

St Edmunds Catholic Primary School

URN: 124764

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

24 June 2026 – 25 June 2026

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

Religious education (p.5)

The quality of curriculum religious education RE

Collective worship (p.7)

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

The school is fully compliant with the general norms for religious education laid down by the Bishops' Conference

The school is fully compliant with any additional requirements of the diocesan bishop

The school has responded to the areas for improvement from the last inspection

2

1

2

2

Yes

Yes

Fully

What the school does well

- St Edmund's is a welcoming and inclusive community where every child is known, loved, and cared for.
- Senior leaders are inspirational witnesses to the Gospel in their actions and decisions; as a consequence, all staff enthusiastically embrace the mission statement.
- Pupils are highly motivated, happy and proud to be at St Edmund's; behaviour is exemplary at all times.
- Pupils enjoy religious education lessons and are very engaged in their learning.
- Leaders have carefully planned the school's collective worship timetable to include appropriate celebrations for key times of the Church's year.

What the school needs to improve

- Develop a consistent approach to assessment and feedback so that pupils routinely understand what they have done well and what they need to do next to improve their learning in religious education.
- Provide a breadth of prayer opportunities and experiences for all members of the school community.
- Provide professional development so that all relevant staff are skilled at leading a wide range of prayer opportunities and supporting pupils to take an appropriate lead.

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

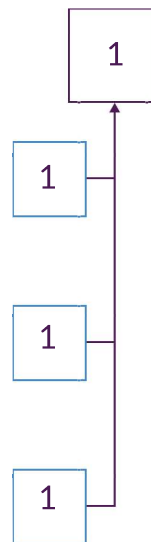
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

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 at St Edmund's are joyful ambassadors for their school and truly understand and live out their mission statement, "Learning together in God's love". They explain that it 'makes us more tolerant and welcoming so we can open our hearts to everyone for the common good'. They are aware that in following the example of Jesus, they have responsibilities towards vulnerable members of society and can link this to the principles of Catholic social teaching. Eco-councillors, for example, are proud to pick up litter as part of their duty of stewardship 'because Pope Francis told us to look after the earth,' while the fundraising they do for charities such as Tentbox, Water Aid and the local foodbank are seen as integral parts of school life. Pupils feel exceptionally happy, safe and secure and because of the excellent relationships and great respect shown to each other, behaviour is exemplary at all times. They are extremely understanding of those with additional needs and take pride in including pupils from the Nest SEND unit in their play. Pupils relish the opportunity to take on roles such as language ambassadors, house captains and school councillors, and the RE ambassadors are particularly proud of their work in leading the rest of the school in their prayer life.

Staff are adamant that the mission statement is the core of what they do and that 'Christ is at the heart of our school'. They are exemplary role models in their positive interactions and relationships with pupils. This is particularly evident in the exceptional levels of pastoral care shown to all and especially to the most vulnerable, which stems from knowing the families very well and can include support with, for example, referrals, free uniform and food deliveries. Everyone demonstrates love and care, resulting in the strong sense of welcome that is felt by pupils, parents and visitors. One parent told inspectors that at their previous

school, their child had never wanted to go to school but since joining St Edmund's 'she never wants to stay at home'. Staff are proud of how the school celebrates the diversity of its community with, for example, the use of culture bags and the links in the assembly rota to other cultures and faiths. The school environment is a rich celebration of the mission of the school with creative displays of Bible stories, prayers, and a wealth of signs and symbols that act as witness to the school's Catholic character.

Senior leaders are inspirational witnesses to Gospel values; they share a common vision and clearly articulate the school's mission. This is reflected in the pastoral support and care they show towards staff. Leaders and governors have invested in wellbeing and nursing service support for the staff as well as prioritising workload reduction. Staff are wholly appreciative of this and say that leaders are 'understanding and understand that we are human first'. Parents too are overwhelmingly supportive of the school and its mission, highlighting the innovative and regular learning conversations that the school organises with their child's teacher and the fact that all issues are listened to and quickly resolved. One parent shared, 'we love St Edmund's School and feel very lucky to have a place here.' There is a valued and flourishing partnership with the local parish which has resulted in parishioners helping to build the school prayer garden. The parish priest is a welcome and regular visitor and parishioners are invited to attend Mass in the school. Governors are very committed to their role and visit regularly: They provide support and challenge and their self-evaluation, although not yet fully systematic, is beginning to support well-targeted and planned improvements.

Religious education

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 key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

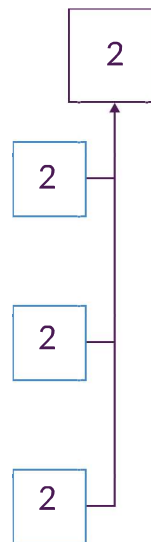
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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 are developing secure knowledge, understanding and skills that reflect the requirements of the *Religious Education Directory* and thoroughly enjoy their lessons. They revisit prior learning in lessons which helps to build up their knowledge and, as a consequence, pupils make good progress from their starting points in knowing and remembering more. They are able to speak with confidence about what they have learned, making links for example between the Passover, the Last Supper and making their First Holy Communion. They readily use subject-specific vocabulary, telling inspectors, for instance, that 'wearing a kippah shows respect for God'. Behaviour in religious education lessons is good: pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to learning, remain focused and contribute purposefully throughout lessons. They willingly collaborate with one another, for example, in making posters about what makes them unique in a Key Stage 2 Class. Their written work is generally well presented, as seen in some high-quality Key Stage 1 books, but this is not consistent throughout all year groups. Although pupils are aware of the school's feedback procedures, they do not routinely know how well they are doing or what they can do to improve.

Teachers are increasingly confident in their subject knowledge: they value religious education and have high expectations. They have a good understanding of how pupils learn and plan lessons accordingly, as seen across the school from the engaging continuous provision activities in early years about what Jesus might have looked like to the high-level discussions in upper Key Stage 2 about Catholic social teaching principles in practice. Effective questioning was observed in some lessons, for example, in Key Stage 1, where teachers used open and

probing questions to extend pupils' thinking about Jewish life in Britain. However, this practice is not yet consistently evident across all classes. Careful planning takes account of, and is linked to pupils' needs, so that all pupils can be successful learners. Those with special needs are especially well supported through adapted resources, scaffolds, widgets and adult support, enabling them to make good progress alongside their peers. Teachers use a range of formative assessment strategies, including live feedback, to support pupils during lessons. However, this practice is not yet consistently embedded across the school. Teachers provide pupils with opportunities to present their learning using a variety of forms, including Big Think Tasks, artwork, drama and extended writing.

Leaders and governors ensure that the curriculum is faithful to the *Religious Education Curriculum Directory* and that the subject is given a high status within the school. They ensure it is given full parity with other core subjects in terms of resources, timetabling and professional development. The subject leader for religious education demonstrates a clear vision and strong commitment to its continued development. Together with senior leaders, she has established a positive direction for improvement and is providing effective professional development: staff value this guidance and support and are confident in seeking advice to develop their practice further. One member of staff commented, 'The RE Lead leads the subject well and has implemented changes for the better.' Staff in the early stages of their career are well supported and there is a real sense of collaboration and working together to improve. Leaders have established appropriate systems to monitor religious education, through lesson visits, work scrutiny and pupil voice and have a secure understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. Governors are kept informed through conversations and occasional visits to the school: However, their self-evaluation is not systematic or rigorous enough to support them in making decisions that lead to strategic improvements.

Collective worship

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

Collective worship key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

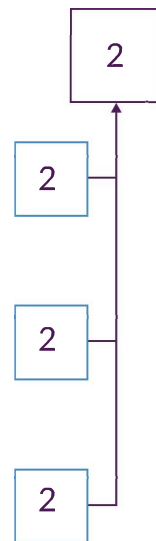
How well pupils participate in and respond to the school's collective worship

Provision

The quality of collective worship provided by the school

Leadership

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



Pupils respond well to the prayer experiences provided by the school. This can clearly be seen in the way they participate in moments of silent reflection, communal responses and in their joyful singing. In an Early Years prayer session, children were focused on the scripture of feeding the 5000 and were able to reflect and link this to their own lives. As they progress through the school, pupils become increasingly aware of a variety of different ways of praying, including Catholic traditions such as the Rosary and Magnificat, silent reflection and prayers asking for forgiveness or intercession. They recognise and understand the Church's liturgical year and can explain important feasts and celebrations, including Advent, Lent, ordinary time and the Easter Triduum. Pupils are able to discuss the impact prayer has on their daily lives: one pupil commented that they liked to 'privately talk to God' while another shared that 'Jesus is the light of the world; we can't switch him off because he helps us to see the way.' The RE Ambassadors are very committed to their roles and relish their work in leading class prayers and setting up prayer tables: they say they would like to have more opportunities to prepare and lead acts of worship alongside opportunities to evaluate the quality of prayer and liturgy.

Prayer is central to the life of the school and there is a daily pattern of prayer, which includes a morning offering, grace before meals and a prayer for the end of the day. The scripture used in worship is well selected and seasonally relevant, for instance, Psalm 130 used in a whole school celebration of the word to enable pupils to reflect on what they find difficult. Staff are positive role models and willingly participate in all prayer and liturgy, supporting pupils with additional needs to take part and using their own talents, such as playing the piano, where appropriate. They now need to be provided with additional professional

development opportunities to enable them to help pupils to plan, lead and evaluate well-constructed prayer and liturgy and to improve the quality of the prayer experiences. The parish priest visits regularly to celebrate Mass, the Sacrament of Reconciliation for older pupils and to support pupils and staff with their skills and knowledge. Parents greatly value the school's life of prayer and worship with one parent commenting, 'we particularly enjoy being given the opportunity to attend Mass as a parent during the school day'.

Leaders ensure the school calendar reflects the liturgical year and prioritises regular opportunities to celebrate the Eucharist, with Mass on holy days of obligation as well as special occasions such as harvest, the beginning and end of the school year and St Edmund's Day. The programme of worship clearly outlines links to Catholic social teaching and the Sunday Gospel reading, and is matched to pupils' ages and experiences, ranging from short prayers and bible stories in Early Years to focused scripture sessions in upper Key Stage 2. The prayer and liturgy leader is passionate about her role and has a good grasp of the areas for development. Together with senior leaders, she provides appropriate training for staff based on the liturgical calendar and ensures that staff have time to discuss and ask questions. However, monitoring and evaluation are at an early stage for governors and leaders. As a result, areas of focus are not always precisely identified and consequently some staff lack the skills required to lead a wide range of prayer opportunities including supporting pupils to prepare and lead.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Edmunds Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	124764
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	9353311
Full postal address of the school	Westgate St, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk, IP33 1QG
School phone number	01284 755141
Executive Headteacher	Mrs Maria Kemble
Headteacher or Head of School	Mrs Katie Copeman
Chair of Governors	Mr Ian Cameron
School Website	www.st-edmunds.suffolk.sch.uk
Trusteeship	Diocesan
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	25 June 2018
Previous denominational inspection grade	Outstanding

The Inspection Team

Michael Lobo Lead

Maureen Collier

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