

Catholic Schools Inspectorate inspection report for
**Holy Family And St Michael Catholic Primary
School, Pontefract**

URN: 141594

Carried out on behalf of the Right Rev. Marcus Stock, Bishop of Leeds on:

Date: 13-14 July 2023

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.....	
Religious education (p.5) The quality of curriculum religious education.....	
Collective worship (p.7) The quality and range of liturgy and prayer provided by the school.....	
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	

Summary of key findings

What the school does well

- The sense of community at Holy Family and St Michael's Catholic Primary School is strong: the parish clergy engage proactively with the school for the benefit of all.
- The school environment expertly reflects the Catholic character of the school: it celebrates the school mission and provides a variety of prayerful spaces where the pupils' faith can flourish.
- Pupils at Holy Family and St Michael's get a strong start in acquiring religious literacy and spiritual growth in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1.

- The focus on religious literacy and pupils knowing more and remembering more in religious education, through the revisiting of prior learning, ensures that pupils make good progress.
- All members of the community are committed to the mission statement: relationships in school are strong and pupils and staff feel cared for and loved.

What the school needs to improve:

- Improve the accuracy of self-evaluation in religious education and collective worship to ensure it is robust and challenging, allowing well targeted and planned improvements to occur at pace.
- Give pupils more opportunities to produce independent work, enabling teachers to assess pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills.
- Implement and embed the policy for collective worship to ensure pupils are happy and confident to lead and evaluate worship so they can clearly articulate the impact of prayer and liturgy on their lives.

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

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

1



Pupils talk about the distinctive nature of their Catholic school. They know the mission statement, 'Building Confidence, Compassion and Courage through the teachings of Jesus Christ'. One pupil clearly explained how each of the three virtues could be seen in the lives of the school's patron saints. The pupils often speak about confidence, compassion and courage in their lessons and liturgies; they easily relate these virtues to how they treat others and how others treat them. Pupils are aware of those in need. Funds are raised for various charities, helping pupils to think about local and global needs. There are opportunities for pupils to take an active role in school and they enjoy taking on responsibilities, including membership of the chaplaincy team and Mini Vinnies. However, these groups require further development, giving pupils more opportunities to lead the agenda and to volunteer rather than be selected by staff. Pupils understand the importance of learning about other faiths and respect difference. The 'Catholic Life' books give pupils an opportunity to evaluate the Catholic life of the school. These excellent records of school events are consistently good and, in some cases, outstanding: the outstanding books show pupils' evaluation of activities and their relevance to Catholic Social Teaching.

The school mission statement is reviewed annually and now includes the virtues of confidence, compassion, and courage. Staff embrace the mission of the school; they have had time to reflect on how they live the mission and how they use the virtues in their working lives. They participate and contribute to the Catholic life and mission of the school with enthusiasm and joy. The sense of community is evident, staff appreciate the high priority given to their well-being, and they talk about leaders 'who treat them with compassion'. The school environment is excellent. It is obvious that Holy Family and Saint Michael's is a Catholic school when entering the building: it is bright and well maintained, and displays celebrate the mission of the school and the faith journey of the community

through the year. Pupils and staff are provided with many opportunities to pray and deepen their spiritual understanding. This results in pupils, families and staff growing in faith together. Chaplaincy is well planned. The development of the whole person is a shared vision throughout the school and is given high priority when organising school life.

Leaders and governors have a shared vision for the school and want pupils to 'experience the Catholic faith and to know God loves them.' They ensure this vision by asking pupils and staff to say the refrain 'God loves me' at the end of all liturgies. The school is part of the Bishop Konstant Catholic Academy Trust and its Catholic ethos benefits from this membership. Leaders and governors attend many trust events and there is effective collaboration between the academy council and the trust board. The school also engages with the diocese, ensuring leaders take an active role in many areas. The school benefits from parish clergy who come in and celebrate mass on a weekly basis. The parish priest is involved in the faith formation of both pupils and adults. He supports the Sycamore Programme that is used in staff meetings, supports teachers with planning, and teaches parts of the curriculum in class.

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' outcomes in religious education are good. When previous learning is revisited, pupils show they know more and remember more. Pupils can speak at length when given the opportunity to do so and relate their learning to topics covered earlier in the year. Pupils reflect on the demands of everyday life, describing how their learning in religious education helps them to think ethically. Behaviour for learning is good and they listen attentively. Pupils talk about religious education lessons positively but find it difficult to say what they need to do to improve. The use of 'I can statements' and 'steps to success' are not made explicit. There were few opportunities for self and peer assessment in the lessons observed and the books scrutinised by the inspectors. Pupils of all ages are confident using subject specific language. Work in pupils' books is usually of a good standard and they work with pride. Although there are a variety of creative tasks in pupils' books, responses are occasionally too teacher-led, and pupils end up with similar outcomes. To be outstanding some tasks need to be more open, allowing for more independence and greater creativity in responses.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment of religious education is good. The focus on language acquisition and teaching specific religious vocabulary is highly successful. The use of technology in religious education lessons is embedded. For example, the use of quick-fire questioning at the beginning of a lesson allowed the teacher to assess individual responses to questions, quickly determining which pupils responded correctly. This method also gave pupils immediate feedback on any misconceptions alongside the correct answers. Most lessons observed were good. When teaching is at its best, questioning is effective, and lessons move at pace. In addition, support staff are active throughout, reinforcing the teacher's questioning and the subject knowledge being taught. However, some lessons are not creative, pupils do not get the opportunity to work independently and at a length appropriate to their age and ability. Teachers celebrate

pupils' efforts in a variety of ways, not least within the moment, using specific praise. The quality of feedback and marking seen in pupils' books is inconsistent, reducing the potential positive impact on pupil outcomes. Teaching in the Early Years and Key Stage 1 is a real strength of the school, where pupils make rapid progress.

Leaders and governors are determined to provide quality religious education, and governor monitoring visits are evident. However, these need to be more robust and challenging to bring about well targeted actions which lead to outstanding outcomes. Leaders invest in staff training, resulting in most teachers having good subject knowledge, delivering lessons in a creative manner. The curriculum design ensures that 10% of time is devoted to religious education. Religious education is considered a core subject by leaders and governors. The deputy head teacher is the religious education coordinator. The school benefits from a highly active parish priest, who comes into school regularly. The parish priest supports staff with queries about the curriculum when required and teaches certain topics to the pupils when invited. Staff are confident to ask questions, praising the leadership team for their open manner and support. The leadership team is not yet robust enough in monitoring and evaluating religious education. Monitoring lacks regularity and sufficient self-challenge to have a swift impact on provision and outcomes for pupils.

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

1

Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for collective worship

2



Collective worship at Holy Family and Saint Michael's is good. Pupils respond well to opportunities for prayer and liturgy. Pupils are reverent in whole school worship, Mass, and class-based liturgies. They know many traditional prayers and routines, including standing for and greeting the gospel. There is an atmosphere of calm during worship, allowing pupils to pray silently. Pupils join in responses and sing hymns extremely well, even when unaccompanied by music. From the earliest years prayer is integral to the school day. Reception children can make the sign of the cross, sing the alleluia and greet the gospel. The familiar format of having three objects to place on the worship table is used throughout school. Pupils say, 'Share your word' when the bible is brought forward, 'Share your light' for the candle and finally 'Share your love' when the crucifix is placed on the focal point. All celebrations of the Word end with the refrain 'God loves me' said three times. These familiar actions and use of words means pupils are confidently participating throughout prayer services. However, older pupils need to be given more opportunities to plan and deliver worship to ensure the skills and progression outlined in the school's prayer and liturgy policy are fully implemented. Pupils cannot yet undertake ministries with the increasing confidence, understanding, and skill that is expected in upper Key Stage 2.

The quality of prayer and liturgy provided by Holy Family and St Michael's is outstanding. Prayer is central to the life of the school. There is a daily pattern that reflects the richness of tradition, and this is appreciated by all. Mass is celebrated in school weekly, resulting in pupils attending Mass on a regular basis and consequently pupils know the rituals of the Mass very well. Staff are inspiring role models and join in worship in a heartfelt manner alongside the children. Pupils are supported in their prayer by slides and routinely say the 'St Michael Archangel' prayer to acknowledge one of the school's patron saints. In some classroom celebrations the theme of the worship is not made clear, limiting pupil understanding. However, pupils are given the space to reflect during prayer and

liturgy helping them to make the 'right choices' in life. The quality of singing during the whole school and class-based worship is high, showing the excellent impact of the diocesan singing programme and effective modelling by staff.

A graduated policy for prayer and liturgy is in place and staff use this as a guide. However, this policy has not been fully embedded. Pupils' independence and depth of knowledge do not increase at pace as pupils progress through school. Pupil evaluation of worship has begun but needs to go further for older pupils. The opportunity to celebrate Mass on a frequent basis as well as taking part in other events including the May procession are well appreciated and central to the school's calendar. Leaders and governors prioritise resources of time, staffing and money to ensure there are many opportunities to pray and special prayer spaces both inside and outside. Several staff have attended training in collective worship and 'Godly Play'. Senior leaders are highly skilled in leading prayer and worship. They are inspirational role models to other staff and pupils. Leaders and governors have reviewed the quality of prayer and liturgy by observing worship and seeking the views of pupils. However, at present these reviews are not rigorous enough to move the school to outstanding.

Information about the school

Full name of school	Holy Family and St Michael's Catholic Primary School, Pontefract
School unique reference number (URN)	141594
Full postal address of the school	Cobblers Lane, Pontefract, West Yorkshire, WF8 2HN
School phone number	01977 798303
Name of head teacher or principal	Mrs Claire Cade
Chair of governing board	Mrs Lesley Fitton
School Website	www.hfsm.bkcat.co.uk
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	Bishop Konstant Catholic Academy Trust
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy
Age-range of pupils	4-11
Trustees	Diocese of Leeds
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	June 2016
Previous denominational inspection grade	Outstanding

The inspection team

Mrs Diane Todd	Lead inspector
Mrs Alixena Lubomski	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