CATHOLIC SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

THE NATIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE INSPECTION OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS, COLLEGES AND ACADEMIES

St Richard's Catholic Primary School

URN: 141497

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Most Reverend John Wilson, Archbishop of Southwark

26–27 February 2025

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

Compliance statement

- Religious education is taught for a specified portion of each repeating cycle, and this constitutes 10% of the taught curriculum time
- The school is fully compliant with the requirements of the Archbishop
- The school has fully met the recommendations from the last report

This Catholic Schools Inspectorate inspection was carried out under canons 804 & 806 of the code of canon law. For maintained schools and academies in England it fulfils the statutory requirements of s.48 of the Education Act 2005. For maintained schools and academies in Wales it fulfils the statutory requirements of s.50 of the Education Act 2005.

What the school does well

- A profound level of pastoral care is evident in the relationships between all members of the community.
- Leaders' clear vision for an authentic Catholic education for pupils continues to secure improvements in all areas.
- Pupils respond to prayer and liturgy with great reverence, including silent reflections and through singing joyfully.
- Pupils enjoy their learning in religious education and engage well in lessons.
- Parents overwhelmingly appreciate the dedication and care of all members of staff.

What the school needs to improve

- Enable pupils to articulate the principles of Catholic social teaching underpinning the wide range of charity work that exists within the school.
- Increase the capacity of subject leadership that will improve standards of teaching and learning of religious education.
- Create new opportunities for pupils to evaluate the quality of prayer and liturgy.

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

1

Leadership

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

2

Pupils are genuinely happy in this inclusive, nurturing school. They know they belong to a Catholic family and fully embrace their responsibilities by serving and living out their mission to 'use our gifts from God to help others'. They naturally model the school's values of love and kindness. In doing so, they create a community in which every person is given the dignity of being a child of God. Pupils understand God is at the heart of the school and live out St Richard's prayer to 'follow thee more nearly'. Pupils know the principles of Catholic social teaching and are beginning to show a deeper understanding of how they relate to everyday life. Commitment to the vulnerable, in school and the wider community, is evident in generous contributions, for example, for Christmas hampers and the school's food pantry. Pupils take on positions of responsibility. The Sunshine team and buddies, for example, are excellent models in the way they spread kindness around the school and local community. They deliver Christmas cards to local residents and look after the youngest pupils. They acknowledge and speak warmly about all members of staff who look after them and are always there when they need them.

The impact of the mission statement is evident throughout the whole school. In everything they do, staff and pupils create a loving, joyous Christian family by 'helping and bringing joy and peace' to others. A teacher said that people come and go but, in the school, 'faith and calmness are constant'. The level of pastoral care is profound. All staff have a genuine affection for pupils and an evident commitment to the most vulnerable. The Rainbow room and sensory corridor, for example, ensure pupils are safe and have reassurance when times are difficult. There is a close partnership between all teachers. They deeply care for each other as colleagues and friends. The school environment bears witness to its Catholic identity at every turn, with central displays and indoor and outdoor areas, that highlight the prayer of St Richard to 'know thee more clearly and love thee more nearly'. Through newsletters and an active parents' group, parents are well informed. They are overwhelmingly grateful

to all staff. They know they are genuine partners in the mission of the school. The provision for relationships and health education is carefully planned. It is well resourced and accepted by parents as appropriate.

Leaders and governors have a clear understanding of the mission of this Catholic school. They are very committed to ensuring each pupil 'develops their talents to the full'. The level of care across the school reflects leaders' commitment to developing an authentic Catholic family, including parents; wellbeing is a priority for school leaders. Examples of the support the school gives to staff during difficult times further reflects the compassionate approach of school leaders. Governors are proud of the school and its continuing progress after a period of transition to new leadership. They challenge and support the headteacher through regular meetings. The headteacher, with senior leaders, provides inspiring and caring leadership. He knows what the school needs to make further progress. He has a deep commitment to serving pupils, staff and families. The wellbeing of all members of the community is a priority for all leaders. Staff talk very warmly about the care and support they receive. Understanding the Catholic life of the school is part of the induction for new staff, Catholic or otherwise. As a result, staff show they understand their role and fully share its purpose. Leaders are beginning preparation for the Oscar Romero Participator Award.

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

Pupils enjoy religious education lessons. They respond well to teachers because they know teachers want them to do well and will help them achieve their best. Behaviour is exemplary and learning is never disrupted because pupils concentrate well and remain on task. This includes when working collaboratively, a feature of most lessons, which is effective in helping pupils make progress. There are good examples of the use of religious literacy, such as in a lesson using the names of the sacred vessels in the Mass, but this is not consistently embedded in all lessons. Similarly, more complex key scriptural and theological language, for example consecration and transubstantiation in a lesson on the Eucharist, needs to be developed across the school so that all pupils begin to use key vocabulary correctly in context more consistently. Pupils' positive attitudes are further evidenced in their engagement and in written work. Work in pupils' books is well presented and reflects considerable pride in their work. Attainment in Religious Education is in line with other core subjects and sometimes better. Outcomes are on an upward trend. The majority of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make consistent progress.

Where lessons are good or better, teachers' subject knowledge is strong, pupils are well motivated and challenged to achieve at a greater depth. However, pupils are not always given enough opportunities to take the initiative in their learning with more challenging tasks. Teachers make sure every pupil is involved, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, who are effectively supported by other adults. Relationships, therefore, between pupils and teachers are very strong. Questioning is generally effective in encouraging pupils to think for themselves and make good contributions to the lesson. For example, in lessons, pupils were able to make links between peace and the principles of Catholic social teaching. Floor books allow pupils to demonstrate learning in more creative ways, including art and drama. Enrichment activities, including visitors such as street pastors and Cafod, enhance learning. Good lessons successfully build on prior learning, thus ensuring effective sequential lessons, but the school recognises the need to support all teachers to create

greater consistency across all lessons. There is a clear assessment, marking and feedback strategy as evidenced in pupils' work. Pupils, including the youngest, are able to self- assess their learning using the school system.

Leaders and governors are ambitious for improving standards of teaching and learning in religious education. They fully accept their responsibility to teach the faith and lay sound foundations for their pupils. Governors are becoming more effective in their role in providing support and challenge to senior leaders. They are proud of the school's progress over recent years and are determined to support the school in its work of continually making improvements. Their strategic liaison with local schools is ensuring they are better equipped to lead more effectively. The headteacher and senior leaders, including the subject leader, work closely together to ensure that governors are kept informed and that there is an ongoing striving for improvement. Monitoring, including lesson observations, learning walks, book scrutiny and support for planning, are in place and beginning to have a positive effect. Professional development opportunities are valued by staff and are accessed by them. This includes preparation for more teachers to study for the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies. The subject leader is dedicated to her role and has had a significant impact on teaching and learning provision. However, governors are aware that subject leadership succession planning needs putting in place to ensure outcomes continue to improve.

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 fully embrace all opportunities to engage in the prayer life of the school. They gather calmly, act with reverence and pray sincerely because they understand the importance of prayer and the impact on their lives. The parish priest commented favourably on the respectful manner in which pupils approach and participate in Mass and assemblies. This is further seen in the silent reflections at the start of the day and in lessons. They also love to praise God through their beautiful singing. Pupils are at ease writing their own prayers. This is particularly evident on the prayer tree. During special silent assemblies, pupils add a prayer with a purple ribbon to indicate they are talking to God in a very personal way. Pupils are beginning to play a leading role in the leadership of prayer and liturgy. Further opportunities to do so will build on pupils' willingness to be more involved. The importance of prayer is seen in the way pupils talk about how they pray so naturally and with confidence. The tangible impact of the spiritual life of the school is evidenced by the way are encouraged to develop a personal prayer life and relationship with God. One pupil described prayer as 'letting the Lord into our heart'. Pupils demonstrate a clear understanding of the Church's seasons and major feasts.

The centrality of prayer and liturgy in the daily routine of the school is evident. Each morning begins with a class reflection or an assembly. They are very spiritual occasions in which pupils pray and sing beautifully. Pupils confirm that prayer is not merely added onto the day: it is a way of life. The daily use of the chapel enhances provision for pupils who demonstrate an understanding of the space as a Holy Place where they can be with Jesus. The school has excellent links with two parishes and several local clergy. They offer spiritual support for the community, including families. Mass is celebrated in the church and school throughout the year which reflects the deep spirituality of the school. Scripture has an increasingly high profile within prayer and liturgy. Passages are carefully chosen to be relevant to the season, allowing pupils to engage well and listen to the word of God. Prayer spaces throughout the school are carefully and thoughtfully created to a good standard. There are opportunities for

pupils now to monitor and look after them in the corridors and classrooms. The themes chosen for prayer and liturgy follow the liturgical year.

The wide range of opportunities for prayer and liturgy shows leaders and governors are effectively embracing their role in developing a deeply spiritual community. Careful planning and good resourcing contribute to making prayer and liturgy a rich spiritual experience for pupils and staff. School leaders are committed to continued improvement by more effective monitoring and evaluation. They share best practice and training to achieve this. Governors monitor the quality of prayer and liturgy through the link governor who works effectively with the subject lead. The assembly showed the impact of the headteacher and senior leaders. They are excellent models for staff and pupils and are supporting staff in delivering prayer and worship opportunities. As a result, all teachers demonstrate their own commitment to prayer and liturgy in the way they lead and support pupils in prayer. Although they are working together effectively to ensure a totally inclusive spiritual school, they acknowledge that sustaining growth in faith and practice continually needs developing. Leaders provide opportunities to help staff grow in expertise and confidence. Induction for new teachers is in place. The impact is in the confident way staff work with pupils to lead and support them in prayer.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Richard's Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	141497
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	8863740
Full postal address of the school	St Richard's Catholic Primary School, Castle Avenue, Dover, CT16 1EZ
School phone number	001304201118
Headteacher	Colin Taylor
Chair of local governing body	Elizabeth Boxall
School Website	http://www.st-richards.kent.sch.uk
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	Kent Catholic Schools' Partnership
Phase	Primary
Type of school	Academy
Admissions policy	Non-selective
Age-range of pupils	4-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	27 November 2018
Previous denominational inspection grade	2

The inspection team

Damian Fox	Lead
Maria Shepherd	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