



# CATHOLIC SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

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



## Sacred Heart Roman Catholic Primary School

URN: 119510

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Bishop of Salford

03 June 2026 – 04 June 2026

### Summary of key findings

#### Overall effectiveness

The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school

#### Catholic life and mission (p.3)

How faithfully the school responds to the call to live as a Catholic community at the service of the Church's educational mission

#### Religious education (p.5)

The quality of curriculum religious education RE

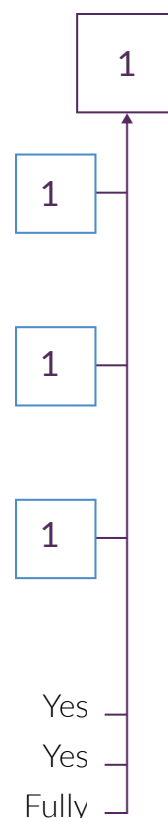
#### Collective worship (p.7)

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

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

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

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



Yes  
Yes  
Fully

## What the school does well

- Sacred Heart is a highly distinctive community where pupils of many faiths are united in their shared love of God and actively embrace the school's Catholic identity.
- Prayer and Liturgy is engaging and inclusive, enabling all pupils to participate meaningfully while remaining faithful to the Catholic tradition.
- Inspirational leadership, grounded in a clear vision for inclusion, empowers staff to deliver authentic and confident practice within a diverse community.
- Behaviour across the school is exemplary; pupils demonstrate deep respect for one another, rooted in their understanding of human dignity.
- Highly effective pastoral care and precise monitoring ensure that all pupils, including those new to English, make strong progress and feel supported to flourish.

## What the school needs to improve

- Develop pupils' ability to articulate the theological and scriptural foundations of Catholic social teaching, so that they can confidently explain how their actions for social justice are rooted in the Gospel, Catholic teaching and the mission of the Church.
- Develop staff expertise in facilitating pupil-led prayer and liturgy so that pupils confidently contribute to the planning, leadership and evaluation of worship across a wider range of formal and informal settings.

## Catholic life and mission

How faithfully the school responds to the call to live as a Catholic community at the service of the Church's educational mission.

### Catholic life and mission key judgement grade

#### Pupil outcomes

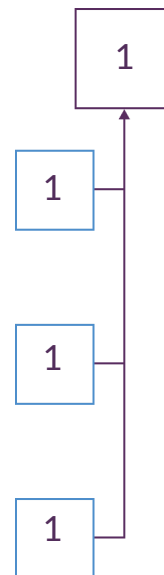
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

#### Provision

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

#### Leadership

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



Pupils at Sacred Heart deeply value and actively embrace the school's distinctive identity. This is evident in the way a diverse community lives out the principle of being 'many faiths but all unite as one in God's family.' This strong sense of unity is affirmed by the Parish Priest, who describes the school as a 'beacon of collaborative pilgrimage and hope.' Pupils demonstrate a secure sense of belonging, rooted in their understanding that each person is made in the image and likeness of God, which underpins a culture where every individual is respected and valued. Pupils flourish as they grow in virtue. One pupil reflected on St Carlo Acutis, expressing amazement that a teenager could be a saint and resolving to 'never give up' on their own faith journey. Pupils speak confidently about their mission statement, 'We pray; we learn; we discern', and their behaviour consistently reflects respect for the dignity of others. They take an active role in responding to Catholic social teaching, engaging with initiatives such as earthquake appeals and water projects, guided by Gospel values. While pupils demonstrate a strong commitment to action, their ability to articulate the theology underpinning their service is less well developed.

The mission statement is a clear and compelling expression of the Church's educational mission and is lived authentically in daily school life. Sacred Heart is experienced as a 'common home where all faiths feel united in their shared love of God', reflecting a deeply embedded culture of inclusion. This vision is realised through the work of a close-knit 'Sacred Heart family' of staff, who share a strong sense of purpose and unity. Staff speak with conviction about their vocation within the school community and demonstrate a strong commitment to its mission'. Staff embrace the mission with integrity and provide highly

effective pastoral care, consistently going the extra mile to support the most vulnerable, including refugees and international new arrivals through initiatives such as the 'toast club'. As a result, pupils feel safe, valued and supported, enabling them to flourish both personally and spiritually. The school has created a highly inclusive environment where pupils are able to live and pray in fidelity to their own beliefs within a Catholic framework. Positive and respectful relationships are a defining strength, fostering a harmonious community where diversity is celebrated and all members are empowered to succeed.

Guided by the inspirational leadership of the headteacher, leaders and governors ensure that Christ remains central to all aspects of school life. They are deeply committed to their role as guardians of the mission and have established a culture where inclusion and faith are seamlessly integrated. A significant strength lies in the development of bespoke professional formation, including the use of *Together with Prayer*, which equips staff with the theological confidence to deliver inclusive and meaningful practice. This shared vision enables staff to adapt and innovate confidently, ensuring that the curriculum meets the needs of the school's diverse community. Staff report that their confidence is shaped by a supportive culture where they are mentored to become authentic role models of faith. Governors provide robust challenge and support through regular monitoring and strategic oversight. Their commitment to understanding the school's work first-hand ensures that evaluation is rooted in evidence. Self-evaluation is rigorous and leads to well-targeted improvements, ensuring that the school's mission remains consistently strong and responsive. As a result, the curriculum is a coherent expression of a Catholic understanding of reality and reflects the school's distinctive identity as a community of unity and faith.

## Religious education

How faithfully the school responds to the call to live as a Catholic community at the service of the Church's educational mission.

### Religious education key judgement grade

#### Pupil outcomes

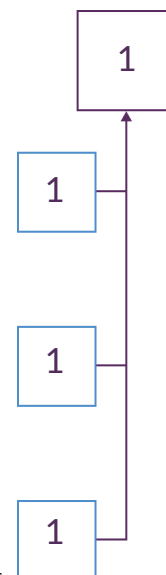
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

#### Provision

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

#### Leadership

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



Attainment in religious education is a notable strength and aligns closely with standards in writing across the school. Despite a high proportion of pupils with English as an additional language and significant transiency, pupils make strong progress from their starting points. Pupils demonstrate secure religious literacy, making meaningful connections between Christianity and other faith traditions and applying their knowledge thoughtfully in a range of contexts. For example, pupils explain how figures such as the Good Shepherd or ordinary people who do extraordinary things act as role models in daily life. They show curiosity and ask insightful questions that deepen their understanding further over time. Pupils produce consistently high-quality work, including Faith Journey scrapbooks that reflect creativity and thoughtful engagement with their learning. Behaviour for learning is consistently strong; pupils approach lessons with enthusiasm and sustain focus over extended periods of independent study. They understand how to improve their work, using driver words to evaluate progress accurately. This enables them to take increasing responsibility for their learning. As a result, pupils become reflective learners who increasingly recognise how faith informs their understanding of themselves, others and the world. They illustrate understanding through discussion, writing, and creative tasks, demonstrating confidence in expressing ideas and respectfully to others.

Teaching and assessment in religious education are highly effective and underpinned by a strong focus on language development. Oracy and writing are prioritised, ensuring religious education has clear parity with other core subjects across the curriculum. Staff are confident

in their subject knowledge, supported by high-quality training and a collaborative professional culture that promotes consistency and shared practice. Planning is meticulously linked to class in context reports, ensuring learning builds progressively for every individual, including International New Arrivals. Provision is carefully tailored; for instance, a Key Stage Two pupil with additional needs had work sensitively adapted during a lesson on Micah 6:8 to ensure full engagement and understanding. Teachers use questioning effectively to identify pupils' understanding and adapt teaching accordingly, securing strong progress over time. Resources are deployed skilfully, including the use of bilingual staff to support access and inclusion. Scripture is central; Year 1 pupils confidently demonstrated their knowledge of church features, accurately identifying the ambo. Feedback is purposeful, with pupils responding to Fix-it comments or using driver words to improve their theological responses. Consequently, pupils develop confidence and competence in expressing theological ideas, making learning consistently meaningful, engaging and relevant.

Leadership of religious education is highly effective and demonstrates a clear commitment to excellence. The subject leader provides strong direction and maintains high expectations, ensuring consistency and quality across all phases of the school. The implementation of the *Religious Education Directory*, supported by the *Lighting the Path* programme, has been carefully managed so that learning builds systematically and progressively over time. Monitoring is rigorous, enabling leaders to identify and address gaps quickly, which secures sustained improvement in teaching and learning outcomes. The governing body is committed to maintaining high standards and ensures that religious education is given equal priority alongside other core subjects. Professional development is a key priority, with staff receiving training and support that strengthens both subject knowledge and confidence in delivery. As one member of staff noted, 'our confidence comes from the culture established by leaders, who mentor us to become role models of faith.' New staff benefit from effective induction processes, ensuring they understand and contribute to the school's approach. The subject leader's expertise is recognised beyond the school through participation in networks and collaborative moderation. As a result, provision is well planned, consistently delivered, and has a strong impact on pupil outcomes and spiritual development.

## Collective worship

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

### Collective worship key judgement grade

#### Pupil outcomes

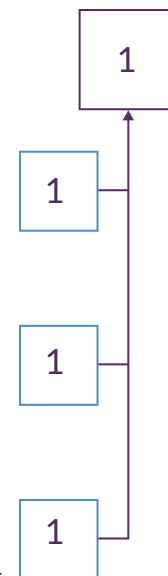
How well pupils participate in and respond to the school's collective worship

#### Provision

The quality of collective worship provided by the school

#### Leadership

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



Pupils engage in prayer and liturgy with deep reverence, enthusiasm and maturity. This is most evident in their purposeful and reflective participation in experiences such as the Stations of the Light, where they contribute through singing, sign language and symbolic actions with some pupils acting out each station using freeze frames to support prayerful reflection. Pupils move beyond passive involvement and demonstrate a genuine sense of ownership during worship. Pupil leadership is a significant strength. Many Key Stage Two pupils confidently fulfil roles as chaplains and worship leaders, supporting their peers and modelling respectful participation. One pupil explained that 'becoming a chaplain has built my confidence' and strengthened their faith journey. Pupils demonstrate a strong capacity for stillness and contemplation, recognising that participation in prayer can take different forms, including quiet reflection. They articulate personal responses to prayer with sincerity, explaining how acts of love 'brighten my day' and provide reassurance and comfort. As a result, prayer and liturgy has a clear and positive impact on pupils' spiritual development and sense of belonging. Pupils of all faiths feel included and valued, recognising the school as a place where they can encounter and reflect on faith together.

Prayer and liturgy is of a very high quality and is central to school life. A well-established daily pattern ensures that prayer is a seamless and meaningful part of the day for every member of the community. Scripture is at the heart of worship, with passages such as Psalm 24 being carefully selected to ensure they are accessible, meaningful and relevant to pupils of all faiths and abilities. Prayer is enriched through creative and symbolic practices, including drama, reflective actions and visual elements that deepen engagement and understanding. The

environment is thoughtfully prepared, using lighting, artefacts and space effectively to create a calm atmosphere that promotes reverence and reflection. Leaders make effective use of both indoor and outdoor spaces to enhance prayer opportunities, including plans to develop a dedicated outdoor prayer area. Prayer is carefully planned to ensure inclusivity, enabling pupils of all faiths to participate meaningfully while maintaining fidelity to Catholic tradition. Pupils are supported to respond personally through faith journey scrapbooks and prayer journals, making faith a tangible and relevant part of their lives. As a result, prayer and liturgy is both engaging and meaningful, enabling pupils to develop a deeper understanding of faith and its relevance in their lives.

Leaders and governors are committed guardians of the school's prayer life, ensuring prayer and liturgy remains central to the school's unique identity and daily life. Staff provide a strong example through their active participation in prayer, including leading worship during meetings and engaging in reflective practices such as 'Wellbeing Wednesday' where they look to God as their solution. This consistent witness strengthens the culture of prayer across the school. The headteacher provides clear and innovative leadership, supported by strong theological understanding. The use of *Together with Prayer* has enhanced staff confidence and ensured greater consistency in delivering inclusive and meaningful worship across the community. Staff are supported to develop their skills, enabling them to lead prayer with increasing confidence and understanding. Governors are actively involved in monitoring provision, ensuring that evaluation is informed by first-hand experience through visits and discussions with leaders. Their engagement supports effective self-evaluation and continuous improvement. There is a strong culture of reflection, with pupil and staff voice contributing meaningfully to development. As a result, prayer and liturgy is well led, continuously improving, and has a significant impact on the spiritual life of the school, strengthening pupils' sense of belonging and faith.

## Information about the school

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| Full name of school                            | Sacred Heart Roman Catholic Primary School   |
| School unique reference number (URN)           | 119510   |
| School DfE Number (LAESTAB)                    | 8893500  |
| Full postal address of the school              | Lynwood Road, Blackburn, Lancashire, BB2 6HQ                                       |
| School phone number                            | 01254 54851  |
| Headteacher or Head of School                  | Mr Michael Parker  |
| Chair of Governors                             | Mr Paul Gerard Crewe   |
| School Website                                 | <a href="http://www.sacredheartblackburn.co.uk">www.sacredheartblackburn.co.uk</a> |
| Trusteeship                                    | Diocesan   |
| Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable) | Romero Catholic Academy Trust  |
| 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         | 27 April 2018  |
| Previous denominational inspection grade       | Good   |

## The Inspection Team

Jane Myerscough Lead

Laura Orr

## 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 |