

# St Mary Magdalene Catholic Primary School

URN: 110483

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Bishop of Northampton

04–05 December 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

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

## Compliance statement

- The school is fully compliant in relation to the general norms for religious education laid down by the Bishops' conference.
- The school is fully compliant in relation to any additional requirements of the diocesan bishop.
- The school has responded fully to previous areas for improvement.

## What the school does well

- The school environment authentically, creatively and visibly celebrates its Catholic life, ensuring every visitor instantly recognises and experiences its mission.
- Warm, respectful relationships between staff and pupils foster a supportive culture in which children feel valued and flourish.
- Pupil behaviour in school and in lessons is exemplary, enabling strong engagement and a positive climate for learning.
- Prayer is central to the daily life of the school, with pupils confidently using prayer in a meaningful way in a range of situations.
- Pupils with additional needs thrive within a highly inclusive school community that prepares them well for life.

## What the school needs to improve

- Plan learning to explicitly develop the skills outlined in the *Religious Education Directory*, enabling pupils to deepen their understanding of religious education.
- Promote greater pupil independence in religious education by effective questioning and adapting explanations and tasks.
- Develop a more systematic and inclusive approach to monitoring and evaluation in religious education, ensuring that progress can be clearly measured and used to inform ongoing improvement.

## 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**

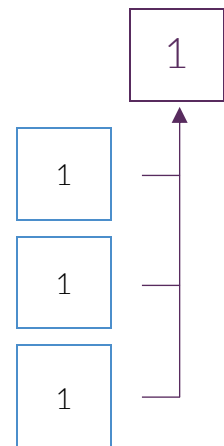
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

**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



Pupils demonstrate a clear understanding of the mission statement, 'growing together in faith and love'. They show respect and celebrate diversity. Pupils recognise themselves as valued members of a community rooted in the belief that all are created in the image of God. This is reflected in their confidence, happiness and exemplary behaviour. They make strong links between their mission and Catholic social teaching. Pupils speak confidently about themes such as human dignity and demonstrate these values in action. They engage actively in school life and embrace their responsibilities. Pupils enjoy participating in opportunities such as going on pilgrimage. Liturgy leaders are developing leadership skills, taking increasing responsibility and have clear plans for future growth. Pupils' response to Catholic social teaching is evident in charitable work. They explain that they support foodbank collections and fundraise for Cafod and Unicef. Pupils articulate the theological reasoning behind these actions using scripture as a foundation. They also show a deep understanding of stewardship, exemplified by the Eco Council's reflection on nature as God's gift. Across the school, pupils express their faith with confidence, whilst respecting those of other faiths. They demonstrate a genuine commitment to service and the common good, summed up by one pupil: 'We act as role models, and we work together in everything we do.'

The mission statement is actively lived and deeply embedded across school life. This is a community rooted in scripture, Catholic tradition and the charism of Mary Magdalene, whose steadfast devotion to Christ is reflected in the school's ethos. Staff mirror this sense of vocation through their dedication, going above and beyond to secure the very best outcomes for pupils. They reflect that their service is a daily expression of the mission. Strong pastoral provision ensures vulnerable families are supported with dignity and compassion. Families can discreetly

access uniform, food packages and financial assistance for trips. This ensures no child is left without opportunity. Subsidised enrichment experiences include seaside visits, farm trips, pantomime, cinema outings and residential visits. These experiences broaden horizons for all pupils and enrich their lives. They are made possible through financial support as well as staff willingly giving of their time. Staff wellbeing is prioritised, contributing to low turnover and a sense of security and belonging. Those new to Catholic education receive focused professional development, with opportunities for further formation. Staff of all faith backgrounds feel valued and equipped to teach within a Catholic context. Leaders maintain an open-door culture that promotes trust, professional dialogue and growth. Staff also willingly participate in pilgrimage experiences, deepening their own spiritual formation. Relationships, health and sex education is delivered with fidelity to Church teaching, enabling pupils to speak confidently about their learning and personal development.

Leaders ensure that the school is a safe, inclusive and nurturing environment where every pupil is known, valued and able to flourish. The dignity shown to families and the kindness present in interactions reflect a culture rooted in care. This pastoral approach makes the school a powerful expression of faith lived out in action. Leaders provide pupils with a rich range of opportunities that broaden their experience of the world. These activities deepen their sense of belonging within the community and help them grow academically, emotionally and spiritually. Pupils are supported to become confident, compassionate individuals who strive to be the very best version of themselves. This commitment to formation is recognised beyond the school; governors speak positively of feedback from the local high school, where St Mary Magdalene pupils are acknowledged for their exemplary behaviour, positive attitude and readiness to contribute. In this way, the school fosters not only achievement but character rooted in Gospel values.

## Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

### Religious education key judgement grade

#### Pupil outcomes

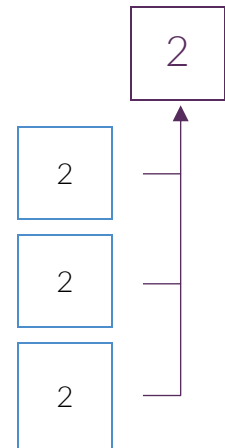
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

#### 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 make good progress in religious education and develop secure knowledge aligned with the *Religious Education Directory*. They are becoming increasingly religiously literate and use religious vocabulary with confidence. Pupils enjoy their lessons and present their work well, showing growing creativity and pride. In an upper Key Stage 2 lesson, pupils worked independently to research the characters of Mary and Hannah. They demonstrated strong recall of scripture. The teacher addressed misconceptions skilfully, enabling pupils to deepen their understanding. Highly effective questioning promoted deeper thinking and resulted in pupils making good progress. In Early Years, continuous provision was planned creatively, encouraging pupils to use religious vocabulary meaningfully and talk about scripture through play. The extent to which pupils are able to reflect on how their learning connects to life beyond the classroom differs across year groups. This means their experiences of independent reflection are not yet fully consistent. Outcomes for pupils with additional needs are good. Overall attainment in religious education is at least in line with national expectations and other core subjects, with sustained or improving trends over time.

Teachers demonstrate strong subject knowledge and a secure understanding of how pupils learn. In the strongest lessons observed, questioning was used effectively to check understanding. Reflection time was provided to support pupils' learning. In a Key Stage 1 lesson, pupils experienced awe and wonder using a sensory box. They confidently used religious vocabulary; one pupil commented, 'An angel came to tell Mary she would have God's son'. In lower Key Stage 2, a Jesse Tree lesson showed similarly strong practice. Questioning was adapted for different abilities, enabling pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, to make good progress. Lessons offer varied opportunities for pupils to express their learning, supported by well-chosen resources. Curriculum adaptations allow pupils with

additional needs to engage successfully. However, feedback does not currently guide pupils in developing their learning. Planned activities do not consistently foster discernment or help pupils reflect on how their learning relates to life beyond the classroom. Although teaching shows strong subject knowledge and effective questioning, pupils' written work does not yet demonstrate deeper personal response or independent thinking.

Leaders and governors ensure that the religious education curriculum faithfully reflects the Directory. Resources are selected to meet its aims and support progression. Religious education holds parity with other core subjects in timetabling, staffing, resourcing and professional development, demonstrating its importance within the life of the school. Staff benefit from ongoing training to develop both subject knowledge and pedagogy. Budget allocation reflects a strong commitment to formation and quality of provision. This investment enables staff to engage with high-quality professional development and ensures pupils have access to appropriate resources. Curriculum planning is well structured, coherent across phases and responsive to pupils' needs. Wider opportunities deepen understanding and support pupils in applying learning beyond the classroom, contributing to a rich experience of religious education. Monitoring and evaluation contribute to development, though documentation does not currently reflect a clear review cycle over time. Overall, leaders and governors demonstrate a clear commitment to ensuring that religious education is well resourced, carefully planned and valued across the school.

## 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 engage in prayer and liturgy with attentiveness and active participation, demonstrating reverence through silence, response and joyful communal singing. In a whole-school assembly, pupils sang with enthusiasm, and moments of stillness demonstrated reverence and respect, creating a prayerful atmosphere. Pupils show a secure understanding of a wide range of Catholic prayer traditions, including the use of scripture, symbolism, meditation and reflective silence. During a Year 6 Celebration of the Word, pupils prayed the Rosary together and reflected on Mary's response to God. They demonstrated confidence in prayer and familiarity with Catholic devotion. Pupils speak openly about how prayer shapes their daily lives. They described praying for the deceased in November and offering prayers of thanksgiving and intercession when loved ones are unwell. They talk with pride about seeing their personal petitions displayed in the school chapel. Many pupils explain that prayer brings comfort, strengthens faith and helps them to think of others with compassion. Leadership of prayer and liturgy is developing positively across year groups. In Early Years, pupils help to prepare the prayer space, incorporating prayers written at home with their families, fostering belonging, reverence and ownership. These early experiences contribute to a culture where prayer is recognised as inclusive, meaningful and sacred.

Staff model exemplary practice in prayer and liturgy, sharing in retreat experiences together and with pupils. Retreats help pupils to deepen their spiritual formation and strengthen their sense of community. As a result, prayer and liturgy sit firmly at the heart of school life, evident in daily routines, whole-school gatherings and responses to moments of joy and sorrow. Scripture is chosen to support participation and connect pupils with the rhythm of the liturgical seasons. The school provides rich opportunities for pupils and families to engage in prayer. Examples include an Advent prayer book, candles with the school prayer for new starters, prayer bags at Easter

and the travelling crib during Advent. Parents are invited to 'stay and pray'; one parent shared, 'The stay and pray sessions are beautiful and purposeful.' First Holy Communicants are celebrated during liturgy and presented with special pins. Another parent commented, 'The staff at the school are very supportive and committed to building a good relationship between school and home.' Prayer spaces, including the chapel and a garden dedicated to Our Lady, are cherished. The statue of St Mary Magdalene is a daily reminder of her special place in Jesus' life. Strong partnerships with families and the parish further enrich the prayer life of the community. One parent explained, 'The school has given them so much more than an education. It has given them faith, confidence and a real sense of belonging.'

Leaders and governors have established a clear and progressive strategy for developing pupils' participation in prayer and liturgy. As a result, pupils grow in confidence and independence as they move through the school. In the Early Years, children begin by preparing the prayer space and sharing simple prayers from home, establishing early habits of reverence and belonging. By Year 6, pupils lead prayer with maturity, drawing on scripture and a wide range of Catholic prayer traditions. Staff describe how leaders model strong practice and share their own faith, creating a culture in which faith is lived and integrated into every aspect of school life. The liturgical calendar is shaped to provide regular opportunities for the whole school community to gather in prayer. Staff receive high-quality formation and professional development in prayer and liturgy, supporting a shared understanding of their central role. Leaders prioritise resources, including time, staffing, facilities and budget, to sustain consistently rich and meaningful prayer and liturgical experiences across the school.

## Information about the school

Full name of school	St Mary Magdalene Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	110483
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	8263379
Full postal address of the school	St Mary Magdalene Catholic Primary School, Ardwell Lane, Greenleys, Milton Keynes, MK12 6AY
School phone number	001908321746
Headteacher	Rosemarie Jones
Chair of governors	Laura Maw
School Website	<a href="http://www.stmarymagdalenemk.co.uk">www.stmarymagdalenemk.co.uk</a>
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	N/A
Phase	Primary
Type of school	Voluntary Aided School
Admissions policy	Non-selective
Age-range of pupils	3-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	April 2019
Previous denominational inspection grade	1

## The inspection team

Evelyn Ward  
Jo Marsh

Lead  
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