74

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

THE NATIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE INSPECTION OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS, COLLEGES AND ACADEMIES

CATHOLIC SELF-EVALUATION DOCUMENT (CSED)

School	St Mary's RC High School
Headteacher	Mr Stuart Wetson
Religious education leader	Mrs Rebecca Surman
Other Catholic life and mission leader(s)	Fr Andrew Berry
Date of completion	Updated Autumn Term 2 2026

SCHOOL INFORMATION

Full Postal Address:	St Mary's RC High School Lugwardine Hereford HR1 4DR

Telephone Number:	01432 850416 / 850755	**Arch/diocese:**	Cardiff - Menevia
Email Address:	admin@st-maryshigh.heredford.sch.uk	**Parish in which school is located:**	
Website:	www.st-maryshigh.hereford.sch.uk	**Parish Priest/Priest Chaplain:**	Fr Andrew Berry
URN (Unique Reference No):	116992	**Number on roll:**	747 – (21/10/2026)
Local Authority:	Herefordshire Council	**Age range of those on roll:**	11-16
Chair of Governors:	Dr John Stedman	**Gender of those on roll:**	Mixed
MAT/MAC (if applicable):		**Phase:**	Secondary
Chair of Directors (if applicable):		**Foundation trustees:**	
CEO or CSEL (if applicable):		**School type:**	Voluntary Aided, 11-16 Comprehensive, Non-Selective, RC High School

Current statutory inspection grade:	Outstanding (Sec 5)	**Date of this inspection:**	December 2024
Current denominational grade:	Excellent (Sec 48)	**Date of this inspection:**	April 2019

CONTEXT (updated Autumn Term 2 2026)

A brief outline of any circumstances that help contextualise the information contained in this document

St Mary's RC High School is a voluntary aided mixed 11-16 school. We are a school within the Catholic Archdiocese of Cardiff - Menevia and are maintained by Herefordshire County Council. We are a high performing and oversubscribed Catholic school *"with God at the centre of all that we do in our faith community".* We strive to uphold the Gospel values and the standards we have set for ourselves, and are committed to providing outstanding academic, pastoral and spiritual development for all of our pupils. We are blessed with beautiful surroundings in which to work and learn and with talented teachers committed to helping our pupils realise their potential.

There are currently 747 pupils on roll: this compares with 745 pupils at the time of the previous Section 48 inspection in 2019.

We serve the north-eastern edge of Hereford and draw pupils from a wide catchment area including Bromyard, Ledbury, Leominster and Ross-on-Wye. Two of our three Catholic feeder primary schools are located in Hereford city, and the other is situated in Ross-on-Wye. Our social and economic circumstances vary with around 14.2% of our pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM). 0.8% of pupils are currently looked after /CIC. (9)

59.7% of our pupils are baptised Catholic children, which is above the average when compared to other schools in the archdiocese. An additional 30.3% of pupils come from other Christian denominations and approximately 4.7% come from other World religions (see breakdown below – page 3)

Most of our pupils speak English as their first language. 24.1% of pupils have special educational needs: that is higher than the national average. 32 pupils have an Education Health Care Plan (4.3% of school population). Most pupils are from a white British background. Around 30.0% (224) of pupils speak English as an additional language / are designated EAL, which is above the national average (in large part due to Catholic Eastern European pupil population).

The leadership team is made up of the Headteacher, who has been in post since April 2018, a Deputy Head (DSL), three Assistant Headteachers and the school business manager. 26.0% of teaching staff 13.3% of TA's are Catholic.

The average individual school budget per pupil for St Mary's RC High School is currently £5,270 per pupil (£5,022 per KS3 pupil and £5,661 per KS4 pupil) which is in line with the other secondary schools in Herefordshire.

SCHOOL POPULATION: BREAKDOWN BY FAITH (Updated Autumn Term 1 2026)

Anglican	3		
Baptist	18		
Christian	30		
Church of England	169		
Methodist	0		
Greek Orthodox	1		
Russian Orthodox	3		
Seventh Day Adventist	2	226	30.3%
Hindu	6		
Jewish	0		
Muslim	6		
Other Religion	23	35	4.7%
No Religion	38	38	5.4%
Refused	2		
Roman Catholic	446	446	59.7%

CONTEXT OF THE RE DEPARTMENT 2026-2027

The RE department is made up of: Mrs R Surman Head of Department, two full-time colleagues, Mr D Coyne and Miss C Leslie (all three are practising Catholics), and one part-time non-specialist, Mr R Watson who teaches exclusively in KS3.

Pupils at KS3 and KS4 have five hours of curriculum time across a two-week timetable. In Years 10 and 11, there are five groups (mixed ability within two ability-based bands) with a total number of 147 pupils in year 11 and 150 pupils in year 10. At KS4 a transition to a new exam board (*Eduqas*) has taken place to help further strengthen outcomes and make course content more accessible for pupils (first exam 2027). There are two additional groups of ten pupils in both year groups who are following the *ELC for Religious Studies.*

The RE department are central to the *Catholic Life and Mission* of the school, alongside our priest chaplains, Fr Andrew and Fr Augustine. The HOD has additional responsibility for RSE and DCO is HOY 10 and 11. CLE has further responsibility for social action and fundraising, including *CAFOD* and *SVP.*

Mrs Marion Smith is the Link Governor for the RE Department, completing termly visits and sharing her feedback with the wider governing body.

For further information the RE Department 2025-2026 / 2026-2027, please see:

- **RE Department DDP 1 (October 2025) & DDP 2 (March 2026) & DDP 1 (Autumn 2026)**
- **RE Department Review 2025-2026 & 2026-2027: Final Report & Executive Summary (October 2025)**
- **RE Department 2025-2026 & 2026-2027: HOD PPT Presentation to Governors (October 2026)**
- **RE Department: Assessment Implementation 2025-2026 & 2026-2027**

WHOLE SCHOOL SPIRITUALITY - *'The Catholic Life of our School'*
Updated Statement 2026

Our school is founded on Gospel values, we believe that by remaining faithful to Christ's teaching and example, we will continue to serve God and show selfless love to our neighbour in our daily lives. We believe that each one of us is created in God's image & likeness and is called to perform a special task. We also believe that we must use our God-given talents to fulfil our academic and spiritual potential. Our Priest Chaplain, Fr Andrew Berry, assisted by Fr Augustine Primavesi, works closely with the department to plan and deliver key celebrations / worship within the liturgical cycle.

Our **Mission Statement** is supported by our school values (***'Pupil Profile'***), which proposes the qualities we wish to develop in our pupils. These qualities are simple, yet challenging, and seek to enable every member of our community to take the message of the Gospels to heart and apply it to their day-to-day lives. We challenge and encourage our pupils to be:

- Grateful for their own gifts, for the gift of other people, and for the blessings of each day; and generous with the gifts, becoming people of service.
- Attentive to their experience and to their vocation; and discerning about the choices they make, and the effects of those choices.
- Compassionate towards their neighbour, near and far, especially the less fortunate; and loving by their just actions and forgiving words.
- Faith-filled in their beliefs and hopeful for the future.
- Eloquent and truthful in what they say of themselves, the relations between people, and the world.
- Learned, finding God in all things, and wise in the ways they use their learning for the common good.
- Curious about everything and active in their engagement with the world, changing what they can do for the better.
- Intentional in the way they live and use the resources of the earth, guided by conscience; and prophetic in the example they set to others'

Heart of the School

At the heart of our school stands our chapel, offering a silent oasis amid our learning environment, a place of sanctuary and encounter with the living God. Here, we can spend time with Christ, present to us in the bread of life, the Eucharist, inside the Tabernacle. Our chapel is a physical symbol of our faith and beliefs at St Mary's, open and always accessible to all pupils and staff.

The Catholic life of the school is at the centre of our education. We aim to nurture the holistic development of all our pupils through provision of a thriving chaplaincy, which is led by the RE Department staff, by our Priest Chaplain, Fr Andrew, Fr Augustine and supported by our Pupil Chaplaincy team. Each weekday morning there is an opportunity for pupils and staff to attend morning prayers in the chapel. During form time on Tuesday morning pupils are invited to our Rosary Club, and at lunchtime, we have the chapel open to all for personal and collective time with God.

Masses are provided on all Holy Days of Obligation that fall within term time, and the feast days of each of the patron saints of the respective school pastoral houses are celebrated. In addition, we celebrate Mass on the first Friday of the month during extended registration time (*see registers of attendance*).

Prayer and worship are central to our purpose as a Catholic school and our pupils are encouraged to lead liturgies and elements of assemblies during the year, as well as participating in Form time prayers. **Sacred Spaces** are on designated days for each form to focus on prayer, scripture and reflection: setting up a *'sacred space'* in each form room is a key element in establishing an environment of prayer. The visual reminders of our Catholic faith invite pupils to remember to quiet themselves in the presence of the God. For staff there are also many opportunities to reflect and worship together throughout the working week; for example, Monday and Wednesday morning staff briefings always begin with a prayer led by a different colleague organised via a half-termly *Prayer Rota*. Departmental, MLT and weekly SLT meetings always begin with a prayer. There is a prayer and reflection service held for pupils and staff if a family member or friend is ill or has recently passed away.

In addition, there are many opportunities for pupils to develop their faith outside of the classroom, for example; by participating in bi-annual pilgrimages to Rome or Lourdes, in-school whole day retreats for each year group and residential retreats within England. Most recently, the school went on pilgrimage to Rome in June 2026 with members of the RE Department and Fr Andrew Berry accompanying the pupils.

We consider that helping those less fortunate than ourselves is one way of encouraging our pupils to care and be concerned for others. A variety of events are organised; for example, non-uniform days, pupil-led cake sales, raffles and games in order to provide practical ways to respond to the needs of others. In November 2025, all pupils in KS3 were invited to support the *'Samaritans Purse Charity'* campaign, *Operation Christmas Child*. Nearly 300 shoe boxes were collected, wrapped and filled with gifts. The school has also recently participated in CAFOD's *'Brighten Up'* day (*October 2025*). The latest whole school Ofsted inspection of St Mary's in December 2024 highlighted fundraising as a real strength and an admirable facet of the school: *"There are numerous opportunities for pupils to support others. For example, pupils recently raised £3,000 for charity"* (*Ofsted Report 2025*)

In November 2022, we launched a *Youth SVP* group at St Mary's, a group that has grown considerably in numbers since. The core aim of the group is to help young people turn concern into action. Pupils are encouraged to engage with the community to make a positive difference, as well as learning new skills and their developing faith. The group meets weekly and plan to provide support and assistance in practical ways that utilise each of the pupils' gifts and talents.

The **RE Department Review 2025-2026,** as part of the school's annual **Department Review** process, took place on *w/c: Monday 22nd September 2025***.** The process involved pre-review meeting with the HOD, lesson observations, learning walks, a marking & feedback scrutiny and a pupil voice exercise. A final report was subsequently published and shared with the department.

The final **RE Department Report** and **Executive Summary 2025-2026** can be located on **CRL (Central Resource Library): SLT – Spirituality / Section 48 – RE Department Monitoring & Evaluation 2025-2026 & 2026-2027.**

- **All final RE Reports in relation to the past five academic years can also be located on CRL.**

RESPONSE TO LAST INSPECTION (April 2019)

Area for improvement	Actions taken	Impact of actions
R1: Review the curriculum time given to Religious Education to ensure that it meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference and Archdiocesan expectations	Following the 2019 inspection, the curriculum was immediately reviewed to ensure that sufficient time is allocated to RE to meet the requirements of the Bishops' Conference and Diocesan Directives (10% curriculum time) All pupils at St Mary's are given significant curriculum time to deepen their knowledge, skills and understanding of RE throughout KS3 & 4 in line with Diocesan Directives (five hours across a two-week timetable in both key stages). RSE is delivered during **Values & Virtues** (formerly PSHRE) as part of a dedicated programme (45 minutes Form time is allocated every Wednesday for the delivery of **Values & Virtues**). This is closely monitored by the school's SLT, HOY and V & V lead.	Rationale: *'There are clearly defined aims of the curriculum, inclusive of serving the needs of pupils from the Catholic tradition, from other faith traditions and those with no faith. The curriculum intent also aims to ensure that pupils develop spiritually and morally, understanding the school's mission to serve each other through the teachings of Christ. All pupils should be provided with a high-quality Religious Education that allows them to engage in learning that helps develop their faith, as well as acquiring the knowledge necessary to make academic progress. The RE curriculum also presents opportunities to explore values and virtues that support the ethos of the school'* **(from, RE Department Position Statement 2026)**

R1: Review the curriculum time given to Religious Education to ensure that it meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference and Archdiocesan expectations	The **KS3 RE curriculum** is agreed by the Bishops of England and Wales as presented in the **RE Curriculum Directory** (2022). Pupils follow the ***Source to Summit*** syllabus which links directly to, and builds on, the curriculum used in Catholic primary schools in the Archdiocese of Cardiff - Menevia. Curriculum at KS3 meets all directives from the archdiocese, including proportional curriculum time (10%). The **RED** curriculum aligns with **Eduqas** GCSE content.	At **KS3**, there is a logically agreed sequence to the topics studied and each one builds on prior learning, and work becomes more challenging as terms progress. There is flexibility within the topics to allow for pupils to develop their own skills and to explore topics of interest. There is also the opportunity to develop skills and knowledge that tie in with the **Eduqas Religious Studies GCSE syllabus**. As a Catholic Christian community, the focus is on Church and Gospel values in our modern world, but pupils will also explore other World Religions, in recognition of the UK as a multi-faith and multicultural society and the importance of dialogue and respect. Regular revision coupled with mid and end of unit assessments, encourage pupils to know and remember more, whilst reflecting on their own faith journeys. **(see, RE Department Curriculum Statement 2026)** **Impact (example):** *'The new RED curriculum aligns well with Eduqas GCSE content. Curriculum intent is clearly linked to spiritual development, with opportunities for reflection, debate, and moral reasoning embedded in lessons'* **(from, RE Department Report 2025-2026)**

R1: Review the curriculum time given to Religious Education to ensure that it meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference and Archdiocesan expectations	At KS4, there are 6 groups, 5 following **GCSE** and 1 following **Entry Level RS**, as directed by the archdiocese. The department has recently moved exam boards for GCSE Religious Studies, from **AQA to Eduqas** with the first cohort to sit exams in 2027. Schemes of work are held centrally on the CRL, and staff use the same shared resources with appropriate adaptation. The curriculum at **KS4** builds on the work started at KS3, and it also follows the guidelines laid down by the Bishops of England and Wales. At St Mary's, pupils will start the GCSE course in the January of Year 9, thereby allowing enough time for them to explore units in greater depth and to allow for the development of SMSC across the learning experiences.	At **KS4**, regular revision coupled with end of unit assessments, encourage pupils to know and remember more, whilst developing key exam skills. The curriculum is differentiated / adapted allowing for equality of access for all, and the sequencing of units is regularly reviewed to match ambition and to ensure a clear rationale for learning and teaching. As a Catholic Christian community, the key focus is on Church and Gospel values, but within a modern world. Pupils will also explore other Christian denominations and Judaism. Pupils also have opportunities to consider non-religious and Humanist perspectives. **(see, RE Department Curriculum Statement 2026)** **Impact (example):** *'Curriculum Clarity: Clear links to GCSE specifications, including rationale for learning and how marks are awarded (AO1/2/3).* **(from, RE Department Report 2025-2026)**

R2: Embed the monitoring of standards and progress of pupils in Religious Education to ensure that attainment improves, particularly for disadvantaged and middle attaining learners at key stage 4	The RE Department, as with all other departments, are subject to a thorough SLT-led annual review process, culminating in a detailed final report. The most recent review was completed in October 2025, with a final report and executive summary issued shortly afterwards **(see, RE Department Review 2025-2026: Final Report and Executive Summary)** In the **RE DDP** (3 versions over the course of the school year), there is a dedicated section on GCSE and mock exam outcomes relative to FFT 20 targets, and a sharp focus on key groups of learners (including disadvantaged and SEND). The close monitoring of standards is also a vital component of RE HOD Seminars, Mock Exam Analysis meetings and annual appraisals. The RE Department has developed a precise internal tracking document to enable more effective identification, intervention and support as required. The department also started its weekly programme of after-school revision classes for Year 11 at the outset of 2026-2027 academic year	Average GCSE attainment in RE at St Mary's for **2026** was **Grade 5 (Average Points 5.06).** This represents further improvement from 2025-2026, continuing a positive trend. **For further detail, see:** ○ **RE Department DDP 1 (October 2026), inclusive of detailed GCSE results analysis** ○ **RE Department Review 2025-2026: Final Report & Executive Summary (October 2025)** ○ **RE Department 2025-2026 & 2026-2027: HOD PPT Presentation to Governors** **Impact (example):** *'There is an intervention programme which targets the entire Year 11 GCSE cohort through close monitoring, tutorial sessions and parental involvement. Extra support is regularly available at lunch and after school from teachers for pupils who want extra help or advice. There are also targeted revision and catch-up sessions. All three KS4 teachers provide after school revision sessions for GCSE classes in preparation for Mock and GCSE examinations, a process that begins early in Term 1 of Year 11. There will be more in-depth analysis and intervention from January following mock exams'* **(from, RE Department Review 2025-2026: Final Report)**

R2: Embed the monitoring of standards and progress of pupils in Religious Education to ensure that attainment improves, particularly for disadvantaged and middle attaining learners at key stage 4	A key and ongoing component / recommendation of the **RE DDP 1 2026-2027** is: ***'Further improving pupils' attainment in line with FFT20 targets'*** – see quotes opposite The **RE Department Review Report 2025-2026** recognised specific support for disadvantaged pupils: • Seating plans to ensure that disadvantaged pupils are sat with easy access of the teacher and where appropriate with more able pupils • Directed questions to ensure disadvantaged pupils' full participation • Feedback: Clear strategies provided to ensure pupils know how to make good progress • Opportunities for homework to be completed in school during lunch times • One to one support, including learning conversations following mocks and advice on revision strategies • Targeted invites to ensure disadvantaged pupils' full participation in the wider life of the school- eg. Pilgrimage to Rome and Hereford Youth Retreat	*'…. a rigorous approach to monitoring standards at KS4 with a focus on intervening with those identified underperformers'* *'Use of departmental database of Y11 pupils' interim marks in topic tests & end of unit assessments and systematic monitoring via Dept. meetings, learning walks and work scrutiny'* *'Additional revision and support sessions available for targeted learners'* *'Strategies being used, including homework of exam style questions being marked and constructive feedback given. More model answers to be circulated - Structured evaluation templates developed to give support for those pupils struggling to complete the 12 marks questions within the given time'* *'Underachieving pupils identified and monitored within the department through regular tracking based on Dept data, FFT and whole school targets - KS4 GCSE Homework book on CRL to be used as a focus for developing exam skills and learning key terms* *'Revision sessions utilise exam board marking criteria with pupils to improve exam technique, with a particular focus on command words, key terms and evaluation skills'* **(from, RE Department Review 2025-2026: Final Report)**

R3: Ensure assessment procedures are consistent across the department to reflect the best practice	The RE Department has developed its KS3 curriculum and assessment processes (in line with the revised whole school assessment system) to ensure better rigour and uniformity, and to inform support and intervention work with pupils. There is also clear continuity between the key stages with GCSE level work and content commencing in the January of Year 9 **(see updated RE Department Curriculum Statement)** – *'A wide range of assessment data helps to identify those pupils in need of support to achieve their potential, and this in turn is used to inform planning. Pupil progress is closely monitored through an on-going intervention programme which targets the entire GCSE cohort through close monitoring, tutorial sessions and parental involvement'* **See KS3 and KS4 RE assessment feedback samples using newly devised top sheets:** ○ **CRL – SLT – Spirituality / Section 48 – RE Department 2025-2026 & 2026-2027: KS3 / 4 Assessments** The **RE Department Review: Final Report and Executive Summary 2025-2026** include several references to greatly improved marking, feedback and assessment processes (see examples opposite)	○ *'In terms of KS3 assessment, each half term covers a specific unit that culminates in an end of topic test. A typical assessment is designed to mirror a GCSE exam in some regard; for example, identifying key terms, applying the meaning of Christian expectations for daily life, referencing and knowledge around scripture and finally arguing strengths & weaknesses (evaluation)'* ○ *'Lower mark questions are more accessible for less able pupils'* ○ *'The ongoing assessment data helps to identify those pupils in need of support to achieve their potential, and this in turn is used to inform planning'* ○ *One of the recurring strengths of recent RE Department Reviews is the quality of detailed KS3 assessment feedback based on success criteria (using a bank of statements). Pupils are required to respond to feedback, giving themselves a star and target…. The frequency and rigour of KS3 assessment is replicated at GCSE level.* ○ *'The department provides detailed assessment feedback based on a bank of statements - this is recognised in this report as a strength, largely due to the level of detail and precision….'*

R3: Ensure assessment procedures are consistent across the department to reflect the best practice	There is a renewed focus on quality, frequency and impact of marking / feedback in the **RE DDP (both 2025-2026 & 2026-2027)** '*Ensure assessment & feedback procedures are consistent across the department to reflect best practice*'	○ '*There is an increased focus on sharing model answers and ongoing pupil self-assessment opportunities. Assessment results are logged and discussed at ongoing Department Meetings, flagging any pupils of concern who are underperforming two grades or more below target*' ○ '*There is an intervention programme which targets the entire Year 11 GCSE cohort through close monitoring, tutorial sessions and parental involvement. Extra support is regularly available at lunch and after school from teachers for pupils who want extra help or advice. There are also targeted revision and catch-up sessions*' KS3 Assessment feedback is based on success criteria, typically presented in accessible language to enable pupils to respond to advice and instruction, for example: ○ '*To improve in the next assessment: Continue to know and include a broader selection of religious language that will enable you to… …Continue to back up / support your arguments with further references to biblical quotes…. Consider showing insight on the opportunities and challenges posed by having religious beliefs…*'

R3: Ensure assessment procedures are consistent across the department to reflect the best practice	From **RE Department Review: Final Report and Executive Summary 2025-2026:** *'Evidence of formative and summative feedback was present in pupil work. Previous work scrutiny and quality assurance of marking and assessment has highlighted some excellent practice with the need to ensure consistency across the department….'*	○ *'Good effort on your first assessment. I really like how you have tried to structure the longer question A1e to gain higher marks – Take care to respond to all of my corrections'* ○ *Good effort in your first assessment, especially the shorter questions where you clear and accurate – In the 12-mark question try to give the same number of points as marks allocated (12 points for 12 marks)'* ○ *'Accurate and productive use of assessment (for example, Fact File allows review point and an opportunity to see pupil confidence with synthesising information'* Sample: Year 10 Assessment: Catholic Christianity Feedback: ○ *'The result shows you have prepared with some effort. This is evident in your end of unit assessment where subject knowledge, understanding, key vocabulary and scripture used accurately throughout. Key vocabulary is included but more is required. Your evaluation questions structured as suggested using PEEL and informed before being summarised with a personal conclusion. Your use of SPaG requires improvement'*

R3: Ensure assessment procedures are consistent across the department to reflect the best practice	Ongoing work scrutiny conducted by SLT **See key documents:** ○ **Assessment in RE at St Mary's 2026-2027** ○ **RE: Assessment Implementation 2026-2027** ○ **RE Marking & Feedback: SLT Scrutiny 2026**	*To achieve a Grade 5, you need to:* ○ *Continue to acquire and include more key vocabulary in all answers* ○ *Create a response that allows you to include key quotes….* ○ *To achieve 12-marks on this key question you must show: excellent knowledge, understanding and insight, a selection of smaller points using PEEL* ○ *Remember to use structure strips in your planning* ○ *Check closely for SPaG errors* ○ *You must continue to fully explain the teachings of Catholic Christianity* ○ *Take on board and put into practice any written feedback you get on future pieces of work*

R3: Ensure assessment procedures are consistent across the department to reflect the best practice	Ongoing work scrutiny conducted by SLT See key documents: ○ **Assessment in RE at St Mary's 2025-2026** ○ **RE: Assessment Implementation 2025-2026** ○ **RE Marking & Feedback: SLT Scrutiny** See, **newly adapted top sheets for RE assessment / exam feedback in KS3 and KS4**	**SLT - Marking & Feedback Scrutiny in RE 2026** **Sample 1: from Year 9** **Frequency & Quality of Marking** ○ All work acknowledged, some with more developed star / target. Regular praise and acknowledgement of good effort ○ Very good evidence of peer and self-assessment (using accessible criteria) – for example, *'12-mark questions: Peer Assessment Grid'* ○ Exemplary formative feedback with precise targets: for example, *'Accurate rersearch and interpretaion of the second part of the Shema – To improve: 'Link the beliefs in the Shjema with how Jewish people act'* AND *'All tasks on the Messiah completed to a very good standard – Target: Make sure you can explain how belief in the Messaih influences Jewish people today'* **Assessment** ○ New assessment policy and practice fully incorporated. ○ End of Year Exam: *Excellent RE Department KS3 Assessment Feedback: Year 9:* Fully inclusive with *Teacher Comment, Key Criteria (Knowledge, Skills & Comms), % Outcome, Pupil Self-Evaluation ('What I need to do to make progress..' / 'What my strengths are…')*

R4: Ensure that differentiation is planned effectively so that all learners at key stage 3 make progress in line with expectation	Effective differentiation (adaptive learning) has been an ongoing whole school teaching and learning target over the past three years – there has been dedicated INSET, and it has been a key element of our SDPs, DDPs and Department Reviews. Differentiation continues to feature prominently in RE DDPs and RE Review Final Reports (notably in key priorities and lesson observation feedback respectively). The two most recent **RE Department Reviews** recognise significant progress in relation to differentiation; for example, *'To bridge any gaps in learning the department has produced differentiated learning packs / study skills booklets for each year group'* The final reports also highlight how this could be developed further: *'As a further aspect of differentiation, have extension tasks available. Continue to work on effective differentiation by task, outcome and process (refer to INSET PPT on Differentiation): for example, offer choice – student-led activities (leading a plenary?) – Writing frames – differentiated worksheets…. ('All pupils completed all tasks despite differentiation by task – is there room to offer a connected reflection task (stretch and challenge?)'*	**Sample lesson observation feedback from most recent RE Department Reviews:** *'Differentiation – stretch activity added to the starter and aim higher task added to tasks throughout the lesson… Use of scaffolding to help the pupils answer the exam style question at the end of the lesson'* *'Differentiated writing tasks – rising challenge model by task. Individual task working through five tasks of rising difficulty 'mild-spicy' model. All pupils to complete all 5 tasks'* *'Differentiated task options (grade related) 3-6 or 7-9. Some individuals who had not quite achieved a 7 in the recent mock were encouraged to tackle this level of question'* *'Another laudable feature of the lesson was the evident graduation in challenge to extend the more able. This was clear in the next writing task: 'Explain why Christians believe they should help stop the suffering of others. You must refer to the parable of the Sheep and the Goats (Matthew 25:31-46) in your answer'. The teacher modelled ideas to support and further enhance understanding. The link to relevant parables was skilfully managed (The Sheep and the Goats – The Good Samaritan)'* *'Graduation in challenge with evident pupil progress across the most successful lessons'*

	'Ensure that differentiation is planned effectively so that all learners at KS3/4 make progress in line with expectation - by sharing best practice to ensure differentiated tasks are used frequently and consistently across the department'	
R5: Continue to develop opportunities for all children to be involved in the systematic preparation and delivery of worship and provide opportunities for spontaneous prayer	Many opportunities for pupils to be involved in the preparation and delivery of worship and prayer has continued to a priority (see updated statement on **'The Catholic Life of our School'**): some examples feature opposite.	*'There are also very good spiritual enrichment opportunities outside of the classroom. A guiding principle for the RE Department is to enable all pupils to nurture their spiritual and moral development by providing avenues for reflection and prayer. In terms of practical application of this principle, each weekday morning there is a chance to attend morning prayers in the Chapel, during form time on Thursday mornings pupils are invited to the Rosary Club and at lunchtime there is Adoration. Masses are provided on all Holy Days of Obligation that fall within term time, and the feast days of each of the patron saints of the school pastoral houses are celebrated. In addition, Mass is celebrated on the first Friday of the month. Prayer and worship are central to our purpose as a Catholic school and pupils are encouraged to lead liturgies and elements of assemblies during the year, as well as participating in Form time prayers. Sacred Spaces are designated days for each form to focus on prayer, scripture and reflection. Setting up a 'sacred space' in each form room is a key element in establishing an environment of prayer'*

R5: Continue to develop opportunities for all children to be involved in the systematic preparation and delivery of worship and provide opportunities for spontaneous prayer	For further evidence / examples, see: ○ **St Mary's Spirituality / Catholic Life 2025-2026 & 2026-2027** (physical folder and CRL access) Electronic access: ○ **CRL – SLT – Spirituality / Section 48 – Whole School Spirituality & Chaplaincy 2025-2026 & 2026-2027**	*'There are other opportunities for pupils to develop their faith outside of the classroom, including pilgrimages to Rome or Lourdes and school-based retreats. Over the course of the past year, the RE department has led the way in continuing the tradition of supporting CAFOD fundraising campaigns'* *'The Youth SVP group at St Mary's, established in 2022, helps young people turn concern into action and engage with the community to make a positive difference, as well as learning new skills and developing faith'.* **(from, St Mary's Whole School Spirituality 2026)**

GRADE SUMMARY

Overall Effectiveness	1

Catholic Life and mission	1
CLM1 The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school	1
CLM2 The quality of provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school	1
CLM3 How well leaders and governors promote, monitor, and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school	1

Religious education	2
RE1 How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education	2
RE2 The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in religious education	2
RE3 How well leaders and governors promote, monitor, and evaluate the provision for religious education	1

Collective worship	1
CW1 How well pupils respond to and participate in the schools' collective worship.	1
CW2 The quality of collective worship provided by the school	1
CW3 How well leaders and governors monitor and evaluate the provision for collective worship	1

CATHOLIC LIFE AND MISSION

Overall Grade for CLM

1

CLM1 The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

Grade CLM 1

1

Strengths – what is the impact of the actions you have taken?

The Catholic life of the school is at the centre of our education. Our Mission Statement is supported by our school values (*Pupil Profile*), which proposes the qualities we wish to develop in our pupils. These qualities are simple, yet challenging, and seek to enable every member of our community to take the message of the Gospels to heart and apply it to their day-to-day lives. Pupils are able to reflect on the virtue pairs from the *Pupil Profile* each half term. The virtues are explored from their foundation in scripture and time is devoted to considering how they can be applied on both a personal basis, within our school community and how they can be extended globally. Our ethos is very much rooted in Gospel values / the Word of God. Our Mission Statement is a clear and inspiring expression of the educational mission of the Church and of the school's particular charism. It is regularly revisited and is known, lived and witnessed to throughout the school (ref: Updated statement on *'The Catholic Life of Our School'*)

We pride ourselves on being a welcoming and supportive school community, with the highest standards of pastoral care and provision for pupil welfare (including an explicit and concrete commitment to the most vulnerable). Pupils feel valued for everything they achieve and have spoken highly of this caring and inclusive ethos. The previous Section 48 inspection commented that *"Pupils are immensely proud of their school and speak enthusiastically about the school's distinctive Catholic nature".* Our most recent Ofsted report (December 2024) begins with the statement; *"Pupils are very proud of their school and attend regularly."* Our inclusive and welcoming ethos involves valuing and supporting those from different cultures and belief traditions, enabling them to live and pray in fidelity to their own commitments (for example, the provision of space for other faith worship, bereavement services for pupils of all or faiths, or none).

Pupils from all five year groups are actively involved in the spiritual life of the school (for example, prayers in the chapel prior to the beginning of each school day, Rosary Club, Adoration at lunchtime, whole school and House Masses, Year 7 Welcome Mass (as planned in Form groups to ensure widespread participation), pupil-led liturgies, assemblies, form time prayers / Sacred Spaces, the Angelus, Reconciliation Services, Youth SVP group, work with the Gideons (including the distribution of free Bibles), charity work and fundraising for CAFOD (*Walk for Lent 2025*)….etc)

Our Ofsted inspection (December 2024) recognised that, *"The school provides many opportunities for pupils to develop their spiritual, moral, emotional, social, physical and intellectual development"* and *"There are numerous opportunities for pupils to support others; for example, the school recently raised £3,000 for charity".* The report also refers to *"strong pupil behaviour rooted in the school's values".*

The provision for R(S)HE is carefully planned to ensure that as well as meeting all statutory requirements using CES accredited resources and in line with the Catholic Schools Inspectorate, it is firmly rooted in the teaching of the Church and celebrates a holistic vision of the human person. Consequently, a culture of inclusivity has been created where pupils are able to express what they have learned in these lessons with increasing confidence.

In terms of Chaplaincy provision at St Mary's, a member of the RE Department has added responsibility for spirituality development and enrichment (see examples)

Evidence of strengths / impact:

- St Mary's RC High School: Mission Statement
  - More opportunities for regular prayer as detailed in the updated statement on '*The Catholic Life of Our School*' – for example, prayers in the chapel prior to the beginning of each school day, Rosary Club, Adoration at lunchtime, whole school and House Masses, pupil-led liturgies, assemblies, form time prayers / Sacred Spaces / Values & Virtues, Youth SVP group, charity work and fundraising for CAFOD (Walk for Lent)….) **– see folder, Spirituality / Catholic Life 2025-2026 & 2026-2027 - (for electronic access) CRL – SLT – Spirituality / Section 48 – Whole School Spirituality 2025-2026 & 2026-2027 and Chaplaincy 2025-2026 & 2026-2027**
- RE Department Reviews: Final Report & Executive Summary 2025-2026 (inclusive of Pupil Voice)
- 2019 Section 48: Final Report
- Pupil Case Studies
- Ten: Ten RSE programme (fully planned, mapped and resourced)
- Expanded Pastoral Support Team
- Ofsted Report 2025
- Staff are Eucharistic Ministers at whole school Masses, they also lead prayers in assemblies / form time, taking and treating Sacred Spaces with reverence and respect

What could be improved?

- A further increase in the number of pupils involved in the planning and delivery of liturgy / collective worship. Update: Over the past year there has been an increasingly good number of pupils who attend voluntary Mass in the Chapel on the first Friday morning of the month (typically over 40) and routinely ten or so pupils involved in readings, offertory and altar serving at those Masses.

- Continue to monitor, evaluate and further develop the **Values & Virtues** weekly form time (a dedicated 45 minutes every Wednesday morning) – this is currently being carried out by SLT, HOYs and V & V lead (**see Stakeholder Feedback / Surveys**)

Grade
CLM 2

1

CLM2 The quality of provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school

Strengths – what is the impact of the actions you have taken?

Staff training on Spirituality and the importance of our Mission Statement is a priority with a dedicated INSET scheduled every year, typically at Belmont Abbey. Other ongoing training sessions also occur throughout the year, for example, twilight training this academic year on Ten: Ten RSHE programme.

In April 2024, there were two Twilight INSET sessions for staff, focused on:

- Our Catholic Mission Statement
- Working in a Catholic School
- The importance of the Virtue Pairs in shaping the above

In April 2025, there were two Twilight INSET sessions for staff, focused on:

- Jubilee 2025: Pilgrims of Hope
- Working Together
- Staff Discussions & Feedback

In January 2026, INSET focused on CSI: A Whole School Approach

- Our Mission Statement
- Collective Worship
- Values & Virtues – Virtue Pairs
- Catholic Social Action & Charity

All staff INSET days begin with a prayer service in our chapel. Staff enthusiastically participate in and contribute to those activities which reflect the life and mission of the school, and the service it offers to the community. They are increasingly assured about the delivery of our RSHE programme on the basis of training / support, resourcing and mapping, recognising that the programme is rooted in the teaching of the Church and celebrates a holistic vision of the human person. Staff are also acutely aware of the need to be good role models, bearing witness to our school's Catholic life and mission; for example, staff led prayers in assemblies and form times, participation in school Masses, delivery of the RSE programme during weekly Virtues and Values. Staff also receive ongoing CPD via our annual Spirituality INSET (typically in the second term of the school year).

The introduction of *Sacred Spaces*, selected days for each form to focus on prayer, scripture and reflection, is a key element in establishing an environment of prayer. The visual reminders of our Catholic faith invite pupils to remember to quiet themselves in the presence of the God, and form tutors play a fundamental part in this process. Our annual Governor's Away Day also prominently features Spirituality as a key agenda item.

As a school, we access and contribute to diocesan training at various levels - chaplaincy, teacher level, HOD and SLT. We regularly join all Teams meetings and the face-to-face events in Cardiff. The RE HOD has a continued role within the Diocese of Cardiff & Menevia RSE Leads working party and has offered the opportunity to share good practice with other schools within the diocese. The Ten: Ten *Live Life to the Full* scheme of work was also carefully reviewed and shared within the RE Department following training. Ten: Ten programmes have been mapped into the wider PHSRE (Virtues & Values) curriculum for KS3 and KS4 to comply with the *RSE Best Practice Toolkit.*

The extension of our Pastoral Support Team over the past few years is also a key element of our supportive and caring community grounded in Gospel values. Our pupils' wellbeing is constantly supported and cared for with sensitivity and compassion (for example, restorative work, anti-bullying, exam-related support, all of which are aimed at creating a community that loves and cares for each other). Everyone is welcomed and valued in a spirit of generous hospitality, especially those who are most vulnerable. New staff also follow an extensive induction programme with Catholic life as a key theme; for example, both Father Andrew and RSU (HOD) have delivered dedicated sessions during Autunm term 1 2025 (agendas available).

The school environment effectively witnesses to its identity, mission and charism through explicit and effective signs of our school's Catholic character; for example, regularly updated displays in our chapel and RE classrooms, as well as a Chaplaincy noticeboard in a central location in the school, and prominent displays of our school values / virtues (*'Pupil Profile'*) which proposes the qualities we wish to develop in our pupils. These qualities are simple, yet challenging, and seek to enable every member of our community to take the message of the Gospels to heart and apply it to their day-to-day lives.

Evidence of strengths / impact:

- Ten: Ten RSE programme (fully planned, mapped and resourced)
- Annual Spirituality INSET (published schedules) - staff get the dedicated and protected time to talk to one another about what it means to them to work in a faith school and to explore their responsibilities around this. Non-Catholic staff deepen their understanding and have the opportunity to ask questions, explore and access necessary support
- Diocesan training
- Pastoral Support Team
- Pupil Case Studies
- Sacred Spaces
- Values & Virtues
- School Environment: for example, chaplaincy noticeboard, prominent displays of House Saints, V & V…

What could be improved?

- To extend the number of staff working towards the *Catholic Teacher Certificate*

- To widen the number of staff involved in the preparation of *Sacred Spaces* resources (beyond the RE Department)

CLM3 How well leaders and governors promote, monitor, and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school

Grade CLM 3

1

Strengths – what is the impact of the actions you have taken?

St Mary's school leaders, Head of RE and governor's regularly review and promote the school's policy on prayer and liturgy. It is written in such a way that makes it accessible and useful to relevant staff who use it consistently as a reference point when preparing prayer and liturgy. This is reinforced through Spirituality INSET and other related staff training organised by SLT and Head of RE every academic year. The Head of RE is also given a platform on other INSET days to reinforce the importance of the planning and delivery of prayer to enable staff to feel increasingly confident and secure, especially during daily form time. As a result, St Mary's continues to be a thriving Catholic community with Gospel values at our core.

In addition, there is a regularly updated section on **Spirituality / Catholic Life of the School** on our school's website, including a daily prayer. This is an important means of updating and communicating with parents / carers. This is also an important means of enabling pupils, parents and carers to remotely access prayers.

Leaders, including governors, have planned the school calendar and timetable carefully to ensure that opportunities to celebrate the Eucharist are regularly offered to the whole school community, particularly at key times in the liturgical year and at significant moments within the life of the school. All holy days of obligation and other significant days, such as the respective Feast Days of our House Saints, are prioritised in the school's calendar and timetabled to ensure that all those who wish to are able to participate in Mass, or other appropriate liturgies, on such days. In addition, *the Sacrament of Reconciliation* is always offered in school at key times in the liturgical year, such as Lent and Advent.

The Catholic life and mission of the school is an ongoing agenda item at weekly SLT meetings to ensure that all leaders have the understanding and knowledge to assist others in planning and leading experiences of prayer and liturgy. SLT- led assemblies for all year groups are calendared every year. SLT also evaluate the impact of the provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school and its impact on Cultural Capital at St Mary's.

It is a priority, and part of a clear strategy, to fully involve staff and pupils in the prayer life of the school. The Year 7 Welcome Mass is an important starting point for our new intake, with ongoing opportunities to participate in prayers in the chapel prior to the beginning of each school day, Rosary Club, Adoration at lunchtime, whole school and House Masses, Year 11 Leavers' Mass, pupil-led liturgies, assemblies, form time prayers / Sacred Spaces, Youth SVP group, charity work and fundraising for CAFOD etc. All public exams begin with a prayer.

The annual Department Review process in which all subject areas are thoroughly reviewed by SLT is inclusive of the Catholic life and mission of the school. This is most explicit in the final published **RE Department Report** but is also referenced across different subjects. In addition, the Catholic life and mission of the school is a key component of whole school SEF / SDP, subject DDP's and HOD seminar discussions. All HOD's provide an annual report in person to the school governor's: this process allows the governing body to question each HOD on how their department promotes Catholic life.

Evidence of strengths / impact:

- A dedicated and active working group on RSE, including members of SLT, the governing body and the Head of RE Department
- Updated school policy on Prayer & Liturgy
- School Calendar 2026-2027
- School Assemblies programme and Values & Virtues POS 2026-2027
- School Website: Spirituality / Catholic Life of the School
- Annual Spirituality INSET (most recent, January 2026)
- SDP & SEF 2026-2027
- Department Reviews: Final Reports & Executive Summaries 2025-2026 – the latter is inclusive of feedback from Mrs Marion Smith, the Link Governor for the RE Department
- DDP's (Note: RE Department: Cultural Capital document)
- HOD Seminar minutes
- School Website: Cultural Capital
- *Pupil Profile Virtues* and *Fruits of the Holy Spirit* revisited in year group assemblies

What could be improved?

- Further develop the dedicated Catholic Life section on our school website - ongoing
- Updates and amendments to policy on Collective Worship as required
- Revisit the school's Mission Statement to reflect the prominence of the Pupil Profile in the daily life of the school (how the MS is lived out daily at St Mary's)
- Closely monitor, evaluate and further develop the Virtues and Values weekly form time (a dedicated 45 minutes every Wednesday morning)

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Overall Grade
2

RE1 How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

Grade
RE 1
2

Strengths – what is the impact of the actions you have taken?

The annual RE Department Review is inclusive of a Pupil Voice activity with a variety of pupils drawn from all five-year groups: the outcome of *Pupil Voice* interviews is a prominent part of the final RE Department Report. In summary, pupils can speak fluently and confidently about what they have learned in religious education, using key concepts and subject-specific vocabulary. They have a clear understanding of how they are doing and what they need to do to progress further. The following excerpt is from the **RE Department Review: Final Report:**

'The Pupil Voice aspect of the review highlighted many positive aspects of RE and the wider spiritual life of the school. The majority of pupils spoken to referred to their enjoyment of both discussion and practical work and felt that they were able to ask questions in a secure, inclusive and welcoming environment (one pupil referred to the willingness of their teacher to always "take the lesson in a different direction" if something new had arisen during a debate). Pupils also felt supported in their learning and understanding with approachable and caring teachers. Some pupils drew attention to variety and creativity in lessons, and there was a lot of appreciation of how teachers linked topics to modern world experiences, including the lives of young people, as well as environmental issues and the importance of charity. The study of other world religions is also regarded as interesting and inclusive. Many pupils expressed how much they enjoyed and valued spending lesson time in the Chapel.

'One pupil encapsulated much of the above by stating, "I really like the challenge in RE and how we are given the chance to see the world in a new way". Another pupil spoke about their greater appreciation of "compassionate values and humanity" because of their study of RE. As a further example of positive endorsement, another pupil said "I feel that my opinions are valued and at no time do I feel pressured to think in a particular way"'

The lesson observation element of the **Department Review** also reveals very good pupil engagement, focus and participation in RE lessons. There are references in the final report for 2025-2026 to positive behaviour, informed and enthusiastic responses, incisive questions, enjoyment, reflection and challenge / differentiation. A variety of teaching and learning strategies are employed in RE lessons.

Some sample content from the lesson observation feedback section from the most recent RE Department Reviews:

- *'A lovely lesson to observe with a brilliantly interesting topical way to connect learning about prophecy to a modern context. It was a pleasure to see your genuine interactions with the pupils and your caring treatment of them, which included reminding them of high standards throughout and holding them to these with consistency and clarity – they respond fantastically to this structure and worked well individually and collectively throughout the lesson'*

- *'Pupils over the course of the lesson worked on retrieval reflecting their prior learning and the integration of their homework, completed reading activities, summarising, synthesis and finally analysis and evaluation. This was supported with multimedia and scaffolded writing frames and as such the students completed a range of tasks, a lot of work and used a lot of different skills without perhaps realising it'*

- *'Strong relationship between teacher and pupils which had an impact on pupils' work ethic and approach to the lesson'*

- *'A laudable aspect of the final writing task was the quality of literacy / SPaG support. The task was / will be complemented by a PPT slide (see below) featuring, key words, punctuation marks, sentence starters / connectives and PEEL. In addition, pupils were issued with an excellent worksheet / writing frame (see below) inclusive of sentence / paragraph openings'*

GCSE attainment in RE (see**, RE Department DDP Version 1 (Autumn 2026) and pp 32-33 of this document)**

The average grade attained was 5 (Strong Pass) with Average Points at 5.06 – (77.7% 4+, 61.1% 5+ and 22.3% Higher Grades 7-9)
Note: It is difficult to compare outcomes from St Mary's HS with those of the archdiocese due to the different grading system used in Wales.

Evidence of strengths / impact:

- **RE Department Review 2025-26: Final Reports & Executive Summaries** (inclusive of lesson observation feedback, marking / feedback scrutiny & pupil voice)
- **RE DDPs 2025-2026** (3 versions across the school year) **& DDP 1** (Autumn 2026)
- **HOD Seminar and HOD pre-review minutes – Autumn 2026**
- **HOD post-mock exam review meeting – January 2026**
- **RE Assessment Implementation 2026-2027**
- **Folder: Church School Inspection 2025-2026 & 2026-2027** (see section on RE Department) & **CRL – SLT – Spirituality & Section 48 – RE Department 2025-2026 & 2026-2027**

What could be improved?

- Further increase the % of pupils achieving FFT 20 targets in RE
- Further exam board training for all GCSE level teachers in the RE Department to support the move to **Eduqas**
- Further improve / develop targeted interventions for identified Year 11 pupils within different ability groups (informed by tracking document)
- Further develop the **ELC** course for lower attaining pupils, building upon excellent outcomes in 2026.

RE: Headlines arising from 2026 GCSE Outcomes

Summary: 77.7% 4+, 61.1% 5+ and 22.3% Higher Grades 7-9

9-1 GCSE (Att8 Points) EXAMS BY GROUP

Name	Total Grades	Total Points	Average Grade	Average Points
11P/RE1 RSU	30	165	6-	5.5
11P/RE2 DCO	28	162	6-	5.79
11P/RE3 CLE	29	167	6-	5.76
11Q/RE4 RSU	25	96	4=	3.84
11Q/RE5 DCO	27	113	4+	4.19
Summary	**139**	**703**	**5=**	**5.06**

2025 EXAM OUTCOMES v 2026

- 2024/25: 48.32% 5+ and 63.1% 4+ 17.4% Higher Grades 7-9
- 2025/26: 61.1% 5+ and 77.7% 4+ 22.3% Higher Grades 7-9

Grade	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	F	U	X	Other	Total Grades	Average Grade	Average Points
2025	5	5	16	24	22	22	29	13	9	0	4	0	0	149	4	4.44
2026	6	8	17	26	28	23	20	7	4	0	0	0	0	139	5	5.06

RE GCSE Results & Key Priorities

Headlines:

- Results have further improved from 2025: 78% achieved grade 4+
- Higher grades achieved across more classes
- Disadvantaged pupil results are on average below their non-disadvantaged peers: 3.94 vs 5.21 respectively
- SEND exam grades were 3.59 compared to the average 4.44
- Progress from mocks requires further improvement

Response:

- Mixed ability teaching groups are now established across both teaching bands to help further improve progress across the cohort and to facilitate peer mentoring.
- ELC group results were very good - all pupils passed the course
- Continue to narrow the gap between boy – girl outcomes: boys' average grade 4.89 and girls' average 5.23. Seating plans are used to mix genders in class sets as much as possible. GCSE classes are devised with gender mix / balance as a key consideration
- Intervention for disadvantaged and underachieving pupils: focus on exam skills and command words will continue as priority areas for the current Year 11
- Encouragement for disadvantaged and underachieving pupils to take up the extensive opportunities offered. The RE Department ran revision sessions after school from September 2025 through to the final GCSE exams in summer 2026. Uptake was encouraging in the first term but became inconsistent across the cohort, with many pupils prioritising English and Maths, especially following the Christmas break
- 12 pupils were identified having scored 1-mark below the next grade – appeals were submitted

Key priorities and next steps for 2026-2027:

- Mock preparation revision sessions commenced on week beginning 8th September 2026
- Continued moderation to take place within the RE Department to maintain rigorous assessment and greater accuracy of predicted grades
- Communication with parents/carers by class teachers to alert the need for improved attitude to learning and the importance of the subject in developing an enquiring, critical and reflective approach to the study of religion
- Raise the profile and perceived value of RE - continued link with HSFC to promote A- level Philosophy and Ethics, and further career opportunities linked to GCSE RE
- Continue increasing the proportion of higher grades:

  Class teachers to audit gaps:

  - *Knowledge gaps* (key terms, quotes, or religious teachings)
  - *Explanation gaps* (linking belief to its impact on believers)
  - *Evaluation gaps* (construct a balanced AO2 argument)

- *Target High-Mark Questions:* Prioritise 15-mark evaluation questions, as these carry the greatest weight
- *Master Command Words*
- *Deconstruct Mark Schemes:* Use practice answers and mark in class using official exam board mark schemes. Use top-tier answers to identify how to gain full marks
- *Embed Meaningful Quotations:* Ensure pupils link every source of wisdom or authority directly to the argument.

RE2 The quality of teaching, learning, and assessment in religious education

Grade RE 2

2

Strengths – what is the impact of the actions you have taken?

The most recent **RE Department Review (October 2025)** highlights some excellent T & l practice. Some of the best and most recurring aspects are:

- *Carefully planned and well-structured lessons (transitions between tasks, clear sequencing, regular references to timings, use of visual checklists etc)*
- *Detailed preparation with excellent supporting resources (in both paper and electronic forms)*
- *Well-established routines and consistent expectations – regular reminders of expected high standards and holding pupils to these standards with consistency and clarity (from lesson feedback notes: "All pupils were attentive and engaged throughout, there was an incredibly focused atmosphere in the room…. Classroom expectations were not referenced, as all pupils seemed to know and understand them")*
- *Carefully devised seating plans (with SEND, EAL and disadvantaged pupils as a key consideration)*
- *Lesson aims and objectives made clear (and revisited in the very best lessons)*
- *Very good levels of participation - discussions and debates are clearly an integral part of RE lessons and are managed effectively*
- *Good pace, a key factor in behaviour management*
- *Variety and engagement (from lesson feedback notes: "Pupils over the course of the lesson worked on retrieval reflecting their prior learning and the integration of their homework, completed reading activities, summarising, synthesis and finally analysis and evaluation. This was supported with multimedia and scaffolded writing frames and, as such, the pupils completed a range of tasks, a lot of work and used many different skills without perhaps realising it")*
- *A variety of t & l strategies employed, notably, and most effectively, the use of modelling and open questioning (regarding the latter, often pushing for extra detail)*
- *Graduation in challenge with evident pupil progress across the most successful lessons*
- *Teaching adapted to respond to the strengths and needs of all pupils*
- *Accurate and productive use of assessment (for example, Fact File allows review point and an opportunity to see pupil confidence with synthesising information)*
- *Teachers continually circulate throughout lessons (especially during independent activities) to provide prompts, reminders, support etc.*
- *Regular reinforcement of prior learning, often through starter and plenary tasks – effective recall and retrieval work*
- *Impressive teacher elaboration, explanation and clarification, as required*

- *Explicit teaching for literacy (SPaG, writing support and key terminology)*
- *Some inventive approaches / activities (for example, hot seating, acrostic puzzles and word bingo)*
- *Clear links to exam requirements / marking criteria (reminders to KS4 classes about success criteria, key terminology, allocation of marks, exam technique in advance of mock exams etc)*
- *Good working relationships with class TA (from lesson feedback notes: "Effective use of additional support within the classroom, to support individuals with additional learning needs – this was best illustrated during the sacrament group task")*
- *Fulfilment of wider professional responsibilities (for example, upholding the Catholic ethos of the school with excellent modelling and emphasis around the Angelus 'We don't just say we pray…' and 'We are speaking to God…' – Clear evidence of 4Ps and behavioural expectations – standing behind desks to greet etc)*
- *The quality of displays in RE classrooms are an extension of the teaching and learning experience (sometimes used as reference points – from lesson feedback notes: "Certain aspects of display work were referred to and formed part of a main lesson activity")*

The quality, regularity and impact of marking and feedback in the RE Department is predominantly good / very good, with the very best practice recognised in this and previous reviews as outstanding (for further detail, see document *Marking, Feedback & Assessments in RE*, updated July 2026)

Some of the most notable features of effective practice are:

- *Very good formative marking & feedback (the best of which features modelled examples and specific guidance on how to improve, thereby closing the gap between where pupils are now and the next step in their learning*
- *Star & Target methodology is used effectively in the most impressive and effective feedback*
- *Some very good specific marking for literacy / SPaG*
- *Quality assessment feedback with precise references to success criteria*
- *Some very good self / peer / whole class marking*
- *A consistent focus on neatness / presentation (set formats)*
- *Regular merited praise and recognition of good work / effort*
- *Tracking grids in all year groups*

The RE Department has recently updated its **Curriculum Statement** with a precise focus on **Intent, Implementation and Impact**. The statement clearly outlines the process of assessment across both key stages that builds on prior knowledge, allows for differentiation, and has equality of access.
A new **RE Department Position Statement** has also been added to our school website.

Evidence of strengths / impact:

- **RE Department Review 2025-26: Final Report & Executive Summary** (inclusive of: lesson observation feedback, marking / feedback scrutiny & Pupil Voice)
- **RE Department Marking & Feedback Scrutiny by SLT 2026**
- **RE DDP Versions 1 -3 2025-2026** & **DDP 1 (October 2026)**
- **HOD Seminar, Mock Exam Analysis and pre / post-review minutes 2025-2026**
- **RE Department: updated Curriculum Statement & Position Statement**
- **RE Department: Assessment Implementation 2026-2027**

RE3 How well leaders and governors promote, monitor, and evaluate the provision for religious education

Grade RE 3

1

Strengths – what is the impact of the actions you have taken?

St Mary's school leaders and governors ensure that the curriculum for religious education is a faithful expression of the *Religious Education Curriculum Directory*. Religious education programmes and/or other resources are used imaginatively and creatively to enhance the delivery of the Directory. RE also has parity with other core curriculum subjects, which includes professional development, resourcing, timetabling, staffing and accommodation. There is also a parity of demand with other core subjects in relation to whole-school policies, such as homework, marking and reporting to parents. RE is a core subject at St Mary's and meets the requisite curriculum time – it has a similar profile to other core subjects.

The Head of RE is performance managed by Mrs Angela Leslie, Deputy Headteacher, and reports to a key Link Governor, Mrs Marian Smith. The HOD has a clear vision for teaching and learning and a good level of expertise in securing this vision. Her individual lesson appraisals and quality of marking / feedback are consistently appraised as excellent (reference: *Appraisal October 2025 & 2026 – RE Department Review 2025 - 2026 / Individual Lesson Observation feedback 2025 - 2026*). The school's leadership are supportive of requests for extensive professional development (including via the archdiocese) and intervention work (for example, Diocesan training for staff / governors and School-led Tutoring funding respectively).

Excellent links are forged with other appropriate agencies and the wider community to provide a wide range of enrichment activities to promote pupils' learning and engagement with religious education (for example, links with feeder primary schools, CAFOD, Hope House, Shroud of Turin exhibition, fundraising through non-uniform days, SVP Youth Group, pilgrimages to Rome and Lourdes…). RSU also attends Archdiocesan training and subject lead meetings.

Evidence of strengths / impact:

- **RE Department Review 2025-26: Final Report / Executive Summary**
- **RE DDP Versions 1 -3 2025-2026** & **DDP 1 (October 2026)**
- **RE Department: updated Curriculum Statement** & **Position Statement 2026**
- **Spirituality / Catholic Life of the School: updated statement /dedicated section of our school's website – CRL – dedicated folder**
- **HOD Seminar minutes – most recent September 2026**
- **Spirituality INSET 2025 & 2026**
- **Enrichment / community links** (as detailed above)

What could be improved?

- Greater use of stakeholder surveys to capture views of parents / carers and pupils re: provision of RE at St Mary's HS
- To further promote community links (for example, over the past year significant progress has been made via closer links with our feeder Catholic Primary Schools, including exploration of establishing a Catholic MAT in Herefordshire – exploratory meetings held with Anne Robertson, DDE)
- To promote the profile of RE linked CPD and training within the whole school schedule (in order that spirituality permeates across the curriculum). As evidence of recent progress in this area, dedicated staff training has taken place over the current academic year on Virtues and Values to inform new approaches to policy and practice in other key areas, such as Behaviour Management. In addition, the Annual Governors' Away Day at Belmont Abbey features Spirituality as a key agenda item.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

Overall Grade for CW: 1

CW1 How well pupils participate in and respond to the school's collective worship

Grade CW 1: 1

Strengths – what is the impact of the actions you have taken?

Prayer and worship are central to our purpose as a Catholic School and our pupils are encouraged to lead liturgies and elements of assemblies during the year, as well as participating in Form time prayers. Sacred Spaces are designated days for each form to focus on prayer, scripture and reflection, setting up a 'sacred space' in each form room is a key element in establishing an environment of prayer. The visual reminders of our Catholic faith invite pupils to remember to quiet themselves in the presence of the God.

As many pupils as possible are invited to participate in whole school and / or House Masses across the school year, as well as year assemblies.

Pupils respond well to the experiences of prayer and liturgy provided by the school; this evident in *prayer services, silent reflection, singing, music, understanding of the liturgical year, form time and Virtues & Values weekly form time…* Pupils also lead the Angelus in their respective teaching groups during Advent.

From RE Department Curriculum Statement:

'St Mary's RC High School has an active pupil Chaplaincy group that lead and contribute to the prayer life of the school. In addition to the academic content delivered in lessons, pupils will be encouraged to observe the liturgical year with special lessons and services. There will also be opportunities for prayer and the Sacraments, as well as time for reflection during retreats or visits from outside speakers'

See, **Voluntary Mass attendance figures 2025-2026 (CRL – SLT – Spirituality / Section 48 – Masses)**

What could be improved?

- To vary the pupils who routinely take an active part in the preparation and delivery of collective worship in order that a greater number have opportunities to participate, and gain from the experience (greater inclusivity)
- To provide further opportunities for more spontaneous acts of worship

CW2 The quality of collective worship provided by the school

Grade CW 2

1

Strengths – what is the impact of the actions you have taken?

There is a naturally embedded daily pattern of prayer at St Mary's: there is a creative balance between routine and innovative times of prayer, notably during form time every morning (for example, Sacred Spaces. Other examples include, the Angelus, prayers at the beginning and / or end of RE lessons, weekly assemblies….). Daily prayers for all form groups are available on the school CRL network. All PPT presentations for reference link to Pupil Profile and Virtue Pairs.

Well-chosen Scripture passages that are informed by the liturgical season form the heart of prayer and liturgy, and there are intrinsic links between these passages and the whole of the celebration (for example, during our *Advent service* or *Lenten assemblies…).* The RE Department take a leading role in preparing pupil participation in collective acts of worship: the RE staff are highly skilled in helping pupils to confidently plan and lead well-constructed prayer and liturgy. They have a thorough and comprehensive understanding of the liturgical norms of the Church and are adept at helping pupils to faithfully reflect these norms in their preparation. The Music Department also supports acts of collective worship by preparing the school choir and musicians as necessary.

Each year group has a dedicated retreat day. The aim of our retreats is to provide an opportunity to experience faith on a more personal way and on a level different than "book knowledge." Each day allows for a "retreat" from the typical academic day and provided opportunities for reflection and spiritual experience, an increase in self-knowledge and a deepening of relationships among members of each form group across all of the year groups. The themes of each retreat last year were linked to Catholic Social Teaching: *Year 7: Stewardship and God's Creation, Year 8: Human Dignity, Year 9: The Common Good, Year 10: Option for the Poor and Year 11: Solidarity.* The new retreat programme for 2026-2027 began in October.

What could be improved?

- To further invest in the school's audio system in order to enrich the whole school Mass experience for all involved (there are budgeted plans in place for 2026-2027)

- To give renewed focus to Altar server succession training

- To commission more staff Eucharistic Ministers following the recent departure of former staff who served in the role (two members of SLT were commissioned as Eucharistic Ministers last year)

CW3 How well leaders and governors promote, monitor, and evaluate the provision for collective worship

Grade CW 3

1

Strengths – what is the impact of the actions you have taken?

The school's policy on prayer and liturgy is carefully devised, regularly reviewed, accessible and fit for purpose.

St Mary's school leaders, including governors, have a clear understanding of the different levels and skills of participation that are reflective of the age and capacity of pupils. There is a strategic approach to building up these skills of participation as pupils' progress through school. Over time, pupils are able to participate in liturgy and prayer with increased confidence, understanding and frequency.

Leaders, including governors, have also planned the school calendar and timetable carefully to ensure that opportunities to celebrate the Eucharist are regularly offered to the whole school community, particularly at key times in the liturgical year and at significant moments within the life of the school. All holy days of obligation and other significant days are prioritised in the school's calendar and timetable to ensure that all those who wish to are able to participate in Mass, or other appropriate liturgies, on such days. Equally, school leaders ensure that the Sacrament of Reconciliation is offered in school at key times in the liturgical year, such as Lent and Advent.

RSU as HOD has reported to governors on outcomes, progress and targets as part of the monitoring and evaluation process. All members of SLT also provided an individual presentation as part of the Governors' Away Day in December 2023: the spiritual life of the school was a prominent theme.

Finance and time are also allocated to ensure that professional development, staff INSET and resources are available to staff to support provision for prayer and liturgy (for example, *Ten: Ten training for staff, annual Spirituality INSET (typically at Belmont Abbey – see below), Virtue Pairs, staff training on Sacred Spaces….)*

What could be improved?
➢ Monitoring and evaluation of collective worship to be discussed termly via our **Governor's Safeguarding Committee** ➢ Greater staff involvement from across the curriculum in the spiritual life of the school **Spirituality INSET since 2019** (INSET interrupted by pandemic 2020 & 2021)**:** 2019 Belmont Abbey (Fertile Heart) – 2022 Belmont Abbey *('God in Everything')* –2023 Ten: Ten focus - 2024: Twilight INSET on the Mission Statement and Virtues – 2025: Twilight INSET on *Working Together in a Catholic School & The Jubilee Year of Hope* – 2026: INSET Day dedicated to CSI preparation Programmes available **(CRL – SLT – Church School Inspection / Whole School Spirituality – Staff INSET)**

PUPIL AND STAFF INFORMATION (Updated: Autumn Term 2 2026)

Year Group or Class	No. of pupils	No. Catholic pupils	% FSM eligible (Targeted & Expanded)	% SEND (inc. EHCP)	% EHCP	% Significant ethnic groups (i.e. >5% of cohort)	% EAL
7	150	86	18.0	24.7	4.0	88.0	34.0
8	150	94	12.0	15.3	2.0	89.3	35.3
9	150	94	16.7	28.7	2.7	90.0	28.0
10	150	83	14.0	30.0	8.7	91.3	28.0
11	147	89	10.2	21.8	4.1	86.4	24.5
Total	747	446 (59.7%)	14.2%	24.1	4.3%	89.0%	30.0
Compared to national averages		45.3% *** (Cardiff-M Archdiocese)	26.5% *	20.8% **	6.0% **	72.1% *	21.6% *

*Schools, Pupils & Their Characteristics January 2026

** Special Educational Needs in England June 2026

*** Cardiff Archdiocese – Digest of 2024 Census Data for Schools & Colleges in Wales

Religion Data

Published Admission Number (PAN) of Pupils:	**750**
Percentage of pupils who are baptised Catholics:	**59.7%**
Percentage of pupils from other Christian denominations:	**30.3%**

Percentage of pupils from other religions:	**4.7%**
Percentage of pupils who are non-religious:	**5.4%**

Staffing

Primary – give details of all teaching staff; Secondary and Sixth Form College – give details of staff teaching Religious Education

Name	Responsibility	RE specialist? (Y/N)	Experience	Current service	FTE	CCRS or equivalent (Y/N)
Rebecca Surman	Head of RE Department / Responsibility for RSE	Y		Sept 2015	FT	N
Daniel Coyne	Full-time teacher of RE / Head of Year 10 and 11	Y		Sept 2015	FT	Y
Catherine Leslie	Full time teacher of RE	N		Sept 2021	FT	Y
Richard Watson	Part time teacher of RE	N		Sept 2022	FT	N
Victoria Budden	Part-time teacher of RE	N		Jan 2007		N

KEY

Experience – years in teaching; Current service – years in this school; FTE – where 1.0 represents full-time

Senior Leaders

Name	Responsibility	Experience	Current service	FTE	CCRS or equivalent (Y/N)
Stuart Wetson	Headteacher		April 2018	FT	N
Angela Leslie	Deputy Headteacher / DSL / Leadership of Pastoral		Sept 1989	FT	Y
Anthony Giampalma	Assistant Headteacher / Leadership of Curriculum		Sept 2006	FT	N
Arron Cassidy	Assistant Headteacher / Leadership of KS3 Provision & Standards / T & L lead		Sept 2022	FT	N
Vikki Avery	Assistant Headteacher / Behaviour & Expectations		Sept 2020	FT	N
Christine Bryan	Business Manager		May 2024	FT	N

CURRICULUM INFORMATION

CURRICULUM STATEMENT: Updated 2026

The aim of the curriculum within the RE Department at St Mary's is to:

- Serve the needs of students from the Catholic tradition, from other faith traditions and those with no faith. In doing so ensure all of our pupils have the knowledge and understanding to think spiritually, ethically and theologically and to be aware of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life
- To ensure that pupils develop spiritually and morally, understanding the school's mission to serve each other through the teachings of Christ.
- Provide every pupil with high quality Religious Education that meets the needs of every pupil as fully as possible.
- Enable pupils to engage in learning that helps develop their faith as well as acquire the knowledge necessary to make academic progress.
- Provide a curriculum that presents opportunities to explore values and virtues that support the ethos of the school.

Pupils at KS3 in Years 7 and 8 have five hours of curriculum time across a two-week timetable: in Years 9, 10 and 11, pupils also have five hours of curriculum time across a two-week timetable. In Year 10, there are five groups (of mixed ability in A Band and B Band), there is an additional small group of 10 pupils who are completing the Pearson ELC in Religious Studies with a total number of 150 pupils. In the current Year 11, there are also five groups (of mixed ability in A Band and B Band), and there is also an additional small group of 10 pupils who are completing the Pearson ELC in Religious Studies with a total number of 147 pupils.

As a Catholic school, the Religious Education department curriculum follows the Religious Education Curriculum Directory syllabus as set out by the Catholic Bishop's Conference of England and Wales. This curriculum has recently been revised and has been implemented for all KS3 pupils.

- The KS3 RE curriculum is determined by the Bishops of England and Wales as presented in the ***RE Curriculum Directory*** (2022). Pupils will follow the ***Source to Summit*** syllabus which links directly to, and builds on, the curriculum used in Catholic primary schools in the Archdiocese of Cardiff. There is a logically agreed sequence to the topics studied and each one builds on prior learning, as work becomes more challenging as terms progress. There is flexibility within the topics to allow for pupils in our school to develop their own skills and to explore topics of interest to them. The curriculum is differentiated allowing for equality of access for all pupils and the sequencing of units is regularly reviewed to match ambition and to ensure a clear rationale for learning and teaching. As a Catholic Christian community, the focus is on Church and Gospel values in our modern world but students will also explore other World Religions as part of the Dialogue and Discourse branch of the RED, namely Hinduism, Judaism and Islam, in recognition of the UK as a multi-faith and multicultural society and of a Church which looks outwards and not inwards. Regular revision coupled with mid and end of unit assessments, encourage students to know and remember more, whilst reflecting on their own faith journeys.

- The curriculum at Key Stage 4 (Eduqas) builds on the work started at KS3 and, once again, it follows the guidelines laid down by the Bishops of England and Wales. Regular revision coupled with mid and end of unit assessments, encourage students to know and remember more, whilst reflecting on their own faith journeys. The curriculum is differentiated allowing for equality of access for all pupils and the sequencing of units is regularly reviewed to match ambition and to ensure a clear rationale for learning and teaching. As a Catholic Christian community, the key focus is on Church and Gospel values but within a modern world; pupils will also explore Judaism and how this has influenced Christianity today.

- A wide range of assessment data is used to identify those pupils in need of support to achieve their potential and this in turn is used to inform planning. Pupil progress is closely monitored through an on-going intervention programme which targets the entire GCSE cohort through close monitoring, tutorial sessions and parental involvement. Two mock exams take place in Year 11.

Please indicate the amount of the taught week allocated to the teaching of religious education

Year Group or Class	Total curriculum time (in minutes)	Total RE curriculum time (in minutes)	% RE curriculum time (to one decimal place)
7	5 hours per two week-timetable (300 minutes)	5 hours per two week-timetable (300 minutes)	10
8	5 hours per two week-timetable (300 minutes)	5 hours per two week-timetable (300 minutes)	10
9	5 hours per two week-timetable (300 minutes)	5 hours per two week-timetable (300 minutes)	10
10	5 hours per two week-timetable (300 minutes)	5 hours per two week-timetable (300 minutes)	10
11	5 hours per two week-timetable (300 minutes)	5 hours per two week-timetable (300 minutes)	10

Settings offering sixth form provision – please indicate the amount of the taught week allocated to the teaching of core religious education – **N/A**

Year Group	Total curriculum time (in minutes)	Total RE curriculum time (in minutes)	% RE curriculum time (to one decimal place)
12			
13			
14			

Please indicate the programme(s) of study followed (Sixth form providers, include A-level Religious Studies and Core RE) – **N/A**

Key Stage	Details of programme(s) of study followed

- Please indicate the capitations for each of the following areas

Subject	Last year	This year
Religious Education	£1,950	£1,950
English	£1,950	£1,950
Maths	£1,950	£1,950

- All three departments qualified for the same initial allocation – same no of pupils at the same rate per pupil (£2 for KS3 and £3.50 for KS4) therefore £1,950 allocation for each of the three departments. At present, our Business Manager is working on the basis of the same amount for 25/26 (with possible scope to increase a little for each department).