

# St Felix Catholic Primary School

URN: 143624

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Bishop of East Anglia

09–10 May 2024

## Summary of key findings

### 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

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 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

2

## What the school does well

- The school is a diverse community where everyone feels welcome.
- There is strong support between the school and parish which enhances the experiences of the pupils.
- Leaders communicate a clear vision of how they want the school to develop, and this is shared by staff.
- Pupils have a keen sense of ownership of the school, shown through their pride in it and desire to look after it.
- Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the experiences of their children in the school.

## What the school needs to improve

- Use the stories of the house saints to root the pupils in their mission to reach out into the community and put Catholic social teaching into practice.

- Ensure that teaching is planned and delivered in a way which helps all pupils to maximise their learning potential at all times.
- Develop the skills of pupils to lead and plan prayer and liturgy at class and school levels

## 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

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

1

All pupils are proud to be part of this school and know that they are part of the wider Church community. One parent says, 'Kindness, caring for each other and friendship is what makes St Felix the unique school we all know and love.' They are very happy in the school and behave well whether in lessons or moving around the school and on the playground. They have many opportunities to serve each other, as play leaders for younger children or on the school council, ministry team or as Earth Cub members. The school council has led on initiatives such as the Cafod 'Big Lent Walk' and can talk about how the money they raise goes towards helping others. This is linked to their increasing understanding of Catholic social teaching. The ministry team could explain how their role is to spread the gospel. The recently formed Earth Cubs know that they have a responsibility to help look after the world. One of them pointed out, 'We are only borrowing it.'

The mission statement of the school is clearly displayed and well known by all members of the school community. Parents comment on the warm welcome that they receive and the invitations to participate. The annual sports day, to which all are invited, culminates in a sharing of food from the diverse cultures within the school community. Displays around the school reflect its strong Catholic ethos, with artwork and artefacts from different cultures and from different times in the school's history. A current display invites the pupils to reflect on, 'When we think of God, we imagine...' and encourages them to move away from the more traditional representations of God. Support for all pupils is extremely strong, and parents commented on how quickly the school deals with concerns. The school chaplain, who is also the parish priest, is a familiar face around the school and provides pastoral support to staff and pupils. One staff member said, 'The Catholic ethos of the school is evident through the relationships between all

the key stakeholders and rooted in Gospel values.' The relationships, sex, and health education provision is very well planned and meets diocesan and statutory requirements.

This is a school where the mission of the Church is central to everything. Leaders at all levels ensure that Christ is at the centre of all decisions made about the running of the school. They work closely with the local parish and are supported by the parish priest, who is also a governor, to take every opportunity to strengthen those links, working together in a clear partnership. The school has embraced working alongside the diocese and makes full use of the support and guidance it can provide. Parents are very supportive of the school and recognise the work that is done to provide the best education for their children in what it means to be a Catholic. The school continues to look at ways of engaging with all parents, especially those who are harder to reach. Staff enjoy working at the school and are grateful for the support they get from school leaders, reflected in the staff policies and induction process. One commented, 'Great support in developing my own faith and how to apply it in a Catholic setting.' All leaders including governors and directors, share a clear vision of how they can continue to improve the provision for all pupils in a loving, supportive Catholic environment.

## Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

### Religious education key judgement grade

**Pupil outcomes**

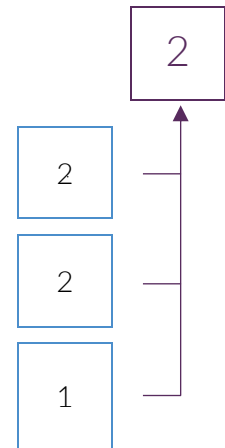
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

**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 religious education lessons and are engaged in the learning. They know their routines for learning, which are seen from Nursery upwards, and this gives them confidence during lessons. Key vocabulary is introduced and rehearsed, sometimes with actions, which means that pupils are able to recall it later in their learning. They are able to use it correctly to answer questions; one child in Nursery was able to say that Jesus, ‘ascended’ and the others showed through their actions that they understood this. Pupils are also confident in referring to previous learning in their work to help answer new questions; one class were delighted to see how their work on St Paul’s conversion helped them learn about his missionary work and a pupil commented, ‘I enjoy re-capping my other learning to put in my new learning.’ Behaviour in lessons is good and pupils are keen to answer questions and contribute. Modelling and support are used well to help pupils’ attainment, but the more able pupils are not always given the opportunity to delve more deeply or respond independently to tasks. Attainment in religious education is broadly in line with other core subjects.

Teachers are confident in their subject knowledge. They clearly communicate the importance of religious education lessons, with many of them starting or finishing the lesson with prayer. The school is in the process of fully implementing the new *Religious Education Directory* and staff have used this opportunity to plan and deliver lessons which are more relevant to the pupils. In a lesson about the hierarchy of the Church, the teacher used photos of a local priest and the Bishop to reinforce the pupils’ learning. Planning links more closely with assessment, which is now being used more effectively to inform next steps and to identify any gaps in understanding. Art, and *visio divina* in particular, are used well to help pupils develop their thinking. Pupils are supported well by all the adults in the classroom and adaptations are matched to their various needs. Questioning is used well, but there are not enough planned opportunities for pupils to

develop answers at a greater depth. 'Big Books' are used to record questions which need more time to answer, and the local priest is often used as a resource to answer these.

Leaders have responded with enthusiasm to the demands of the new *Religious Education Directory* and have nearly completed a very well-planned implementation of it through the school, working with the support provided by the diocese. They have ensured that high quality staff training runs alongside this so that all staff have the skills and knowledge to continue to improve standards. Staff at all levels appreciate the support they are given. The curriculum is now more aligned with the context of the school and the needs of the pupils, and this will continue to improve attainment. Leaders know what is still to be done and, for example, have already begun work on making assessment more accurate and useful, including plans for moderation with other schools which will continue to improve the current provision. Leaders are maintaining standards and moving forwards in religious education at pace amid a considerable number of competing priorities, ensuring that it always has its full allocation. Governors are taking a much more active role in the monitoring of religious education and are aware of what needs to be done to maintain the pace of improvement.

## 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 are keen to join in the prayer life of the school. There are currently 30 pupils taking part in a voluntary lunchtime rosary session and, during a whole school Mass to celebrate Ascension Day, all pupils joined in enthusiastically, especially with the singing. Pupils are given opportunities to experience other forms of prayer and worship. For example, they take part in the stations of the cross, using an outside route marked with stations they have made themselves. The liturgical year is further marked by carols at Christmas and 'The Gospel Show' at Easter. They have all learned how to use *visio divina* at an age-appropriate level, starting in Year 1 with a 'silent stare' at a piece of art. Pupils are keen to work on leading and preparing liturgies and the ministry team is ready to take on this role where they can, 'so that we can help other children and spread the Gospel'. Plans are in place to re-launch the ministry team to begin to take on planning and leading prayer through the school. They used a retreat to Clare Priory before Christmas to reflect on their role. Pupils can talk about how prayer makes them feel. One said that when he prayed, '... it feels like a light goes on and everything feels better for a while.'

The school plans the pattern of prayer and liturgy across the liturgical year, with Mass marking key events such as the beginning of the school year, where staff, pupils and parents are commissioned for the year, holy days of obligation, and the feast of St Felix. Daily prayers and whole school liturgy are well-embedded in the school. Senior leaders and governors are excellent role models in the way they lead prayer and liturgy at school and for example on retreat at Clare Priory with the ministry team. In addition, staff model good practice to the pupils, joining in and leading prayers with them. Art and music are used well to enhance the experiences of prayer and the school grounds are also used creatively with a small, quiet area in memory of a previous parish priest and for the outside celebration of Mass. Parents are welcomed into the school and are appreciative of the invitations. A parent commented, 'Our daughter has learnt

very important life choices and how prayer will shape her to become the best person that she can be.'

School leaders, including governors and directors ensure that prayer is at the heart of this school by having a strong focus on it which is evident across the whole school community right through to children in the Foundation Stage who can sit quietly in prayerful thought. The strong presence of the parish priest in the school plays a large part in this. Governors provide very strong support through participation in liturgical celebrations and by monitoring the quality of prayer and liturgy. Leaders have already drawn up a plan for how this will be developed following recent training from the diocese on the new *Prayer and Liturgy Directory*. Development planning by leaders is accurate and focussed on the key priorities for improvement such as developing the role of pupils in leading prayer in their classes, school and parish and extending the different types of prayer used in church so that all pupils, including those who are not Catholic, will be able to experience more of what the Church offers.



## Information about the school

Full name of school	St Felix Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	143624
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	9353320
Full postal address of the school	St Felix Catholic Primary School, School Lane, HAVERHILL, CB9 9DE
School phone number	01440703775
Headteacher	Andi Dodds
Chair of Governors/Trustees	Mrs Wendy Lashmar
School Website	<a href="http://www.stfelixhaverhill.com">http://www.stfelixhaverhill.com</a>
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	Our Lady Of Walsingham Catholic Multi Academy Trust
Phase	Primary
Type of school	Academy
Admissions policy	Non selective
Age-range of pupils	3-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	20 <sup>th</sup> June 2016
Previous denominational inspection grade	Grade 1

## The inspection team

Catherine McMahon  
Felicity Hope

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