



St Mary's Roman Catholic Primary School

URN: 119647

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Bishop of Salford

08 July 2026 – 08 July 2026

Summary of key findings

Overall effectiveness

The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school

Catholic life and mission (p.3)

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

Religious education (p.5)

The quality of curriculum religious education RE

Collective worship (p.7)

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

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

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

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

2

2

2

2

Yes

Yes

Fully

What the school does well

- Pupils demonstrate a deep respect for themselves and others, including the most vulnerable and those of other faiths and none.
- The school's strong emphasis on pastoral care enables pupils and staff to live out its mission, Believe, Achieve, Flourish, each day.
- The school's learning environment visibly reflects its Catholic identity and actively supports pupils' spiritual formation and faith development.
- Pupils engage enthusiastically in religious education and demonstrate positive attitudes to learning.
- Pupils recognise the positive impact of the Mission Team in strengthening the prayer life and spiritual development of the school community.

What the school needs to improve

- Ensure that all pupils become religiously literate, relative to their age and capacity, and can articulate their knowledge and understanding of key concepts in religious education.
- Develop pupils' experience of a wider range of prayer and liturgy that reflects the traditions of the Church and the liturgical year.
- Ensure that monitoring and evaluation of Catholic life and mission, religious education, and prayer and liturgy are rigorous, targeted and involve all stakeholders so that they have a measurable impact on school improvement.

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

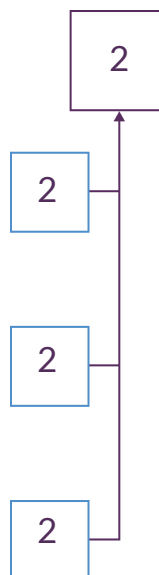
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

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



From their earliest years, pupils at St Mary's demonstrate an understanding of the school's values and some pupils can articulate how this is translated into the daily lives of all at St Mary's school. Each week, 'VIPs' are identified and celebrated as exemplary role models in the school. They are all able to explain how they have shown different school values within their lessons and playtimes. Pupils are very happy and feel secure at school. Staff and pupils speak warmly about being part of a 'family' within the school. Positive relationships in the school ensure that the pupils develop a secure sense of their worth as members of the St Mary's community. Pupils show a deep respect for all in their school and wider parish community. However, they cannot readily recall or make links to key messages from the Gospels which require them to take care of God's world or serve those in need. Pupils respond readily to the demands of Catholic social teaching through their support of a variety of local, national and global charities. The well established Mission Team plan and lead chaplaincy opportunities within the school. Their contribution to school life is recognised and valued by their peers and the staff.

All stakeholders have worked in partnership to review and renew the school's mission statement. Pupil voice was strong during this process and the resulting statement is centred around the language of scripture. Class identities have also been carefully linked to scripture. Staff are committed to witnessing to the mission statement across the curriculum but its impact on the Catholic life is not yet fully understood by all stakeholders. There is a very strong sense of community and everyone is welcomed in a spirit of hospitality. The parish priest, governors and other visitors to the school are appreciative of this warmth of welcome. Staff

are very positive role models, the highest levels of pastoral care are in place for pupils and there is a deep commitment to ensuring that the most vulnerable members of the community are supported and encouraged to flourish. Vibrant displays and high quality religious resources ensure that the school environment bears witness to its identity and mission. Chaplaincy provision is developing well in the school. Pupils undertake their roles within the Mission Team and Eco Council with joy and pride. The school's spiritual, moral, social and cultural curriculum is providing staff and pupils with effective tools for growth in these areas. The provision for relationship, sex and health education meets diocesan requirements.

The dedication of the senior leaders and governors bears witness to the Church's mission in education. They pursue this mission with joy, enthusiasm and determination. The mission is viewed by leaders as a core responsibility. Governors' commitment to their role is evident in school records. However, they do not yet fully fulfil their role as guardians of the school's Catholic ethos through the provision of well considered support and challenge to school leaders. Parish links are strong: staff and pupils lead and participate regularly in parish liturgical celebrations and the parish priest is a welcomed visitor to the school. The school is highly valued by its parents with one commenting that they always recommend it to friends and family. Professional development is enabling new staff to develop and secure their knowledge and understanding of Catholic life and mission when they join the school. Leaders and governors are dedicated to providing the highest levels of pastoral care for the staff, both in their personal and professional lives. Governors and leaders undertake some informal monitoring of the Catholic life and mission of the school but this is not rigorous and as a result does not produce searching analysis or clear impact.

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

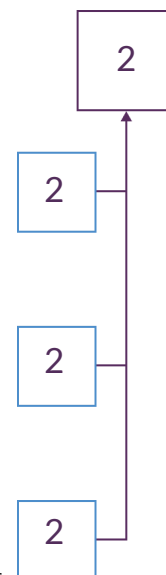
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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



Pupil outcomes in religious education are good. From their earliest years, they show high levels of enjoyment in religious education lessons. They ask searching questions confidently in lessons across the school. Behaviour is positive in all classes. Due to the well sequenced curriculum that is rooted in the *Religious Education Directory*, pupils are acquiring knowledge and understanding in religious education at a steady pace. Staff are supporting all pupils, including those with additional needs, to make progress through targeted questioning and appropriate feedback. Teachers do not always provide tasks that enable pupils to make links with prior learning or challenge them to respond with increasing independence. As a result, pupils' responses show a lack of depth of understanding both orally and written. Pupils collaborate with their peers very easily and respectfully. Most pupils take pride in their work. They are developing a level of religious literacy, including some subject-specific vocabulary, and are using this to begin to think ethically and reflect spiritually. Feedback practices across the school do not encourage all pupils to share their knowledge and opinions in lessons. As a result, pupils have a limited understanding of how well they are doing, and what they need to do to improve.

Teacher subject knowledge is good. They understand the value of religious education and bring enthusiasm and commitment to their work. Targeted support for teachers has resulted in consistency of curriculum planning and effectively structured lessons. When linked to accurate assessment, teachers' planning is ensuring that pupils make steady progress. Those with additional needs are well supported by experienced support staff and, therefore, their

developing knowledge and understanding is captured accurately. Effective questioning in some lessons is increasing the pace of pupils' acquisition of key knowledge and is giving pupils the confidence to ask their own 'big questions'. Pupils' work and contribution to lessons is celebrated regularly through the school's celebration assemblies. Children in the Early Years can articulate accurately why Sunday is designated as the day of rest in Christianity and Judaism. Pupils across Key Stage 1 can identify and describe religious artefacts used in the everyday lives of Jewish families. In Lower Key Stage 2 pupils confidently use their prior knowledge to inform their opinions about Jesus' interactions with the Samaritan woman by the well. Upper Key Stage 2 can make links and comparisons between beliefs and practices in the Hindu religion and the principles of Catholic social teaching. Pupils' knowledge and understanding is captured in creative ways in some areas of school.

Leaders ensure that the school curriculum for religious education is a faithful expression of the *Religious Education Directory*. It is comparable to other core subjects in resourcing, timetabling and staffing. The religious education leaders demonstrate good levels of expertise. Their passion for the subject enables them to translate their vision for improving teaching and learning into practice. Professional development provided by leaders is securing teachers' subject knowledge. Teachers readily acknowledge the positive impact of collaborative planning and coaching from leaders on their practice. There is also an acknowledgement by leaders that further focus on securing pupils' understanding of key vocabulary as they move through the new curriculum is a priority. The curriculum is further enhanced through additional activities throughout the year linked to national events, such as Remembrance. Pupils have limited opportunities to explore different places of worship and welcome visitors from other faiths into school. This area of their religious knowledge is not well developed at present. There is a limited amount of formal monitoring of religious education; as a consequence, self-evaluation is not rigorous enough to have a positive impact on consistency, challenge, progression and outcomes in the subject.

Collective worship

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

Collective worship key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

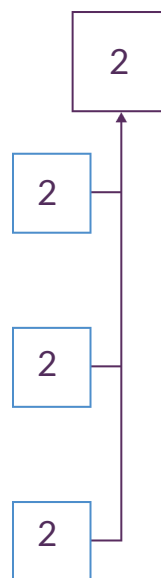
How well pupils participate in and respond to the school's collective worship

Provision

The quality of collective worship provided by the school

Leadership

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



Pupils respond well to the experiences of prayer and liturgy provided by St Mary's and are respectful within them. Across the age groups they participate reverently in community prayer. From their youngest years, pupils lead and experience celebrations of the word which include scripture passages, meaningful visual focal points, traditional prayers and some moments of quiet reflection. However, they do not always have the depth of knowledge of scripture to independently plan liturgies successfully. As a result, in some classroom celebrations the theme of the worship is not made clear, limiting pupil understanding. Pupils know some traditional prayers well but have a limited knowledge of the wider prayer traditions of the Catholic Church. Liturgies provide the pupils with clear guidance for their daily lives rooted in the teachings in the gospels. Planned opportunities for pupils to reflect on the impact of this guidance on their moral and spiritual development are embedded in the liturgical practice of the school. Some pupils can talk about some of the ways in which prayer leads to action but they are not able to confidently articulate the ways in which prayer and liturgy are influenced by the wider life of the school or the wider curriculum.

The quality of prayer and liturgy in the school is good. Prayer is woven into the daily life of the school with leaders ensuring that it is appropriately planned and responsive to key issues in the local area and globally. Pupils from the school attend the church for Mass regularly and consequently pupils know the rituals of the Mass well. They take a lead in the sacramental celebration with confidence and reverence. Links with the parish are very strong, the parish priest is a regular visitor to school and his contribution to school life is valued by the staff and pupils. Senior leaders are skilled in leading prayer and liturgy. They are good role models to

other staff and pupils. When supporting pupils in their planning of celebrations of the word, staff do not consistently ensure that the liturgical norms of the Church are reflected in the pupils' leadership practice. As a result, pupils do not always apply correct gestures before prayers or greetings for Gospel readings. St Mary's makes good use of space inside and outside of the building in order to provide pupils with quiet places to pray individually or in groups. The Mission Team takes great pride in caring for the prayer area in the centre of the school and in leading voluntary prayer activities for different year groups.

The school's policy for prayer and liturgy is being developed. Staff understand the levels of skills of pupil participation laid out in the policy and are mindful of these when supporting the pupils. The opportunities to celebrate Mass on a regular basis as well as taking part in other events such as the Advent and Easter 'read around' liturgies are well appreciated by staff and parents and central to the school's calendar. Parents and parishioners are welcomed to liturgical events throughout the year and comment that they 'love how much the school is involved with the church'. Parish links are further strengthened through the sacramental preparation which is led by school. Leaders and governors prioritise resources of time, staffing and money to ensure there are many opportunities for prayer within the school. As a result of professional development, staff understand the importance of prayer and liturgy and are enabling pupils to plan and lead them with increasing skill. The lack of regular monitoring and evaluation of the quality of prayer and liturgy in the school is preventing leaders and governors from forming an accurate view of the quality of the prayer life of the school. As a result, they are not able to plan appropriately targeted improvements.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Mary's Roman Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	119647
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	8883748
Full postal address of the school	Longsight Road, Osbaldeston, Blackburn, BB2 7HX
School phone number	01254 812543
Headteacher or Head of School	Mrs Maria Coulthard
Chair of Governors	Mr Ian Nugent
School Website	www.smrc.lancs.sch.uk
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Phase	Primary
Type of school	Voluntary Aided School
Admissions policy	Non Selective
Age-range of pupils	3 - 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	29 June 2018
Previous denominational inspection grade	Good

The Inspection Team

Alixena Lubomski

Lead

Fiona Robinson

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