



# St Christopher's Roman Catholic Primary School, a Voluntary Academy

URN: 151363

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Bishop of Salford

12–13 November 2025

## Summary of key findings

### Overall effectiveness

The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school

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

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

1

#### Religious education (p.5)

The quality of curriculum religious education

1

#### Collective worship (p.7)

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

1

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

Yes

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

Yes

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

Fully

1

## Compliance statement

- The school is compliant in relation to the general norms for religious education laid down by the Bishops' Conference and fulfils 10% curriculum expectation.
- There are currently no additional requirements of the diocesan bishop.
- The school has responded fully to the areas for improvement in the last inspection which remain relevant under this inspection framework. Since the last inspection they have worked hard to successfully raise the profile of religious education across school, ensuring it is at the core of the curriculum. They developed creativity and challenge through their use of Come and See and display work proudly around the school. Pupils take an increasing role in planning and leading prayerful opportunities across the school.

## What the school does well

- Leaders and governors are inspirational in their drive for the highest possible standards across school.
- Behaviour and attitudes are exemplary leading to excellent outcomes.
- Relationships are central to the success of this school with care, compassion and wellbeing for pupils, staff and parents is clearly evident in all aspects of school life.
- Catholic social teaching is known, understood and witnessed across school.
- Prayer is central to the faith life of school with pupils, staff and the wider school community engaging with enthusiasm.

## What the school needs to improve

- Utilise the strength of Catholic social teaching to develop a planned curriculum which embraces the richness and tradition of the Catholic church.
- Ensure that high-quality creative opportunities, as well as individual expression and reflection, are planned for as the new curriculum is embedded.
- Develop a comprehensive and strategic plan for implementation of the *Prayer and Liturgy Directory* requirements, ensuring there is clear and progressive skill strategy.

## 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

1

#### Provision

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

1

#### Leadership

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

1

1

Pupils are rightly proud of their school and enthusiastic when talking about their experiences. There is a commitment to following in the footsteps of Jesus and they value the influence He has over their lives. They enjoy the opportunities they are offered, including Faith Leaders, Caritas Ambassadors and House Leaders and can talk about what they do to help other people who are not as fortunate as them. Catholic social teaching is at the heart of what the school does, and some pupils, particularly those with leadership responsibilities can confidently articulate this and why they are committed to it. Faith leaders value the role they have in school and are proud of the impact they have on younger children and the school community, raising money for charities, supporting whole school events and leading prayer and Celebration of the Word. There is a deep sense of respect for other faiths and a celebration of the diversity of the world. Behaviour is always exemplary across school, with the school's four core values of faith, friendship, kindness and courage underpinning all expectations.

The mission statement is known, understood and lived out by all across the school community. It has a significant impact on all aspects of school life. This is a happy, joyful and supportive school community where everyone is welcomed and valued. Pupils appreciate the relationships they have with all members of staff and talk about senior leaders being inspirational role models. The inclusive nature of the school illustrates the commitment to supporting the most vulnerable pupils, including those who have additional needs and those who have experienced adversity. Staff have worked hard to develop the physical environment to reflect their commitment to the mission and identity of the school; the pupils are proud of their prayer garden and their contributions to it, including the painted stones and the wooden hearts that have been added over time. They enjoy being able to access this area during playtimes and at other key times during the school day. *Life to the Full* is planned and used effectively to support pupils to develop

an understanding of relationships and they can talk about what they have learnt and what it means to them.

Leaders and governors are ambitious and conscientious in their efforts to drive the school forward; they recognise the important role the school has within the local community and work relentlessly to achieve the greatest outcomes for the pupils. They have welcomed the opportunity to be part of the Emmaus Catholic Academy Trust and appreciate the opportunities this brings them including promoting the bishop's vision for the diocese. The relationship with the parish is thriving and is appreciated by all members of the school community and the parish priest; this is central to the Catholic life and mission of the school. Parents are welcomed into school and appreciate the support they are offered; they value the impact the school is having on their families. Leaders and governors are inspirational in their commitment, passion and drive to embody Catholic social teaching at every level. They should now use this strength to further develop a Catholic curriculum which reflects the richness of Catholic contributions to art and culture. Governors are fastidious in their commitment to the school; they bring experience, expertise and challenge whilst offering support and compassion to those who need it. They have worked closely with leaders to evaluate the provision rigorously and support leaders to provide high quality professional development in preparation for the new *Religious Education Directory*. Staff new to school, including Early Career Teachers are well supported.

## Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

### Religious education key judgement grade

#### Pupil outcomes

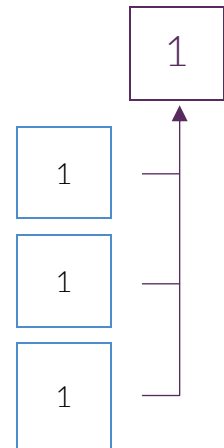
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

#### 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



Pupils make consistently good progress in knowing more and remembering more. They achieve well in religious education across school and there is a clear commitment to ensuring pupils with special educational needs and those who may be disadvantaged achieve well. As the school moves to a new curriculum in line with *Religious Education Directory*, they need to ensure the commitment to the same previous high outcomes under the previous scheme of work remains a priority. Pupils are religiously literate; they talk confidently and articulately, asking meaningful, incisive and often challenging questions. They are encouraged to think spiritually and reflectively, considering what their learning means to their daily lives. There is a robust commitment to developing religious vocabulary and therefore the pupils are confident in asking questions and being curious learners. Pupils clearly enjoy religious education and are motivated and enthusiastic about learning. They produce work of a very high standard and are rightly proud of their work. Behaviour in lessons is exemplary because of the pupils' engagement and enthusiasm for learning.

As a result of the commitment to professional development for staff, they are very confident in their subject knowledge and are committed to aiming for the highest possible standards in religious education; this has enabled them to introduce and embed a new curriculum with success. Questioning is a clear strength across the school, maximising learning for all pupils, and challenging them to think deeply about what they are learning. Teachers make direct links to prior learning and encourage pupils to think carefully about what they already know and consider opportunities to deepen their knowledge. There is evidence from the work on the previous curriculum of the commitment to providing children with a wide range of opportunities to present their ideas in different ways including art, role play, drama and debates; as they embed the new scheme of work across school, they should ensure this same ambition remains to ensure pupils remain engaged and enthusiastic about their learning.

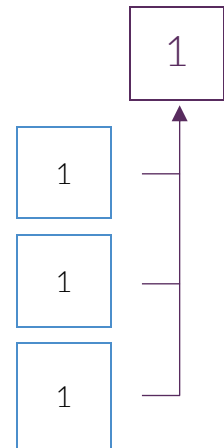
Leaders and governors are ambitious for high quality religious education, moving towards the new *Religious Education Directory* with commitment, enthusiasm and determination; they have carefully planned how this will be successfully implemented. They should now ensure that the new scheme of work is used imaginatively and creatively to continue to realise their high standards. Religious education is considered by all to be the 'core of the core subjects' and there is clear evidence of leaders' commitment to this in the professional development opportunities offered to all staff. The leadership team work closely together to improve teaching and learning resulting in teaching that is at least good. The chosen curriculum is sequential and matches closely to the *Religious Education Directory*. Leaders have worked with the diocese and leaders from other schools to ensure they share the same ambition for the highest quality religious education. They carefully consider different pupils, including those with special educational needs and how they can engage them in their learning. The joint approach to leading religious education has resulted in a holistic approach to teaching and learning, ensuring the successful implementation of a new curriculum.

## Collective worship

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

### Collective worship key judgement grade

<p>Pupil outcomes How well pupils participate in and respond to the school's collective worship</p>	1
<p>Provision The quality of collective worship provided by the school</p>	1
<p>Leadership How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for collective worship</p>	1



There is a clear commitment to prayer and liturgy across the school; pupils are reverent and respectful in their participation and sing with enthusiasm and passion. They demonstrate a clear understanding of the role prayer and liturgy has in school life and engage deeply in all opportunities. They understand the liturgical calendar and its role in the prayer life of the school across the year. Pupil leaders are skilled and enthusiastic in their roles, planning and leading in whole school and class Celebrations of the Word. A wide variety of opportunities are offered to the pupils including Mass, meditation and simple prayer sessions, both planned and spontaneous. They can talk with confidence about the impact scripture and prayer has on them individually as well for the wider community, considering the impact they can have on the world. They welcome opportunities for spontaneous prayer and reflection at different points during the day and across the year, linking what they have learnt from scripture to their own lives. They evaluate the quality of their prayer experiences and consider carefully what they would do to further develop them.

Prayer is central to the life of the school, but also the wider community; prayer groups have been established to provide opportunities for pupils to offer prayers for different reasons, and this is welcomed by pupils, parents, staff and governors. This has included bereavement groups as well as support for members of the school community who are experiencing adversity. There is a natural and embedded pattern of daily prayer which is known and understood by all. Scripture is at the heart of all opportunities and is known and understood well by the pupils. Staff are fully committed to the prayer life of school and support the pupils well in their ministries. Art and music are incorporated successfully into all opportunities, and this is welcomed by the pupils with enthusiasm. Space is utilised well in classrooms as well as displays around school which promote prayer and liturgy; pupils are proud of their prayer garden, and they, as well as governors are keen to develop these spaces even further both in school and in outdoor spaces.

There are strong links with the parish for Masses as well as opportunities for families to join prayer and liturgy events in school.

The policy is clear and provides guidance on leaders' expectations; it is being developed to reflect the new *Prayer and Liturgy Directory*, and leaders should use this to further develop their skill strategy across school which supports pupils to engage, participate and minister appropriately in all opportunities. There is a progressive expectation across school for participation and pupils appreciate the opportunities being offered by leaders. Pupils are increasingly confident across the school and welcome opportunities to further develop their own skills. There is a commitment to the liturgical calendar, and the school year is planned carefully around this with consideration given to providing opportunities for the wider school community, including families and the parish. This includes the opportunity for reconciliation during Lent for pupils across school and Masses to celebrate key dates in the liturgical year. Leaders and governors are committed to the centrality of prayer and liturgy in the school. through professional development, support for staff and resources to enhance opportunities.

## Information about the school

Full name of school	St Christopher's RC Primary School, a Voluntary Academy
School unique reference number (URN)	151363
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	3573326
Full postal address of the school	St Christopher's RC Primary School, a Voluntary Academy, St Christopher's Road, Ashton-under-Lyne, OL6 9DP
School phone number	0161 3305880
Headteacher	Ian Noone
Chair of local governing body	Gemma Grahame-Betts
School Website	<a href="http://www.st-christophers.tameside.sch.uk">www.st-christophers.tameside.sch.uk</a>
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company	Emmaus Catholic Academy Trust
Phase	Primary
Type of school	Academy converter
Admissions policy	Non-selective
Age-range of pupils	3-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	25 <sup>th</sup> May 2018
Previous denominational inspection grade	Good

## The inspection team

Sinead Colbeck  
Emma Graves

Lead  
Team

## Key to grade judgements

Grade	England	Wales
1	Outstanding	Excellent
2	Good	Good
3	Requires improvement	Adequate and requires improvement
4	Inadequate	Unsatisfactory and in need of urgent improvement

