



St Wulstan's Roman Catholic Primary School

URN: 119646

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Bishop of Salford

11 June 2026 – 12 June 2026

Summary of key findings

Overall effectiveness

The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school

Catholic life and mission (p.3)

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

Religious education (p.5)

The quality of curriculum religious education RE

Collective worship (p.7)

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

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

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

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

2

1

2

2

Yes

Yes

Fully

What the school does well

- The highly inclusive school community provides outstanding pastoral support to envelop all who enter St Wulstan's with love and joy, which leads to children, families and staff consistently feeling known, cared for and safe.
- The inspirational and devoted headteacher has a clear vision for excellence and leads with compassion and heart; her visible presence and high expectations build staff confidence and have created a culture where children flourish.
- Strong community links between home, school and parish lead to a powerful sense of belonging to a family and this is recognised and appreciated by all.
- Enjoyment of religious education lessons is a hallmark of the school and children convey a sense of pride in their learning.
- Children are empowered to be missionary disciples by a united staff team who lead by example; they relish the leadership opportunities provided to them, including planning and leading prayer and liturgy, and these have a positive impact on the mission of the school in action.

What the school needs to improve

- In religious education, fully embed the new Religious Education Directory curriculum, ensuring that children have opportunities to think deeply, express their learning creatively and demonstrate increasing theological understanding.
- Ensure the revised prayer and liturgy policy is implemented consistently across the school so that, by the end of Key Stage 2, pupils confidently contribute to the planning, leadership and evaluation of prayer and liturgy.

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

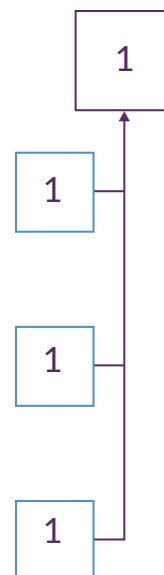
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

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



Children are rightly proud to be part of the school community of St Wulstan's. They embrace the Catholic identity and mission of the school with enthusiasm and joy, safe in the knowledge that they are seen, heard and loved. Strong relationships underpin every aspect of school life, with one parent commenting, 'I feel the school is an extension of the family.' Children appreciate everyone in their community and show respect for those of other faiths. They warmly welcome visitors and eagerly talk about their love of life at St Wulstan's. They demonstrate proactive care for their environment and participate in a wide range of charitable and outreach projects. For example, the children recently united in a fundraising venture to send a fellow pupil to Lourdes with a pilgrimage charity. Laudato Si is given prominence and children lead initiatives such as growing their own produce, recycling and reducing their carbon footprint. The many opportunities for pupil leadership are meaningful and appreciated, with all children willingly collaborating to have a measurable impact on the Catholic life and mission of the school. Children are unfailingly polite, respectful and generous with their time; as a result, the school is a loving, purposeful and joyful place to be.

Undoubtedly, Christ is at the heart of St Wulstan's. There is a lived sense of community centred on the Christian values of love, respect, friendship, forgiveness and honesty. This is evident in exceptionally supportive relationships, where all are cherished and included. The school environment vividly reflects the mission and is used as a tool to help children and adults grow in their faith. The highly dedicated headteacher is rightly seen as a role model for all. She is valued by parents, one of whom commented, 'She knows every family. She is there for everything and everyone.' As a result of her leadership, staff show the utmost love and

commitment to the children in their care. A strong sense of teamwork pervades school life, and the culture of inclusivity is embedded. The level of pastoral care is outstanding; there is a clear commitment to the most vulnerable, and the school's work in this area is exemplary. The implementation of the relationships, sex and health education scheme follows diocesan requirements, and parents and carers have been fully involved. There are extensive, well-planned opportunities for the children's spiritual and moral development which are recognised and appreciated by the whole school community.

Leaders and governors are passionate, energised and knowledgeable in their pursuit of the Church's mission in education. A governor said, when discussing their role in the children's faith journey, 'We are walking alongside them in their faith development.' The highly skilled governors are visible and known to the children, staff and parents, which enhances the sense of collective responsibility. Leaders ensure that all policies and procedures clearly reflect the priority given to the Catholic mission of St Wulstan's. The school places itself at the service of the parish, ensuring a committed partnership that supports the community; this relationship is treasured by the parish priests and parishioners. Children in different classes attend Mass weekly, showing engagement with and appreciation of this opportunity. Successful strategies for engaging with parents and carers are in place; due to this, parents have high regard for the school and are complimentary about the staff, communication and how the school listens to concerns. Subject leaders have worked effectively together to ensure the curriculum is explicitly designed to embed children's understanding of the principles of Catholic social teaching across all subjects. Rigorous self-evaluation processes involve leaders and governors; monitoring is forensic, next steps are clearly identified, and relevant professional development opportunities are undertaken.

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

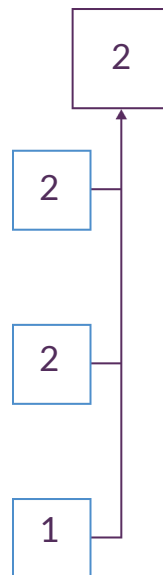
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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



Children enjoy their learning in religious education, showing enthusiasm and pride in their work. They can explain how they have made progress and what they need to do to continue to improve, and their attainment is at least in line with other core curriculum subjects. When asked to share pieces of work, children can offer explanations and recall their learning; however, they do not yet consistently respond in depth or demonstrate well-developed religious literacy when explaining their own thinking. Religious education lessons have a clear structure that is consistently embedded across the school. This enables children to recall prior learning, ensuring they know and remember more. Opportunities for reflection are provided in all lessons, allowing children time and space to link their learning to their own lives and to the school's mission. This is evident in some children's work; for example, in upper Key Stage 2 a child explained the mystery of the Transfiguration by writing, 'We don't fully understand it but we have faith that it happened.' Overall, children's books are well presented and behaviour in religious education lessons is exemplary across the school. Children are fully engaged and remain on task throughout lessons because they enjoy their learning tasks.

Teachers have embraced the new demands of the *Religious Education Directory* through their commitment to developing their subject knowledge as they value religious education as the central subject in the school. In all classes, there are high quality relationships between staff and children, which ensures that children can flourish in their learning. Children feel confident and empowered, knowing they are fully supported by their teachers and the highly skilled support staff. The staff team work collaboratively to ensure cohesive and consistent

approaches that make children feel safe and secure. Questioning in lessons primarily focuses on recall of knowledge; teachers need to broaden their questioning to challenge children in their theological thinking. Lessons contain active learning strategies, including drama, movement and paired talk. These approaches engage children and make the lessons accessible to everyone including those with special educational needs. Opportunities for creativity in teaching and the presentation of learning are evident; however, these are not yet consistently embedded through the personalisation of the new curriculum. Children's efforts in religious education are celebrated through verbal feedback, marking and displays to ensure religious education is prominent in the classroom and beyond.

The strong focus shown by leaders and governors to ensure religious education at St Wulstan's is given the highest status has had a measurable impact. Commitment to professional development has ensured that staff knowledge and understanding reflect current best practice in teaching and learning. Due to mixed-age classes, leaders have creatively adapted the planned curriculum to sequence it comprehensively and meet the needs of all children. Significant work has been undertaken by the subject leader to bring about improvements; this includes rigorous and detailed monitoring of all aspects of religious education. Staff appreciate the support and challenge provided by the subject leader and the expertise shared by deeply knowledgeable governors who give their time generously. The subject leader receives excellent support from the headteacher, which further reinforces high expectations across the school. This clear vision, the focus on quality training and the consistent implementation of the monitoring cycle have led to a positive impact on children's progress. Governors know the information they are provided about religious education is accurate because they visit regularly to provide support and challenge to senior leaders. Self-evaluation is accurate and based on regular, systematic monitoring, leading to precisely targeted priorities for improvement.

Collective worship

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

Collective worship key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

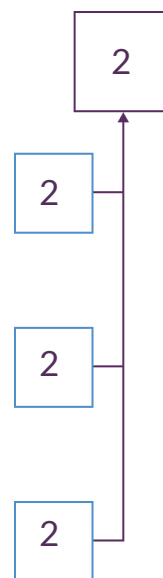
How well pupils participate in and respond to the school's collective worship

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



Children enjoy prayer and liturgy at St Wulstan's, as demonstrated by their respectful and reverent participation and engagement. They can articulate a variety of Catholic ways of praying and understand the liturgical year as well as describe the positive impact that prayer has on their sense of self. Prayer and liturgy opportunities give children dedicated time to develop their relationship with God, and this is something they value. All prayer is well structured and includes a clear 'send' message, enabling children to understand that prayer should lead to action. In lower Key Stage 2, children responded to the Gospel of the Good Samaritan by undertaking a 'Secret Samaritan' challenge following prayer. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, the youngest children reflected on the small things they could do to follow in the footsteps of Jesus. Children increasingly work well with their peers and adults to plan and lead prayer and liturgy jointly. This now needs further development so that, by the time children are leaving Key Stage 2, they are equipped with the skills and confidence to plan, lead and evaluate prayer and liturgy independently.

Prayer and liturgy are central to the life of the school, and prayer takes place as a matter of routine throughout the day. A comprehensive annual plan of provision has been formulated, ensuring a breadth and depth of acts of prayer and liturgy as well as special events throughout the liturgical year. Leaders should now facilitate further opportunities for spontaneous prayer outside planned acts of prayer and liturgy to deepen children's spirituality. Scripture selection is well planned to ensure children are experiencing a range of gospel stories at an age appropriate level. Consideration is given to the experience of prayer for children with additional needs so that all can develop a relationship with God through His

word. All staff serve as role models of good practice; many have the necessary skills to plan and lead well-structured prayer and liturgy, and they use their talents such as playing a musical instrument, to enhance atmosphere and impact. Seasonally appropriate prayer spaces are provided in classrooms; these are prominently placed, well resourced and often used by children. Parents are active participants in the prayer life of the school through activities such as invitations to weekly assemblies, Mass in church and significant events such as Remembrance Day and Holy Week.

Leaders and governors recognise the importance of prayer and liturgy in supporting the faith development of the school community and have ensured that appropriate resources and funding are allocated. Leaders and governors articulate clearly how prayer and liturgy nurture children's relationship with Christ, and the headteacher shows this in action by leading the sacramental programme. The recently reviewed prayer and liturgy policy is well thought out and includes a progressive whole school overview of expectations for children to plan and lead prayer by setting out the requirements for each year group. This aspect of the policy now needs time to embed in order to be fully and comprehensively lived out. Leaders should also ensure that celebrations of the word includes opportunities for children to have uninterrupted, meaningful time for reflection, as this was not always evident. The Eucharist is clearly of the utmost importance, and time is planned to ensure the celebration of holy days of obligation and other significant days in the school's calendar. Well established procedures ensure prayer and liturgy are regularly evaluated, with clear and focused areas for development identified. Children leave St Wulstan's feeling valued, known, loved and connected to God as a result of the prayer journey afforded to them.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Wulstan's Roman Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	119646
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	8883747
Full postal address of the school	Rushton Street, Great Harwood, Lancashire, BB6 7JQ
School phone number	01254 884533
Headteacher or Head of School	Miss Fiona Hadfield
Chair of Governors	Mrs Sarah Doughty
School Website	www.stwulstans.co.uk
Trusteeship	Diocesan
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	02 March 2023
Previous denominational inspection grade	Requires Improvement

The Inspection Team

Helen Sullivan

Lead

Joanne Davies

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