CATHOLIC SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

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

St Elizabeth's School

URN: 117665

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Archbishop of Westminster

06–07 June 2024

Summary of key findings

Overall effectiveness

The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school

1

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

1

Collective worship (p.7)

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

1

The school is fully compliant with the curriculum requirements laid down by the Bishops' Conference	Yes
The school is fully compliant with all 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

- The school mission statement 'to live and learn as friends together, to share and give and love', is lived out at St Elizabeth's, ensuring that all are valued and cared for as unique persons.
- Christ is at the heart of the school, leading to strong relationships, a culture of welcome and an ethos where pupils and staff support each another.
- Staff are exemplary role models for pupils, giving outstanding support with behaviour, personal care and medical needs to ensure all pupils lead as full a life as possible reflecting Gospel values.
- Pupils enjoy their RE lessons and express their knowledge and understanding in lessons, assemblies and across the curriculum as shown in their enthusiastic responses, reflections, and actions.

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.

- The experience of prayer and liturgy provided by the school engages pupils and leads them to full, active and conscious participation.

What the school needs to improve

- Ensure that all the learning objectives in lessons have an explicit RE focus and these are shared with the pupils.
- Further develop the proclamation of scripture in all assemblies and 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

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

Pupils embrace the distinctive Catholic identity, charism, and mission of St Elizabeth's School. They are very happy at the school and can clearly express an understanding that they are valued and cared for as unique persons. They live out the school mission 'to live and learn as friends together, to share and give and love.' They feel loved and accepted in their school life and they are respectful and mindful of each other's needs to be content to learn together. They acknowledge each other's achievements, always encouraging each other to reach their goals. Christ is at the heart of the school and there is a lived sense of community, evident in the quality of relationships and the strong culture of welcome. There is a very supportive ethos amongst pupils which includes helping staff with tasks and supporting peers. Pupils show a deep respect for their own dignity and the dignity of others and take a leading role in responding to the demands of Catholic social teaching. Many local and international projects are supported by pupils such as Cafod family fast day and talent shows, raising money for Children in Need and Red Nose Day. Pupils also have a clear understanding that the school community is committed to following the teaching of gospel values and they participate in and contribute to opportunities provided by the school. One of the pupils remarked that, 'it is good for the pupils to make soup on the Cafod day as it shows kindness, and this is what Jesus would want.' Pupils value the school's chaplaincy provision and enjoy taking an active part in the chaplaincy team.

The mission statement is a clear and inspiring expression of the educational mission of the Church. The staff are overwhelmingly positive about their experience of working in this specialist Catholic school. There is a strong culture of welcome and a flourishing community spirit. Staff remarked on the excellent teamwork that exists and this in turn fosters respectful relationships with pupils. Staff are exemplary in the relationships they show for the pupils and each other, providing the highest levels of pastoral care. The school environment effectively witnesses to its identity and mission. The care and attention given to the classrooms and quality of outdoor space reflects positively to the formation of the pupils. The chaplaincy provision is a central and

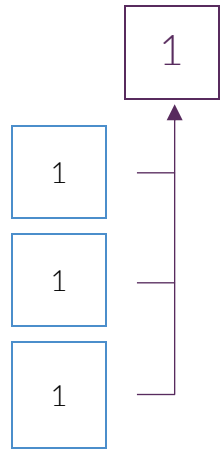
celebrated aspect of the life and mission of the school and seeks to engage all pupils. There are many creative and high-quality opportunities for pupils to further their spiritual and moral development such as participating in RE lessons, class liturgies, assemblies, singing practice and Masses. The provision for relationships, sex and health education meets both statutory and diocesan requirements. The programme is carefully planned and mapped across each of the key areas.

The head teacher, leadership team and governors can clearly articulate the Church's mission in education. They actively promote the archbishop's vision for the diocese and are enthusiastic in their response to diocesan policies and initiatives. Both the leadership team and governors embrace and actively promote the principle that Catholic schools are at the service of the local church and there is an active, flourishing partnership between the school and local parishes. The resident chaplain participates fully in the life of the school attending all assemblies and visiting lessons. Leaders work closely with parents and with the residential home at the centre. Parents are invited to whole school events, Masses and parents' meetings. Many of the parents commented on how the school supports their children. All parents felt that their children were safe at the school and many remarked that their children were very happy at the school. The leadership team are supported by a fully committed governing body who are effective guardians of the Catholic life and mission of the school. The school's self-evaluation is a coherent and honest reflection of self-analysis.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade



Pupils are allocated to pathways and make good progress in knowing, remembering, and doing more when measured against the planned curriculum for each year. They make progress relative to ability through bespoke pathways and are developing secure knowledge, understanding and skills that reflect the learning required by the *Religious Education Directory*. They enjoy their RE lessons and are enthusiastic and actively engaged. Pupils progress relative to their own ability with bespoke planning and support. Learning and progress is captured via a recently implemented learning platform and assessed against the curriculum on a daily basis. Pupils have a clear understanding of how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve through verbal feedback from staff and teaching assistants. Praise is used extensively in lessons, and school data indicates that all pupils make progress across each year and termly, in line with English and Maths. Pupils are keen to answer questions and join in group activities and are generally happy to share their own personal experiences in relation to themes discussed. They take pride in their work and are enthusiastic to share their learning.

Teachers are confident in their subject knowledge and have a good understanding of how pupils learn, appropriate to the pathway in which they are teaching. Teachers are committed to the value of religious education, and they communicate this effectively to their pupils. They have high expectations, and they model this in lessons, supporting pupils to develop their knowledge and understanding with skilful questioning. Eleven lessons were observed, and in best practice the teachers made RE objectives explicit and linked the lesson to scripture. This was evidenced in a Pathway 1 lesson where pupils acted out the bible story and then worked independently on choices and consequences, awarding certificates to those peers they thought had been kind to them. In a Pathway 2 lesson, the objective was to look at the good things God has given us. A piece of scripture was shared with the pupils, and they then participated in a creative group activity revolving around a picnic on the beach and making an ice cream. In Pathway 3, the teacher presented a story of creation. Pupils were encouraged to use their senses to explore a variety of stories and artefacts as well as to demonstrate curiosity and surprise. They learned

about understanding the world around them and how to interact with each other as God wishes. All staff are exemplary role models for pupils. There was differentiation in activities that increased engagement and maximised learning for all. Teachers recognise the impact religious education has on the moral and spiritual development of pupils and give them space and time in lessons to be reflective learners.

Leaders and governors ensure that the curriculum for RE is an expression of the Directory and that religious education has full parity with other core subjects in relation to whole school policies and reporting to parents. The head teacher has introduced learning cycles, with each teacher planning their own thematic curriculum. At the end of each cycle progress is analysed to inform planning and maximise pupil progress. The subject lead for RE has a clear vision for teaching and learning linking real-life experiences to Catholic social teaching and completes regular teaching and learning reviews and learning walks to monitor and provide feedback to staff. New staff are inducted effectively into the school and the Catholic Ethos Advocate supports staff with resources. The subject lead for RE works effectively with the diocesan advisor and other schools. Leaders create links with other appropriate agencies and the wider community to provide a wide range of enrichment activities that promote pupils' learning and engagement in RE.

Collective worship

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

Collective worship key judgement grade

1

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

The experience of prayer and liturgy provided by the school engages pupils and leads them to full, active, and conscious participation. Prayers occur three times a day and can reflect class or individual preferences. There are weekly assemblies which the pupils help to prepare. There is a weekly lunchtime Mass with the opportunity to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation. There are a number of whole school Masses in the chapel throughout the school year. Pupils work collaboratively with others, such as teachers, the lead for RE, other pupils and chaplains to prepare creative and well–constructed experiences of prayer and liturgy. They can reflect on their experiences of prayer and liturgy and can think about themselves and the world and how this has inspired them into action regarding their charity work. Pupils are aware of the rhythm of prayer and value the reflection time at the end of the day.

Prayer and liturgy are central to the life of the school, there is a naturally embedded daily pattern of prayer that faithfully reflects the rhythm of the prayer life of the church. The Sunday gospel is read and explored weekly by the chaplaincy group and shared with the school in the chapel every Wednesday for celebration of the word. There is an inventive use of drama and art in liturgies and assemblies to explain scripture. Staff use their skill and knowledge of pupils to help the pupils focus and engage. They do this by using individualised sensory items and reward systems, identified in partnership with therapists to engage pupils in active participation. Song, movement, and signing are used to encourage response and understanding. There is a Friday singing practice for all pupils and this is a joyful end to the week. The school makes good use of prayer corners in classrooms as a focus for prayer and liturgy, these are individualised to reflect the topic of RE or liturgical events. The chapel is available for staff and pupils at all times. The chaplain says Mass and attends all the liturgies in the school. Relevant staff work with both families and the local parishes to help pupils participate fully in prayer and liturgy.

The school's policy on prayer and liturgy is well formulated, though this will need to be reviewed to reflect the publication of the Bishops' Conference *Prayer and Liturgy Directory*. Leaders, including governors have carefully planned the school curriculum to ensure there are

opportunities for the whole school community to celebrate the Eucharist. There is a clear strategy for building up skills of participation as pupils progress through the school. Staff receive training about the structure of prayer and liturgy and there is a clear understanding amongst all staff that the delivery of high-quality prayer and liturgy in all its forms is a priority within the school. The Catholic Ethos Advocate is available to provide guidance and support in all liturgical matters. Leaders are highly effective in facilitating others to plan and lead experiences of prayer and liturgy. Consequently, staff and pupils are able to provide prayer and liturgy opportunities that are engaging, of a consistently high quality, and accessible, meaningful, and relevant for the whole community. This was evidenced in both pathway assemblies where all the pupils were engaged in a spiritual reflection. Leaders, including governors, recognise the importance of prayer and liturgy and time, resources and staffing are well catered for in the budget. The governors take an active interest in the prayer and liturgy activities and were involved in the formation of the policy. They place the highest priority on the evaluation of the quality and impact of prayer and liturgy and ensure it is embedded in the school's cycle of self-evaluation and planned improvements.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Elizabeth's School
School unique reference number (URN)	117665
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	9197006
Full postal address of the school	St Elizabeth's School, South End, Much Hadham, SG10 6EW
School phone number	01279844270
Headteacher	Lisa Tooley
Chair of Governors/Trustees	Rosemary Sherry
School Website	www.stelizabeths.org.uk
Trusteeship	Daughters of the Cross
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	N/A
Phase	All Through
Type of school	Non-maintained special school
Admissions policy	N/A
Age-range of pupils	5-19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	October 2016
Previous denominational inspection grade	Outstanding

The inspection team

Mary Coyle	Lead
David Purcell	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