



# St David's Catholic Primary School

URN: 401458

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

28–29 January 2026

## Summary of key findings

### Overall effectiveness

The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school

2

#### 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

2

#### 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

2

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

## What the school does well

- A very warm, strong and welcoming Catholic community is firmly established. All pupils benefit from this significantly. The Church's teaching on the preferential option for the poor is put into practice very well at this school.
- The leadership team is extremely dedicated and committed to its work. It has had a significantly positive impact across all three inspection areas in a short space of time.
- The central role that the Mass enjoys in the life of the school is an outstanding feature.
- The work of leaders and governors in relation to the implementation of a new religious education curriculum is very impressive.
- The manner in which many pupils are able to use complex subject-specific vocabulary in discussion about their learning in religious education is excellent.

## What the school needs to improve

- Create a broad range of opportunities for pupils to develop increasingly sophisticated independent learning skills.
- Refine monitoring, evaluating, and reviewing procedures in all three inspection areas, to increase their regularity and robustness and allow for improvement plans to flow from thorough data analysis.
- Increase the range of high-quality music and other art forms to enhance collective worship.

## 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**

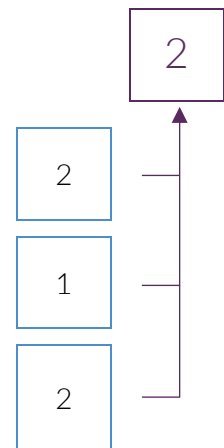
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

**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 David's are happy in school. They feel secure and well cared for. They are keen to participate in the opportunities given to be an active part of the school's Catholic life and mission. They spoke enthusiastically to inspectors, for example, about supporting the work of Cafod and about engaging with and entertaining some of the parish's elderly members during the Advent season. They understand that Jesus is their example of how to live and they are beginning to develop an understanding of how Catholic social teaching (CST) should influence their actions. Many pupils, for example, understand that the concept of 'stewardship' relates to our care for creation and, further, to the work done to achieve Eco-School status. Some of the other principles of CST are less well known. Pupils are respectful to one another, and they exhibit a most welcoming attitude towards visitors. Their exemplary behaviour reflects very positively on the work done by both staff and parents. They value highly the work of the school's staff to support them, and they are very appreciative of the work of the parish priest, who visits regularly to support classes and to celebrate Mass.

Staff are very committed to the implementation of the school's mission statement across the whole of its life. Consequently, a very strong Catholic community has been established in which all are welcomed enthusiastically. The sense of teamwork is palpable and all staff, without exception, participate in it. They display a very impressive determination to particularly support the most vulnerable. The quality of relationships is an outstanding feature of school life and the quality of pastoral care provided is excellent. A range of support strategies for those in need is very effective. A qualified member of staff works with a sense of vocation to support those who have experienced trauma in their lives. This range of support is greatly appreciated by parents. One response to the survey taken noted that, 'I feel supported in encouraging my children in

their faith. It's amazing'. The school environment is clearly Catholic in nature and displays in classrooms and corridors are good. The highly impressive work of the parish priest contributes significantly to the school's life and mission. This, in combination with the work of staff, ensures that pupils' spiritual and moral development is good. Provision for relationships and sex education is in line with diocesan expectations.

Leaders and governors understand that the development of the school's Catholic life and mission is central to their roles. They have developed very strong links with the parish. This is an outstanding feature of school life. Partnerships with parents are effective; nearly 100% of responses to the inspection's survey were positive. The head teacher provides a most caring approach towards staff, pupils, and parents, with an impressive emphasis on the most vulnerable. Her work, over a relatively short period of time, has had a significantly positive impact on the life of the school. Staff greatly value the way they are treated with dignity. Governors are knowledgeable about the work of the school and they are fully committed to their roles. They have a supportive approach towards leaders. However, they do not provide sufficient levels of challenge for them. Leaders' self-evaluation documentation is descriptive in nature and pupils do not currently play a role in its development. However, it is reasonably accurate in this area.

## Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

### Religious education key judgement grade

**Pupil outcomes**

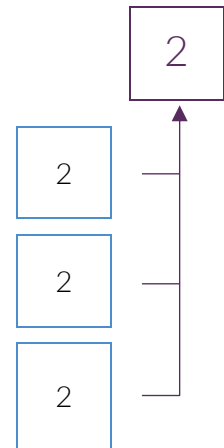
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

**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, across the school, make good progress and they achieve well. Data is not currently available in order to facilitate the comparison of various cohorts, such as by gender or additional learning needs for example. Most learners are actively engaged and their religious literacy develops well. The impressive behaviour of children during lessons is conducive to effective learning. A particularly impressive feature is the way some pupils are able to use subject-specific vocabulary in a mature manner whilst, for example, discussing the link between the miracle of the loaves and fish and the Eucharist. Pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to take a leading and independent role in their learning. However, they are enthusiastic about their studies and they concentrate well. They produce good work that is generally well presented, and some elements of excellence are in place, such as Year 6's work when comparing St John's Gospel with the synoptic authors and Year 1's re-telling of the Annunciation. Pupils have a willingness to improve their learning, and they are developing their skills in relation to self and peer assessment. This work is in its early stages; however, learners do have a good understanding of how well they are doing.

Teachers display good levels of subject knowledge and they are very committed to the value of religious education (RE). They enthusiastically ask plentiful questions of learners. However, at times, they are not sufficiently well focussed on checking for depth of understanding and on improving the quality of responses. Opportunities to ask follow-up questions, with this in mind, are not taken often enough. Overall, the quality of teaching is good with some excellent elements in place. Some explaining skills observed during the inspection were excellent; for example, a teacher-led discussion on the symbolism involved in Raphael's painting of *The Transfiguration* was outstanding. Teachers are keen to move children's learning forward. They celebrate success well and their marking consistently prompts learners to refine their work.

Skills in this area are good. Assessment practice is in development in relation to a new curriculum; a good start has been made. Good use of IT is made in lessons and teachers develop pupils' skills in this area well. Support staff are skilled and committed. They make a significantly positive impact on provision and some of their work is excellent. Communication between teachers and support staff is very good and they work effectively in a commendable spirit of partnership.

Leaders and governors have worked diligently to develop and implement a new curriculum. They have worked effectively in partnership with the diocese, cluster partners and schools further afield to ensure that learners have the opportunity to benefit from a scripture-rich curriculum with clear progression in place. They show high levels of commitment to RE and the subject enjoys a high level of status across the school. The subject leader is dedicated to her role and she has worked with determination to co-ordinate this work. Good professional development has been provided for staff to complement this work. Monitoring of the curriculum and of standards attained is not sufficiently regular or robust. Consequently, the methodical analysis of empirically gathered data does not feature strongly in self-evaluation procedures. Governors are keen to take part in the evaluative process; they have been involved in book trawls, for example. However, they do not currently have access to a broad range of data, including those for all learners, those with English as an additional language, and those with additional learning needs, for example, that would allow them to more effectively hold leaders to account.

## 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

2

#### Provision

The quality of collective worship provided by the school

2

#### Leadership

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

2

2

Most pupils respond well to the opportunities they have to take part in prayer and liturgy. They are able to participate with respect and to reflect, in silence, for reasonable periods. The quality of their singing is good. They understand that there is a range of ways to pray in the Catholic tradition; this includes the most common prayers of the Church, meditation, and the use of scripture. Pupils benefit from regular opportunities to plan and lead class-based collective worship. These occasions follow a well-established structure and pupils take part in them respectfully. The Gospel is consistently at their centre and they are well timed, ending with a 'mission' to go forward. The quality of these acts of worship is good. During the inspection, for example, good quality worship planned by Year 4 pupils focussed on the Gospel story of Jesus walking on the water, and the well thought out 'mission' was to ensure that we 'find time to listen to God'. Pupils regularly review the quality of these acts of worship well. Many pupils are aware that some of their experiences of prayer and liturgy can be linked directly to practical actions to support those in need. The school's enthusiastic 'Mini Vinnies' group spoke with inspectors, for example, about this concept and their work to support Cafod.

The quality of provision, overall, is good. Staff ensure that appropriately planned prayer and liturgy are an integral part of the life of the school. As a result, pupils benefit from a range of collective worship experiences involving the whole school, phases, classes, and the individual. Well-chosen scripture passages are central to provision. During the inspection, for example, a good act of worship, led by the head teacher, focussed on the parable of the lost sheep. The use of music and other art forms to enhance the quality of collective worship and to create a deeply prayerful environment is limited. Staff have developed a range of strong skills aimed at supporting pupils to plan, lead, and evaluate collective worship and this has greatly benefitted them. Good use of space is made to enhance collective worship; the school's prayer room

provides an appropriate setting. Staff work well to involve parents in the prayer life of the school. A Mass in the parish church attended by some pupils during the inspection was very well supported by parents and they have regular opportunities to attend class assemblies in school. Feedback indicates that they greatly appreciate these links with their children's faith journey.

Leaders and governors have ensured that an appropriate policy for prayer and liturgy is in place. They have a very strong commitment to the Eucharist. Consequently, an outstanding feature of the life of the school is the central role that the Mass plays in it. Pupils benefit significantly as a result. Leaders also have an understanding of the importance of the Sacrament of Reconciliation; it is made available to pupils during the season of Lent. Leaders have supported staff well and the professional development provided is good, particularly in relation to preparing pupils to lead collective worship. Staff greatly value the approachability of leaders when they require advice and support. Leaders have ensured that a good range of resources are in place to support and enhance the development of prayer and liturgy. Budgetary outlay for resources in this area compares favourably with other subject areas. Leaders have carried out some good work to monitor the quality of child-led worship, and governors have been involved in this process. However, other forms of collective worship have not been monitored for some time. Therefore, there is not a strategic plan in place, based on the outcomes of monitoring the full range of prayer and liturgy, that is aimed at further improving the quality of provision.

## Information about the school

Full name of school	St David's Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	401458
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	6783324
Full postal address of the school	Caldicot Way, Pontrhydyrun, Cwmbran, Torfaen, NP44 1UF
School phone number	01633482580
Executive headteacher	Not applicable
Headteacher	Learne Harris
Chair of governors	Fr Daniel Stanton - Acting
School Website	<a href="http://www.stdavidprimarycwmbbran.com">www.stdavidprimarycwmbbran.com</a>
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	Not applicable
Phase	Primary
Type of school	Voluntary Aided School
Admissions policy	Non-selective
Age-range of pupils	3-11
Gender of pupils	Not applicable
Date of last denominational inspection	6 <sup>th</sup> – 7 <sup>th</sup> May 2014
Previous denominational inspection grade	UU

## The inspection team

Lyndon Watkins  
Julia Fitzgerald

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