray together. Opportunities are meaningful and age appropriate. Well-established routines of daily prayer, together with adult-led and pupil-led worship, reflect the Catholic character of the school. They follow the cycle of the liturgical year. Use of appropriate scripture passages and a progression prayer document, introducing a wide range of traditional prayers from early years to Year 6, is effective. Staff have supported pupils well to help them to plan and lead prayer. The school has made effective provision for prayer areas, both inside and outside in classrooms and communal areas. These include areas such as the outdoor classroom, log circle, and prayer garden. In addition, pupils attend Mass at the parish church regularly. Themes from the liturgies are often reinforced in lessons, ensuring that all pupils understand them and can apply them to their daily lives. School staff facilitate preparation for the

Sacraments of Reconciliation and First Holy Communion in conjunction with the parish. Though effective work has taken place to support pupils to plan and lead prayer, this could be enriched by expanding the range of prayer opportunities, including spontaneous, reflective, and creative prayer, to deepen pupils' spiritual development and ensure a sense of awe and wonder is present in their opportunities to encounter God.

Leaders promote prayer and liturgy well and have developed a policy on prayer and liturgy that is fit for purpose. Leaders have a thorough understanding of the Church's liturgical year, its seasons and feasts, and the necessary skills to develop meaningful themes for assemblies and other opportunities for worship. Recent work on developing pupil involvement in the preparation of worship has meant that pupils' participation skills progress through the school. Leaders recognise the importance of prayer and liturgy when setting budgets and allocating resources. Leaders have ensured that the school environment effectively demonstrates the Catholic ethos and nature of the school. For example, reflective displays that celebrate pupils' work on each of the Catholic social teaching principles are a prominent feature. Every classroom includes a focal point for prayer, reflecting the liturgical year or the curriculum, which includes pupil responses and individual prayers. However, some prayer areas need to be more engaging and interactive. To further improve outcomes and provision for prayer and liturgy, regular evaluation activities, including seeking the views of pupils, would be beneficial.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Francis Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	400723
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	6683314
Full postal address of the school	St Francis Catholic Primary School, Priory Road, Milford Haven, Pembrokeshire, SA73 2EE
School phone number	01646694830
Headteacher	Abigail Davies
Chair of governors	Joan Cole
School Website	https://sites.google.com/hwbcymru.net/stfranciscatholicschool/home
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	N/A
Phase	Primary
Type of school	Voluntary Aided School
Admissions policy	Non-selective
Age-range of pupils	3-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	26 – 27 January 2015
Previous denominational inspection grade	AG

The inspection team

Mrs Laura Taylor

Mrs Louise Mills

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

