

Catholic Schools Inspectorate inspection report for St Francis Catholic Primary School

URN: 402079

Carried out on behalf of the Most Rev. Mark O'Toole, Archbishop of Cardiff on:

25-26 May 2023

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 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 quality of pastoral care for vulnerable pupils, especially, is excellent.
- St. Francis School is a very strong and welcoming Catholic community.
- The leadership team is fully dedicated to its work and prospects for further improvement are very good.

What the school needs to improve:

- Develop and implement plans to address the variability in the quality of teaching across the school.
- Ensure that the planned religious education curriculum is more ambitious in nature in order to allow pupils' emerging individuality and creativity to be fully developed.

- Create opportunities for pupils to be more fully involved in the life of the school in relation to collective worship and to self-evaluation processes.

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:.....

2

Pupil outcomes

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

2

Provision

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

2

Leadership

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

2

Pupils understand the Catholic nature of the school and they value the manner in which they are cared for by staff in an impressively nurturing way. They are happy to attend and they show a high level of interest in playing a full role in the Catholic life and mission of the school; when they have such opportunities, they do well. Currently, these opportunities are limited and pupils would benefit from them being expanded. Pupils understand that the school community is committed to following the example of Jesus as expressed in the Gospels and that this involves serving those in need. The school supports the work of Cafod and it raises funds for a local charity. Pupils show respect for themselves, each other and for adults. During the inspection, older pupils showed an impressive ability to help and support younger children. The large majority of pupils are very well-behaved and they welcome visitors in a most engaging manner.

The school's Mission Statement is a clear expression of the principles that underpin its work. It has been revisited recently by staff and governors. Staff are fully committed to its implementation and they actively take part in activities which reflect the life and mission of the school. St Francis School benefits from an excellent culture of welcome. It is a very strong and inclusive Catholic community. This is a significant strength of the school, which is particularly impressive, given that only 29% of pupils are baptised Catholics. This has been achieved due to the high levels of commitment from the leadership team and from staff. The manner in which the school supports vulnerable pupils is excellent. The 'Nurture Base' provides an impressive service to those who need it. It is run by well-trained and committed staff and this work allows all pupils to have the opportunity to be happy in school and to succeed. This work puts the Church's teaching on the 'preferential option for the poor' into action in a very impressive manner. The school's environment is very clearly Catholic and it is well ordered. Every class area has an appropriate

space in it that reflects the religious education topic being studied or the current point in the liturgical year. Leaders are enthusiastic about working closely with the local parish to provide a broad range of moral and spiritual development opportunities for pupils however, this has not been possible recently due to a lack of capacity in the parish. They are considering creative ways to develop in this area. The school's provision for Relationships and Sex Education is fully compliant with archdiocesan expectations.

Leaders are passionate about their work and they are able to articulate their vision about the Catholic life of the school well. They provide impressive role models for staff and for pupils. The headteacher and the curriculum leader for religious education have secured significant progress over a relatively short amount of time and they show great potential for the future. The development of the 'Nurture Base', for example, is the result of a positive vision and very good use of available resources. Leaders and governors witness to the Gospel in their direction of the school at every level. The self-evaluation document produced by leaders is rather general in nature and it lacks analysis. Pupils have not had the opportunity to play a significant role in this area of school life. Leaders show a compassionate approach towards staff and an awareness of the importance of their wellbeing. Staff attend archdiocesan training opportunities and they have welcomed the Director of Religious Education to work directly with the school community.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade:.....

2

Pupil outcomes

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

2

Provision

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

2

Leadership

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

2



The rate at which pupils develop their knowledge and skills is good, appropriate and in keeping with expectations. They become increasingly religiously literate as they move through the school and they exhibit a good awareness of the challenges involved in following Christ in everyday life. Pupils speak with enthusiasm about their learning and they report that they enjoy their lessons in religious education. However, pupils have limited opportunities to use their initiative during their learning. The majority of pupils are able to concentrate well for extended periods of time. Work is generally well-presented and standards are good. Levels of engagement in the large majority of classes are good and pupils are keen to develop their skills and knowledge. They are enthusiastic about their learning and they respond positively to their teachers. Behaviour during lessons is therefore very good in the large majority of lessons. In a very small minority of classes, the limited engagement levels of some pupils can hinder the learning process. Pupils have a reasonable understanding about their strengths and weaknesses and about what they need to do to improve. Religious education across the school is highly valued and attainment is at least on a par with that in the other core subject areas.

Teachers exhibit a strong commitment to the value of religious education. Their approach and demeanour communicates this effectively to their pupils. The planning of learning flows from the archdiocesan approved scheme of work and it is pitched well. However, insufficient opportunities are provided to develop pupils' emerging creativity and independence. There is significant variability in teaching across the school. It ranges from very good (with some elements of excellence) to adequate with significant improvements needed. Overall, the standards of

teaching are good. Teachers use questioning to introduce key learning concepts. This is effective to a point but some opportunities to delve more deeply into subject matter and to check for understanding are not taken. Teacher interaction with pupils is positive and encouraging; this contributes well towards developing their motivation. The quality of feedback to pupils is developing. Some good work is evident in the use of an approach to marking that demands a further response from them. This contributes well towards a deepening of learner understanding. Teachers provide pupils with the opportunity to present their learning in the written form and through the use of information technology.

Leaders and governors have ensured that the programme provided for religious education satisfies all archdiocesan requirements. They take advantage of the training opportunities provided such as those on Relationships and Sex Education for example. Governors are very committed to the school and to their work and they are supportive of the leadership team. They have a secure knowledge about the school's strengths and weaknesses. The subject leader has been in post for a short period of time. She shows an admirable level of commitment to and passion for her role. Her work has already made a positive impact; for example, along with the day to day work of teachers, it has resulted in the overall judgement of 'good' for academic standards noted in this report. Her input and that of the equally dedicated headteacher shows great potential. The work of leaders relating to the monitoring of pupil progress and of standards has developed well but it requires further time in order to become embedded and to make its full impact. The quality of the school's self-evaluation work is adequate. It tends to be descriptive rather than analytical in nature and as a consequence, insufficient hard evidence is referenced.

Collective worship

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

Collective worship key judgement grade:.....

2

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



Pupils respond well to the experiences of prayer and liturgy provided by the school. They join in readily with prayer and song as evidenced by the 'Gweddiwn' assembly led by the head teacher during the inspection. Behaviour is good during times of collective worship and pupils respect periods of silence as well. Classes have had the opportunity to plan collective worship. This was well illustrated by the Year 6 assembly during the inspection which had a clear purpose, message, and direction. The school now needs to build on good recent work, in order to give pupils greater ownership of their collective worship. Evaluation of the quality of prayer and liturgy by the pupils would allow collective worship experiences to develop even further. The 'Christian Meditation' and 'Examen' programmes have been well implemented throughout the school and they bring a stillness for pupils and an opportunity for them to reflect. Pupils reported that this had a direct and positive impact on them and that it gave them a sense of purpose and a nearness to God. They show an appropriate awareness that these ways of praying are a part of the Catholic tradition.

Acts of worship reflect the Catholic character of the school. The coordinator has developed collective worship well and she is enthusiastic about its role within school life. Each class plans a 'Gweddiwn' assembly at the end of every topic and parents are invited to attend. The 'Class Chaplains' concept is in its infancy but they already have an important role to play in leading prayer and the reflective 'Examen' throughout the week. The potential for pupils to enhance the school's prayer and liturgy is not fully realized yet. During the inspection, class chaplains expressed the desire to develop a school prayer and song with enthusiasm. Staff are well able to use their gifts to enhance the prayer and liturgy of the school and with the involvement and collaboration of pupils, these could be made into rich experiences for the whole community.

Class and whole school displays are of a good quality and the Pupil Profile Values are displayed prominently in each class. There is a good quality focal point for prayer in every classroom. The school has the desire to work well with the local parish and it would benefit from its support in the area of chaplaincy, especially during key times and significant moments in the life of the school, such as those experienced around the time of the inspection.

Leaders promote collective worship well and they are good role models for both pupils and for staff in this area. The school's collective worship policy details the aims, principles and planning of prayer and liturgy effectively. The coordinator has introduced a good approach to the monitoring of collective worship but this work is in its infancy and it requires time to become embedded and to make a significant impact. At the present time, pupil views on the quality of worship and their thoughts on possible ways forward do not feature, in a formal way, in the work of leaders. This is an area for development. Opportunities are missed to develop worship that would be more engaging and of a higher quality and therefore more accessible and relevant to pupils. Leaders have worked well to develop staff skills in and understanding of the delivery of prayer and liturgy. They are well supported and given the opportunity to lead liturgy and prayer throughout the year. The celebration of Mass has not featured recently in the life of the school due to a lack of capacity in the parish. Leaders have the necessary commitment to make this happen. They have made efforts for the school community to access Mass, as they realise its centrality to Catholic life.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Francis Catholic Primary School.
School unique reference number (URN)	402079
Full postal address of the school	Wilson Road, Ely, Cardiff CF5 4JL
School phone number	029 2059 1666
Name of head teacher or principal	Miss Marie Langsdale
Chair of governing board	Mrs Alex Kydd
School Website	www.stfrancisprm.cardiff.sch.uk
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary Aided
Age-range of pupils	3 – 11 Years.
Trustees	
Gender of pupils	male and female
Date of last denominational inspection	November 2012.
Previous denominational inspection grade	Adequate

The inspection team

Name of inspector: Mr Lyndon Watkins	Lead inspector
Name of inspector: Mrs Juliet Stack	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