

# St Ethelbert's Catholic Primary School

URN: 143802

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Bishop of Northampton

19–20 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

2

#### 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

2

## 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 the additional requirements of the diocesan bishop.
- All areas for improvement outlined in the previous diocesan inspection have been addressed in full.

## What the school does well

- Pupils have fully engaged with Catholic social teaching and can talk about their work with great enthusiasm.
- Induction processes for new staff are strong and greatly appreciated by those who undertake them.
- Parents are strong supporters of the school and value the caring community which has been built and of which they are a part.
- The mission of the school is embedded and known by all pupils, who can talk confidently about what it means to them.
- Pupils have been trained well to plan and lead effective prayer and liturgy.

## What the school needs to improve

- Map the principles of Catholic social teaching across the whole curriculum in addition to the religious education curriculum.
- Deepen staff subject knowledge in order to support the implementation of the new *Religious Education Directory*.
- Further develop the confidence of less experienced staff to support the range of opportunities for formal and informal pupil prayer.

## 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

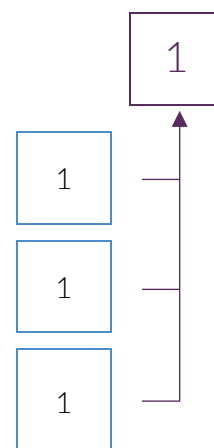
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

#### 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



St Ethelbert's is a school which is centred around its mission statement, 'Learning, achieving and growing together with Jesus'. Pupils understand what this means and can explain how it forms and shapes the community of their school. Relationships within this community are exceptionally strong. Pupils stated that they rarely have issues with each other, and that they are quickly remedied by staff if they do occur. They trust that staff will do this. Catholic social teaching plays a large part in forming this community. The school displays these principles around the building and in classrooms and they are used as the basis on which relationships are formed. The school is a diverse community, but the pupils can point to 'human dignity' as the principle which informs them - everyone is treated in the same way. The school Faith Ambassadors are an enthusiastic group who take on promoting Catholic social teaching, choosing which principles the schools should focus on. They take their role extremely seriously and ensure they canvas the opinions of their classmates when making decisions, such as changing the nominated charity for their Easter fundraising project. They talk with real purpose when discussing how they support Udayan, an orphanage in Kolkota.

This is a school where everyone feels welcome; a parent commented on this experience having only joined the school two weeks before the inspection. Staff also spoke about how quickly they had been made to feel part of the community. The strong relationships between staff model the care and love they ask pupils to show each other. Pastoral care for pupils is a strength, with discrete support put in place for those who need it. The environment celebrates the faith of the school, with artwork by pupils taking pride of place around the school and in classrooms, giving examples of Catholic social teaching, of the life of St Ethelbert and celebrating the Year of Jubilee with the Jubilee doors to each class. The school recognises the diverse community which it serves

and has developed good links with other local schools, of different faiths and of no faith. This local context is also reflected in the planning for the relationships, sex and health education programme, which meets Diocesan requirements. The school has good links with its local Catholic secondary school, and this has led to shared work across the two schools' chaplaincy groups.

School leaders and governors are able to articulate their vision to all stakeholders. One parent said they understood the Catholic nature of the school and felt that this was being lived out in the actions of the school. Many of them expressed that the Catholic nature of the school underpinned much of its work. They feel a part of this strong, Catholic community. There are strong links with the parish, with pupils taking part in Mass on a regular basis. There are strong links with other local schools and the other schools in the Trust. The school engages well with the diocese. All leaders embrace the principles of Catholic social teaching which are reflected in the school policies, such as Behaviour. A parent commented that the school 'has done an excellent job in promoting Catholic social teaching via parent workshops and information shared with us regularly in the weekly newsletter.' Staff are treated with dignity, and they are appreciative of the care they receive. Newly qualified staff spoke warmly of the induction and support they had received and continue to receive. Professional development provides ongoing support for all teaching and non-teaching staff.

## Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

### Religious education key judgement grade

#### Pupil outcomes

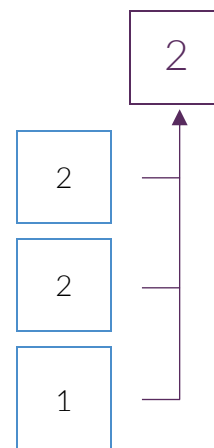
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

#### 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 speak with enthusiasm about their religious education lessons and are able to say how what they have learned should be applied to their everyday life. The school is currently transitioning from their current scheme of work to fully implementing the new *Directory*. Pupils' knowledge and understanding are increasing as is their religious literacy; they could make a link between Elijah being fed by the ravens and the Eucharist, and accurately placed the parable of the Good Samaritan in the Gospel of Luke. Lessons are linked to the principles of Catholic social teaching and pupils are confident in referencing them. 'Big questions' at the start of topics help the pupils to address some of the more difficult areas of knowledge. Pupils work well together and can talk with confidence about their learning and listen to each other respectfully. They are not yet consistently able to say what they need to do to improve their work. Attainment in RE is in line with other core subjects and shows an improving trend. Pupils enjoy their lessons and parents report that they are eager to talk about what they have learned at home.

As the school transitions from the current scheme of work to the new *Directory*, staff continue to be committed to communicating the importance of religious education. They carry out regular assessments and use these to inform their planning, ensuring that the needs of pupils are met and that gaps in knowledge are filled. Subject specific knowledge for RE is an area of improvement for the school and staff try to plan ahead for misconceptions the pupils might have. Staff confidence in the teaching of religious education is increasing alongside their own subject knowledge. Questions are used to move pupils along in their learning during lessons, but there are missed opportunities to really extend the understanding of all pupils. More specific and focussed feedback would also help the pupils understand what they need to do to improve their work. Pupils learn in a variety of ways, with art, drama, Godly Play and storyboarding all

providing different ways for them to respond to learning. Pupils in the Early Years were able to re-tell the story of Jesus feeding of the 5,000 through small figures with great accuracy.

Leaders at all levels are committed to making the delivery of religious education as good as it can be. The subject leaders have a clear vision for the subject which is realised through regular professional development for staff on curriculum subject knowledge, using in-house and bought in resources as appropriate. They carry out regular monitoring of the subject and act on feedback from staff. For example, the subject leader has designed a bridging unit in order to make sure that the next classes changing to the new scheme have the subject knowledge they need to access it, in response to the experiences of the staff who piloted the work this year. The subject is well resourced and has full parity with other core subjects and in some classrooms takes up more wall space than the other subjects. Governors are actively involved in the monitoring of the subject and results are shared at Trust level. Expertise is shared across the local hub of Trust schools and moderation is used to benchmark teacher assessment.

## 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 respond with energy and enthusiasm to the many different opportunities they have to participate in prayer and liturgy. Child-led collective worship is well established from Early Years onwards and the pupils are proud to plan and lead these sessions for each other. A member of staff commented, 'Collective worship is an integral part of our school life, with prayer and liturgy embedded in daily routine'. The Catholic Life team, made up of staff and the Faith Ambassadors, organise many different ways for the pupils to take part in prayer, such as the travelling rosary, the travelling crib and the prayer group. The Faith Ambassadors have also organised events for the Jubilee year including an Easter raffle and Pentecost Pledge day. Pupils take an active part in the weekly Masses held at the church, which is located next door, and enjoy answering the questions put to them by the parish priest during these celebrations. The school has a well written annual plan of prayer which clearly reflects the liturgical year and takes notice of the important events in other faith groups represented in the school.

A member of staff said, 'Prayer is central to our school life, providing our pupils with many opportunities to pray in different ways in order to get closer to God', and this is clearly seen throughout the school. The environment supports prayer through visual prompts and prayer prompts, such as the stations of the cross. The prayer garden is well used and the new healing garden, looked after by selected pupils, is proving to be popular with the pupils. The Catholic Life team are confident in leading and supporting informal and formal prayer for pupils and they provide training for those members of staff who may be new to the school or not Catholic themselves through well planned professional development. A daily routine of prayer is known and enjoyed by the pupils. Art and music are used well to enhance the provision of prayer and liturgy at whole school level and also in the smaller settings of the prayer group. There are strong

links with the local parish and parents are confident that they are welcome to join their children at events during the school year.

The school has an up to date and relevant policy on prayer and liturgy which has formed the basis of the strong provision within the school. The Catholic Life team have inspired the pupils who aspire to be Faith Ambassadors, taking the responsibility of their role very seriously. Major events during the school year are marked with celebrations of the Eucharist and liturgies either in the church, in the school or in the grounds. Links with the local secondary school have also seen the two schools share the celebrations of their feast days. Pupils have access to the Sacrament of Reconciliation during Advent and Lent. Parents are kept involved in the prayer life of the school at all times, and are provided with a clear Prayer Progression shared with them on the website. Governors are very much part of the school community, experiencing its prayer life at all levels. This helps them to have a strong understanding of the strengths of the school in this area. The parish priest has only been in post since Easter, but works with staff and governors to support the prayer life of the school. Leaders ensure that the provision of prayer and liturgy is high quality and central to the work of the school.

## Information about the school

Full name of school	St Ethelbert's Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	143802
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	8713363
Full postal address of the school	St Ethelbert's Catholic Primary School, Wexham Road, Slough, SL2 5QR
School phone number	01753522048
Headteacher	Fiona Maynard
Chair of governors	Catherine Hayes
School Website	<a href="http://www.stethelberts.slough.sch.uk">http://www.stethelberts.slough.sch.uk</a>
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	St Thomas Catholic Academies Trust
Phase	Primary
Type of school	Academy
Admissions policy	Non-selective
Age-range of pupils	3-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	March 2019
Previous denominational inspection grade	Good

## The inspection team

Catherine McMahon

Lead

Nicholas Kehoe

Team

Tony Hall

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