

St Dominic Savio Catholic Primary School

URN: 110041

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Bishop of Portsmouth

26–27 November 2025

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

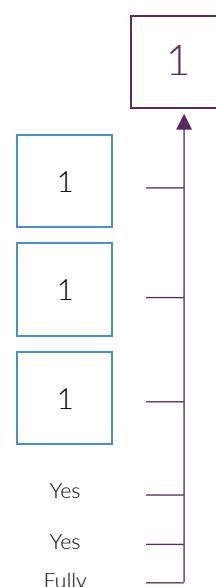
Collective worship (p.7)

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



Compliance statement

- The school is fully compliant with the general norms for religious education laid down by the Bishops' Conference.
- The diocesan bishop does not have any additional requirements.
- The school has completely met the areas of improvement identified in the last Section 48 inspection by the Catholic Diocese of Portsmouth.

What the school does well

- The school mission statement 'Serve the Lord with Joy', is exemplified by the inspirational leadership of the headteacher, her RE leader and other senior leaders, who not only lead the school with high levels of expertise, but a genuine love for the community that they serve.
- The Catholic ethos within the school is palpable. Staff, pupils and governors enthusiastically embrace the school's Catholic life and mission and work actively to live out the faith life of the community.
- Pupils excel in this high achieving school community. Their work within the religious education curriculum is of a consistently high standard, regardless of ability; those with special educational needs are supported particularly successfully to achieve their potential.
- Staff ensure that pupils are carefully guided to develop the habits of prayer and worship and the junior chaplains take an enthusiastic, leading role in providing experiences of prayer that are meaningful and spiritually nourishing.
- Pupils' behaviour is exceptional. The warm relationships they have with one another are reflective of the love that they themselves receive from the staff who work tirelessly to teach and model the Christian virtues at the centre of the community.

What the school needs to improve

- Within religious education, establish a broad range of enrichment activities to complement the strong teaching and learning that takes place across the school.
- Work with families to provide a range of opportunities to include them in the prayer life of the school and to support the developing prayer life of the 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

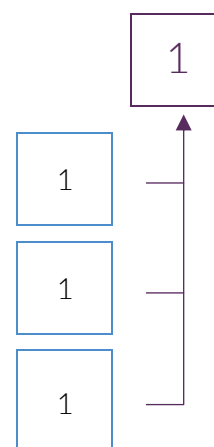
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

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



Without exception, pupils across the entire school have a firm understanding of the recently updated mission statement, *'Serve the Lord with Joy'*. Pupils highly appreciate the love and care that is shown to them by adults which results in their happy, confident approach to life in school. They are fully aware that they are part of a school community which follows the teachings of Jesus Christ reflected in the gospels and through His Church. They also see themselves as active participants in this endeavour. Catholic social teaching is carefully woven into every aspect of school life and pupils have a firm understanding of its significance. The behaviour and attitudes of pupils towards one another is exceptionally positive and clearly linked to the Catholic ethos. The junior chaplains take a very active role in the development of prayer and worship and enthusiastically lead their peers in meaningful opportunities for spiritual growth.

Staff are highly committed to the school and have a genuine affection for it, resulting in many who have worked for a long time within the community. They are particularly appreciative of the support that they receive from leaders and governors, who go out of their way to be present to them. The school community is rich and culturally diverse and includes pupils and staff not of the Catholic faith; although all are highly welcomed and valued and particular endeavours are made to accommodate a variety of perspectives. Pupils highly appreciate the strong pastoral care that they are shown by adults, which extends particularly to those with special educational needs. The physical environment in the school is well cared for and is overtly demonstrative of the Catholic ethos. Particular areas such as the Rosary Garden and Sanctus Locus (holy place) emphasise the school's Catholic character. Relationships and health education is taught extremely well and the school faithfully follows the approach expected by the diocese. As a result, pupils have a strong understanding of the concepts associated within this curriculum.

The school leadership team, supported by the governors, are highly committed to the Catholic mission and clearly understand its implications. This is reflected in the school's support for many

good causes, such as by raising funds for charities such as Cafod and the Royal British Legion, as well as more locally, including fundraising for the local parish roof repair appeal. Such support is illustrative of the active and warm relationship between the parish and school. Parents are highly supportive and appreciative, with one summing up the general view stating, 'The Catholic life of the school underpins all aspects of education at St Dominic Savio. The school continues to have a profound educational and spiritual impact on the education of my two children'. That said, several parents stated that they would appreciate further opportunities to experience the prayer life of the school. Leaders and governors have a firm understanding of Catholic social teaching and are highly committed to ensuring that its principles permeate across every aspect of school life, which is evident in the documentation that they have produced, outlining how this is to be achieved. Governors regularly visit various events within the school and are familiar with its day-to-day running. They work exceptionally hard and with a degree of zeal to ensure that the Catholic mission is at the forefront of the school's ongoing journey. The school employs a rigorous self-evaluation system and continually strives for improvements that are designed to enhance its Catholicity. Staff who are new to the school benefit from an excellent induction and professional development package and leaders have refined an approach which enables non-Catholic staff to quickly appreciate the requirements of working in a Catholic school.

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

1

Provision

The quality of teaching, learning, and assessment in religious education

1

Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for religious education

1

1

Within religious education lessons, pupils make excellent progress which over time, results in pupils having a very strong knowledge and understanding of the subject. Regardless of ability, children achieve very high standards, particularly those with special educational needs who receive excellent support. Pupils are developing a theological and ethical understanding relative to their age and are able to consider how the Christian faith impacts their daily lives. Pupils are particularly articulate and talk with enthusiasm and confidence about their work in religious education. Within lessons they participate in meaningful discussions with each other about the topics at hand, continually demonstrating high levels of independence and excellent attitudes to their learning. Their levels of concentration are commendable and the approach to which they undertake their learning in religious education is first class. This results in written work that is very strong. During religious education lessons, pupils' engagement is excellent and they are developing the skills to become highly competent in all aspects of the subject. As a result of the high standard of religious education within the school, coupled with excellent pupil attitudes, attainment is well above average.

The great majority of teachers are very confident about their ability to teach religious education lessons and those with less experience still deliver lessons of a high standard. This is because of the strong support that they are given, alongside their own commitment to the subject. Comprehensive planning outlines how lessons progress sequentially and build upon pupils' knowledge over time. Staff skilfully use questioning techniques to probe children's understanding and elicit what they have learned. Such questions are demanding and challenge children to explain their learning in detail. The high outcomes that pupils achieve are celebrated enthusiastically by staff and amongst each other, meaning that religious education lessons contribute to a certain positivity across the school. Whilst lessons are demanding, pupils do not

always benefit from additional enrichment activities, designed to enhance academic rigour. Despite this, children learn well, both academically and from a spiritual and moral perspective.

Leaders and governors have ensured that the religious education curriculum aligns with the current *Religious Education Directory*, and the expectations of the diocese. Religious education is considered to be at least as important as the other subjects within the curriculum and as such, leaders and governors make sure that it is well resourced and funded. Leaders do a particularly good job of developing staff expertise in religious education, including offering excellent induction for new teachers, in the form of training and documentation that they have developed. The headteacher, her subject leader in religious education and all senior leaders, work extremely hard and with a degree of genuine passion to ensure that the subject is at the forefront of school life. Their expertise and inspirational leadership are pivotal in the success of the subject. The religious education leader's impact is also felt outside the school, via her links with other local Catholic schools and within the diocese. The religious education curriculum is planned carefully so that year on year pupils build up their knowledge and understanding in a sequential manner. The structure of the religious education curriculum supports pupils of all abilities, particularly those with special educational needs. Whilst there are some opportunities for pupils to experience enrichment type activities within religious education these are not as prominent as leaders would currently like and the school has already identified this as an area to build upon. Leaders and governors regularly undertake monitoring activities in order to enable them to understand the impact of the provision across the school. This enables them to quickly identify and address any issues that need attention, whilst at the same time, celebrate the many achievements of the pupils within the subject.

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 participate in experiences of prayer and liturgy across the school with reverence, respect, and enthusiasm. They respond appropriately to communal prayers and sing with joyful enthusiasm. Relative to their age, pupils have a very strong awareness of Catholic tradition and the seasons of the Church. They know why certain signs, symbols, and artefacts are used in Catholic worship. The junior chaplains spearhead the pupils' participation in the prayer life of the school. They work regularly and highly effectively alongside key staff to lead, plan, and deliver meaningful opportunities for prayer. They are keen to evaluate the opportunities that they provide, although seeking the views of their peers in this respect would be of further benefit. Pupils are very confident in speaking about the prayers that they know and how these influence their lives and the lives of others. They are able to talk with clarity about their prayer life and the spiritual experiences that they benefit from and have a growing awareness of how their spirituality is being shaped.

Prayer and celebrations of the word take place daily, ensuring that a natural rhythm permeates. Pupils and staff experience a range of prayerful opportunities that reflect the richness of Catholic heritage, such as praying the Rosary, the Stations of the Cross in Lent, and having the opportunity to take part in penitential services at appropriate points within the year. Scripture is used skilfully and in a manner that is accessible to pupils. All staff provide an excellent example within prayer and liturgy. They are well-versed in how to create prayer and celebrations of the word in a meaningful way and often employ creative approaches to further engage pupils. Occasionally, the practical arrangements of some classrooms slightly hinder the spiritual atmosphere within class-based celebrations of the word. That said, the school does make very good use of other beautiful areas that are dedicated to prayer, such as the Rosary Garden, Sanctus Locus (Holy place), and where possible, the church, which they are fortunate enough to access close by.

Parents and families are welcome to school Masses and enjoy being able to participate in such opportunities, although some would like further chances to be involved in other devotional occasions.

The school has a very well thought out policy outlining how prayer and liturgy will be implemented. Leaders are very aware of the need to develop the expertise required by staff and pupils in order to facilitate meaningful prayer. Mass is celebrated on all holy days of obligation; the feasts of St Dominic Savio and St John Bosco are also celebrated and pupils participate in other prayerful opportunities linked to the liturgical cycle. School leaders work very well with staff to ensure that they are fully able to plan and lead prayer and liturgy that is of a high quality. Leaders have developed a school prayer book which clearly outlines the prayers that pupils should learn; however, this does not include all of the prayers laid out in the *Prayer and Liturgy Directory*. The school needs to address this to ensure full compliance with the *Prayer and Liturgy Directory*. School leaders make sure that the resources that they use within prayer and liturgy are of a beautiful standard and understand that the quality of these reflect the importance of the prayer tradition. Leaders and governors have a clear understanding of the quality of prayer within the school, due to their ongoing monitoring activities. Governors receive updates at meetings about the quality of prayer but are also keen to experience this for themselves by frequently visiting the school. The impact of leadership on prayer and liturgy within the school is clearly very positive and, as a result, the whole community regularly benefits from prayerful activities that are highly engaging.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Dominic Savio Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	110041
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	8723368
Full postal address of the school	Western Avenue, Woodley, Berkshire, RG5 3BH
School phone number	01189 693893
Headteacher	Laura Hulland
Chair of governors	Fiona Cottle
School Website	www.stdominicsavio.co.uk
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	4-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	November 2019
Previous denominational inspection grade	Outstanding

The inspection team

Jamie Carroll
Roxy Ashworth

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