



Catholic Schools Inspectorate inspection report for
St Mary's RC Primary School

URN106252:

Carried out on behalf of the Right Rev. John Arnold , Bishop of Salford on:

28th and 29th June 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.....	1
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

1. The excellent leadership and deep commitment of the head teacher over many years has ensured that St Mary's, Denton is a truly Catholic school where pupils have a deep sense of belonging and staff are valued and cared for.
2. Governors are knowledgeable and ambitious for the school. They are very successful in their role as guardians of the faith at St Mary's and show true dedication to the school's improvement plans.
3. Staff are excellent role models and provide a deep care for the pupils. All children know they are loved and cared for.
4. Pupils love coming to St Mary's and behave very well both in classes and around school. They take on many leadership roles enthusiastically.

- The outstanding Catholic life and mission is enhanced by the excellent links with the parish.

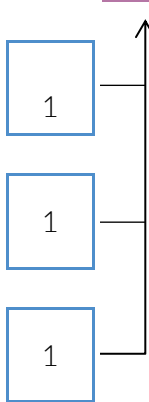
What the school needs to improve:

- Further enhance opportunities for creativity, individuality and the celebration of achievement, so that all pupils, especially those with special educational needs, know more, remember more and do more leading to the best possible outcomes.
- Broaden the opportunities for pupils to deepen their experience of prayer and liturgy by improving the variety and the quality of prayerful moments so that pupils are fully engaged and active in their participation.
- Develop the environment around school and outside to create attractive focused areas for prayer and liturgy to clearly indicate the school's commitment to deepen and enhance each person's faith journey.

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	1



Overall, the outcomes for pupils at St Mary’s, Denton are outstanding. Pupils love coming to this school and speak fondly of their time there. This is because the school has a clear mission and purpose. The mission statement, reviewed in 2021, is visible around the school and is placed on the front of pupils’ religious education books. They enjoy full ownership of it creating a feeling of belonging. They know that they are cared for deeply and know who to go to if there is a problem. They demonstrate very caring relationships, with older pupils caring for the youngest. Pupil leaders undertake a huge range of responsibilities with skill and determination. This enhances the quality of school life for all children in all ages. Behaviour is commendable both in class and in other situations around school. There is powerful tradition at St Mary’s of pupils reaching out to support others who are in need, both near and far. They support a number of charities and organisations like St. Mary’s Foodbank, Cornerstones, St Joseph’s Penny, Save the Children Fund, NSPCC and CAFOD. These actions are undertaken joyfully as acts of kindness showing their commitment to their faith.

The provision for Catholic life and mission at St Mary’s is outstanding. All staff give willingly of themselves to promote the ambitions of the school’s mission ensuring it impacts very positively on school life. The mission statement sits at the heart of the curriculum. The staff give outstanding commitment to the Catholic life and mission of the school. They act as catechists for the Sacramental programme and co-ordinate the Faith in Action programme. Pupils are afforded the very best of care from adults around school. There is a loving attitude that meets pupils where they are. This was witnessed when a child had been upset at being held up on the journey to school. A member of staff ensured that the child was comforted, reassured and given breakfast. This epitomises the commendable deep care that characterises St Mary’s. The school is a welcoming

place with a cheery smile for all visitors. This special welcome is visible everywhere. The school has been proactive in providing an inclusive welcome to vulnerable pupils and providing quality support and care as they journey through school. Staff are excellent role models especially in the way they conduct themselves, their positive relationships with each other and the kindness they bestow on the pupils.

The outstanding head teacher has demonstrated absolute commitment and dedication to the school and its mission in Catholic education. She has led the school with purpose and energy, particularly during challenging times. This also includes the excellent guidance and support she gives to other leaders allowing them to develop very positively in their roles. Governors are passionate and skilled in their work ensuring that the school is well connected to the parish and the diocese. They are increasingly involved in strategic planning at St Mary's to ensure appropriate challenge and support is present. The parish priest is hugely valued and active within school and pupils benefit enormously, seeing themselves as part of the broader church family. For example, the parish priest invited pupils to help create a new logo for the parish. The outcome is a child friendly and very appealing logo that speaks volumes about the high-quality relationship that exists! Parents are supportive of the school. As one parent stated, 'The school and the staff are a credit to the diocese. My children have attended here for many years and we are very proud of the school and the support we have received.'

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



Religious education outcomes for pupils at St Mary's are good. Pupils' books are well presented with pupils expressing pride in their work, indicating secure knowledge, skills and understanding with good progress over time. Pupils make links to reflect their spiritual development and religious commitment in everyday life. This was demonstrated in a lesson where pupils had to decide who should receive a charitable donation of £1, resulting in a lively debate which concluded with one child saying, 'Jesus says we should love everybody'. The classroom environment shows efforts to develop religious literacy with related vocabulary prominently displayed. Opportunities to model and display excellent work in religious education should be promoted across the school to increase high performance further. Behaviour in lessons is good and pupils work independently. In the majority of lessons observed the final task was for all pupils to produce a piece of writing e.g., a guide to Islam or a booklet. These tasks were completed well by most pupils. To improve outcomes for all pupils more creative responses should be encouraged thus increasing engagement, independence and curiosity. Most pupils enjoy their lessons and join in with interest and enthusiasm. Some pupils explained that they engaged significantly more when they were outside or being more creative. One pupil shared how much she enjoyed the 'conscience alley' activity which took place outside and how she was able to access the learning. In an upper key stage two class pupils responded very well to creating special games for their friends about Confirmation. Pupils know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. Marking and feedback allows for the pupils to develop their learning and they are often challenged through teacher questioning.

Teachers deliver the curriculum with confidence and communicate effectively with pupils. Lessons are calm and well planned. Questioning skills are particularly good and promote quality learning. In one lesson focusing on the parable of The Good Samaritan the teacher probed, 'But why? Think as a Christian' resulting in a much more reflective response from the pupils. Regular opportunities are

given to pupils to use scripture, reflect upon it, explain the meaning and make links to enhance spiritual development. Pupils shared their favourite passage of scripture and were able to explain the reason for their choice. The Parable of the Prodigal Son was by far the favourite as, 'It really made you think about forgiving.' Teachers use 'checking in and checking out' activities to assess learning. The results are collated which is evaluated carefully by the religious education subject leader. This assessment informs next steps for all pupils resulting in improving outcomes.

Leadership of religious education is good. Self-evaluation is honest, accurate and clearly sets out a very positive future for St Mary's. The leader articulates a clear vision for the school and shares plans for improvement with the senior leadership team including governors. She has a good level of expertise in securing this vision to improve teaching and learning in religious education. Governors are actively engaged in monitoring and are confident to support and challenge. The governor with special responsibility for religious education meets the leader every term and produces a detailed report to share with other governors resulting in a shared vision and mission. Training is mainly delivered in-house, and the school recognises the need for further collaboration with other schools and continued links with the diocese to improve subject knowledge and pedagogical developments, especially for those staff who are new to the school. St Mary's will need to continue to forensically monitor, analyse and self-challenge to ensure all children achieve the best possible outcomes.

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

Outcomes for pupils in Collective Worship at St Mary's are good overall. Pupils participate well with the opportunities provided by the school. In some classes very thoughtful child led prayer and liturgy engages pupils in quiet moments very successfully. In an upper key stage two class pupils prepared and led a liturgy about caring for the less fortunate. A subtle use of drama, music and reflection created a calm, prayerful atmosphere. This excellent practice now needs to be shared across the school to create a consistent approach to prayer and liturgy. Accessing a wide variety of ways of praying that are part of the Catholic tradition would help to consistently shape the outcomes for pupils. This could involve staff and pupils planning, delivering and evaluating their prayerful moments. The Growing in Faith Together team work hard to spread their expertise by planning liturgies and sharing them in other classes. The school has developed the skills of mindfulness in all classes. This is a very successful calming strategy that children enjoy very much. An opportunity exists whereby these useful skills could be applied in mindful meditative prayer allowing every child moments of calmness in the presence of God. The curriculum is Christ centred based on the school's mission statement. This successfully defines the central importance of prayer and liturgy at St Mary's.

At St Mary's the provision for prayer and liturgy is good. This is exemplified by the centrality of prayer in all acts of worship. Parents attend class assemblies on a regular basis and are overwhelmingly positive about the school's provision saying how their children come home and confidently share their experiences at school. There is a daily pattern for prayer, and this is linked to the plans for the liturgical year. Each room has a special 'sacred space' creating a focus for prayer. These are attractive and contemporary ensuring they are meaningful and relevant to the pupils. Scripture is used exceptionally well not only in prayer and liturgy but also to connect other aspects of learning in the curriculum. Currently there is limited provision for pupils to access focus points

around the school and outdoors for quiet, meditative prayer. Building on the skills of staff and to increase the variety of experiences of prayer the school should create prayer spaces for the pupils to own, along with a dedicated permanent sacred space to be cherished by the school community. This would further enhance the strong links with families and the parish.

The policy and action plan for prayer and liturgy demonstrate the strong commitment of leaders, especially the head teacher and deputy head teacher, to further develop the impact of prayer and liturgy across the school. They are mindful of the skills required for pupils of different ages. This is evidenced by the growing ease that pupils demonstrate in prayer and liturgy as they move through the school. The school has created, with the parish, a timetable to offer every child the chance to go over to church with their classmates on a regular basis. The benefits of this can be witnessed in the reverence and confidence the children show when in church. Staff work together well to share good practice. Access for professional development will need to be extended and deepened as the school prepares for the new church directories and to welcome new staff effectively. Leaders and governors should ensure resources are available to create an environment, both indoors and outside, that support the development of consistently high-quality experiences of prayer and liturgy.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Mary's R.C Primary and Nursery School
School unique reference number (URN)	106252
Full postal address of the school	Kynder Street, Denton, Manchester M34 2AR
School phone number	0161 921 1695
Name of head teacher or principal	Deidre Reeves
Chair of governing board	Claire Cull
School Website	https://stmarysdenton.com/
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	N/a
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age-range of pupils	3-11
Trustees	Diocese of Salford
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	18 th June 2015
Previous denominational inspection grade	Outstanding

The inspection team

Dennis Harrison	Lead inspector
Helen McGrath	Team inspector

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