

# St Edmund's Catholic Primary School

URN: 148510

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Bishop of Arundel & Brighton

18–19 September 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

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

- St Edmund's is compliant with the general norms of the Bishops' Conference in relation to 10% curriculum time.
- St Edmund's implements the diocesan bishop's requirements in relation to phased implementation of the *Religious Education Directory* and the Relationships, Sex and Health Education curriculum stipulation.
- St Edmund's has fully responded to the areas of improvement from the previous inspection.

## What the school does well

- Pupils fully embrace the Catholic identity and mission of the school and are exceptionally happy and confident.
- Conscious that Christ is at the heart of the school, there is a lived sense of community and a strong culture of welcome.
- School leaders ensure there are thriving partnerships with parents and the local parish.
- Pupils produce work that is presented well and shows signs of emerging individuality.
- Leaders and governors, have carefully planned the school calendar and timetable to celebrate significant events in the Church's year.

## What the school needs to improve

- Ensure that leaders' self-evaluation is robust and accurate so that specific areas for development are identified and prioritised for improvement and regularly monitored.
- Share the more effective practice observed for teaching of religious education across the whole school so that all teaching is of a consistently high standard.
- Ensure that all staff have a shared understanding of what constitutes a high-quality prayer experience so that they are models of good practice to pupils.

## 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

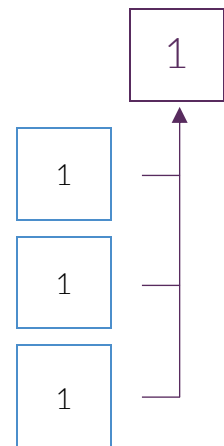
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

#### 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 are exceptionally happy and confident at St Edmund's and know that they are valued and cared for as unique individuals. One pupil shared that they love coming to school because 'it's like a second family, where older children look after younger ones.' Pupils explain proudly about the strong relationships they have with each other and with adults and how 'everyone is treated with respect because God is with us.' They gladly embrace the school's mission to *Learn, Love and Live with the Lord*, exemplifying this in the charitable works in which they actively participate, such as raising money for Cafod, Mary's Meals and the Phyllis Tuckwell Hospice and the achievement of the Cafod Live Simply Award. Some pupils are starting to make links between their actions and the principles of Catholic social teaching and this is an area the school should continue to develop. Pupils have many opportunities to learn and live out the Gospel in school through its extensive chaplaincy work and they welcome the chance to take on leadership roles such as bible leaders, language ambassadors, library leaders or on the eco-council.

Christ is at the centre of St Edmund's and staff feel proud and lucky to work there, citing its family atmosphere and supportive colleagues. The mission statement permeates all aspects of school life, from the embedded culture of welcome, which extends from all members of staff, to the palpable sense of community stemming from strong relationships. One staff member explained, 'being part of a community where the core values of faith, compassion, and integrity are not only taught but genuinely lived made a big impact on me.' This sense of compassion is reflected in the school's commitment to serving the most vulnerable in its community through its high levels of pastoral care, for example, providing free spaces for childcare, bereavement counselling and working with the St Vincent de Paul Society to provide free meals when needed. The school provides a carefully maintained, Catholic environment both indoors and outdoors, including the

well-thought-out prayer garden, which is in constant use by pupils for praying, reflecting or simply a calm place to be. Displays of pupils' work, artwork and statues, create a prayerful and spiritual environment where everyone can work and play, knowing that God is at the heart of the school.

The head teacher leads with integrity and compassion and together with the deputy headteacher, they are determined ambassadors for the school's mission. Staff say they are approachable and supportive with both professional and personal issues and new members of staff feel particularly well-supported and inducted into the school. There is a thriving partnership with parents who are unanimously highly appreciative of the school, saying that their children are always happy and staff always available. As one parent put it, 'there is a wonderful sense of community at this school which is spearheaded by the head teacher... she is our guiding light.' Parish links are also very strong and leaders work effectively with their dedicated parish priest to ensure that this support works both ways, for example, with the parish part-funding the Diocese Singing Schools programme and several staff undertaking liturgical ministries within the parish. Governors are highly committed and ambitious for the school to grow in faith and offer an appropriate balance of challenge and support to leaders. Leaders' and governors' self-evaluation is supported by a range of monitoring activities and they should now endeavour to include pupils, parents and staff in their processes in order to ensure continual improvement.

## Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

### Religious education key judgement grade

#### Pupil outcomes

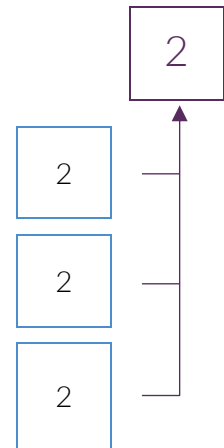
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

#### 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 enjoy their learning in religious education and see it as a special subject, with one pupil commenting, 'we can improve our knowledge of Christianity and become connected to God and learn more about Jesus.' The great respect which they have for the subject can be seen in the time and trouble they take to personalise the covers of their workbooks. In most classes, pupils engage well and are responsive, such as observed in a Year 4 lesson on Creation, where pupils had many opportunities to discuss the questions posed by the teacher. However, pupil engagement declines when the pace of learning is slow and there is too much teacher talk. Pupils' presentation of work is of a very good standard and shows signs of emerging individuality, as seen, for example, in Year 6 where pupils presented work on God's redemptive plan in a variety of ways. They relish the varied opportunities to learn in religious education, telling inspectors with enthusiasm about the art and drama that is a regular feature of lessons. Whilst pupils know when they are doing good work, not all can talk about what they need to do to improve and staff should ensure that pupils understand how to effectively assess their own work and know how to identify accurately ways in which it can be improved.

Teachers are committed to and value religious education and strive to develop their knowledge and skills. Where teachers' subject and pedagogical knowledge is secure, they plan purposeful and age-appropriate activities to provide all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, the opportunity to be successful; this was seen, for example, in a high-quality Year 3 lesson about creation, where the variety of teaching strategies and resources deployed meant that all pupils were engaged and keen to learn. In some classes, however, teachers' choice of techniques or activities led to pupils losing interest and concentration. Teachers use questioning effectively to engage pupils and check understanding and should now develop this so that they can challenge pupils to think more deeply. Opportunities to make links

with previous learning are features in most lessons and teachers are adept at providing a range of retrieval tasks at the start of a lesson to ensure that previous learning is secure. There is a vast array of opportunities for pupils to present their work, including drama, role play, artwork and different forms of writing and these are generally well-used to capture pupils' interest.

Leaders and governors ensure that religious education is given equal prominence to the other core subjects and that the *Religious Education Curriculum Directory* has been implemented faithfully across the school using the diocesan approved scheme of work. The subject leader is active in her leadership and management and is well supported by the headteacher. She engages with diocesan training and implements a monitoring schedule, including data review and analysis, lesson visits, and monitoring pupils' work. Consequently, staff receive feedback from leaders to support their teaching techniques and subject knowledge. Leaders must ensure, however, that their analysis of teaching and learning is accurate so that weaknesses can be quickly identified and addressed, leading to improved outcomes for pupils. Leaders ensure that religious education is effectively planned to meet the needs of different groups of pupils, for example, providing additional adults to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities to access the learning. Governors are involved in self-evaluation in such ways as learning walks and pupil interviews and are kept informed about developments in religious education through the headteacher's report. Leaders and governors together should now refine their self-evaluation cycle so that specific areas for development are identified and prioritised for improvement and regularly monitored.

## 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

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

2

Pupils respond well to the varied experiences of prayer provided. Their participation in liturgy is strongest when it is engaging and uplifting, promoting attentive and heartfelt responses, as observed in a highly effective liturgy where pupils wrote pledges about how to look after God's creation. They are actively engaged in the Mass through ministries such as reading, serving and singing as part of the school's 'choristers' group and are encouraged in this by the parish priest and staff, who are good role models of prayer. Pupils are developing their skills in planning and preparing prayer and liturgy relevant to their age alongside adults and staff should now ensure that they are given more formation and opportunities to do this as outlined in the school's pupil-led progression document. Pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of the liturgical year and make connections to the cycle of prayer and liturgy and various seasonal school traditions, speaking enthusiastically about, for example, the passion play during Lent and the procession for Our Lady in May. They are familiar with differing ways of praying, such as meditation, silent prayer and lectio divina and very much appreciate the time they are given for this: one pupil commented that 'it makes me feel closer to God.'

Prayer is an essential element of school life at St Edmund's. There is an established daily routine, known and understood by all pupils and staff and a range of traditional prayers and responses that are taught throughout the school. Although prayer and liturgy happen consistently throughout the school, there is variability in the quality of provision: in the highest quality experiences, careful thought is given to mood and setting and the age of the pupils, such as in a Year 3 prayer session about creation where the focus area and seating arrangements encouraged pupils to be reflective and thoughtful. It is important that all staff have a shared understanding of what constitutes excellent practice so that all pupils benefit from deeply engaging prayer experiences. Singing is an important and valued feature of collective worship

and the school's commitment to the Diocesan Singing Schools programme greatly enhances all aspects of liturgy. Staff and leaders have thought carefully about how to involve families in the prayer life of the school: parents are encouraged to attend school Masses and events, including the sacramental preparation programme and there are such innovations as the travelling crib during Advent with the result that many families regularly attend Sunday Mass at the parish churches.

Leaders ensure that the school's prayer and liturgy are strategically planned through a termly and yearly calendar linked to the liturgical year and prioritising key celebrations, such as St Edmund's Day, Advent and the feast of St Francis Xavier. The school's policy on prayer and liturgy is well formulated in line with the *Prayer and Liturgy Directory* and serves as a helpful guide to staff on daily and weekly expectations. Leaders know what is appropriate to include at different ages in terms of pupil-led prayer, as reflected in the policy, but this is not yet implemented consistently in all classes. The parish priest supports the formation of staff, guiding and training them on such things as how to write bidding prayers and selecting appropriate music for the Mass. Leaders and governors have a clear schedule to review the prayer life of the school but they must ensure that this self-evaluation is accurate. Leaders should regularly model high-quality worship experiences and provide specific professional development so that all staff are able to prepare and lead high quality worship experiences.

## Information about the school

Full name of school	St Edmund's Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	148510
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	9363462
Full postal address of the school	St Edmund's Catholic Primary School, The Drive, Godalming, GU7 1PF
School phone number	001483414497
Headteacher	Elizabeth Higgins
Chair of local governing body	Ashley Gordon
School Website	<a href="http://www.stedmundsschool.co.uk">http://www.stedmundsschool.co.uk</a>
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	Xavier Catholic Education Trust
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	4 <sup>th</sup> June 2019
Previous denominational inspection grade	Outstanding

## The inspection team

Michael Lobo  
Ursula Hargrave

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