



The Divine Mercy Catholic Primary School

URN: 135648

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Bishop of Salford

13–14 June 2024

Summary of key findings

Overall effectiveness

The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school

2

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

2

Collective worship (p.7)

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

2

The school is fully compliant with the curriculum requirements laid down by the Bishops' Conference

Yes

The school is fully compliant with all requirements of the diocesan bishop

Yes

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

Fully

What the school does well

- The Divine Mercy Catholic primary school is the beating heart of this diverse community.
- Across all areas of the inspection framework, leaders and governors have an ambitious vision for the school.
- The commitment of all staff to the school's Catholic life and mission is exceptional.
- At all times, the behaviour of pupils and their attitudes to learning in religious education are exemplary.
- The pastoral care of the whole school community is a strength and a priority of school leaders.

What the school needs to improve

- Provide wider opportunities for the school's chaplaincy provision to be experienced by the whole school community.

- Review policies for feedback within religious education so that all pupils have a clear understanding of how they need to improve.
- Ensure that opportunities are provided for all pupils to plan, lead and evaluate prayer and liturgy at an age-appropriate level.

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

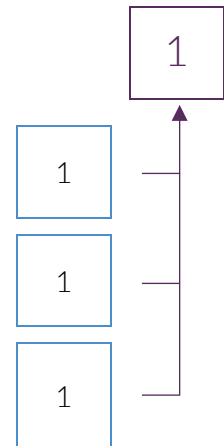
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

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 The Divine Mercy, regardless of their own personal faith, are rightly proud to belong to this very diverse and inclusive Catholic school. Pupils embrace the school's distinctive Catholic identity, and they have a keen sense of justice and responsibility. It is evident from conversations with pupils and from witnessing the interactions between staff and pupils, that pupils know that they are loved and valued, and that their voice is heard. Pupils are polite and kind to each other. Pupils are always shown respect by school staff and as a result, the respect that they have for themselves and for others is exemplary. Pupils readily take on responsibilities and leadership roles such as Student Leaders, Prayer and Liturgy Team, GIFT (Growing in Faith Together) Team, Laudato Si Eco Team and they can describe and demonstrate ways in which these roles impact others in a positive way. For instance, each day, pupils sell hand made goods brought back from Kenya by school staff in order to raise funds for Mission Possible and all proceeds made are used to buy essential goods to take back to Kenya. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school, and it is evident from parent questionnaires and from conversations with parents that they value the wealth of opportunities for their children to share their faith beyond the school, for instance through the locally renowned Sign Divine and Divine Voices Gospel choirs.

All staff at The Divine Mercy are exemplary role models for pupils and they fully embrace the school's distinctive Catholic ethos. The spirit of welcome they extend to all is thriving and tangible. Relationships, at all levels, are a strength of the school and a pleasure to witness. For instance, staff greet pupils individually by name each day on their way into school, and as one parent wrote, 'The Catholic ethos shines through the very start of each day with the welcome given by staff'. This culture of welcome evidences the school's commitment to the most vulnerable, and contributes to the knowledge that the school is a safe haven for all. As evidenced

by staff questionnaires and through conversations with staff, Catholic values are at the heart of everything the school does, so much so that this has become a 'lived experience'. Pastoral care, including the provision of the THRIVE programme, art therapy and a sensory room, is excellent. Staff go the extra mile to support the school's most vulnerable pupils and their families, meaning that pupils have the best chance to flourish. The school's provision for relationships, sex and health education is firmly rooted in the teaching of the Church and meets diocesan requirements. The school's provision for chaplaincy is strong but needs to be extended beyond the Prayer and Liturgy Team.

During the Inspection, it was universally acknowledged by all stakeholders, including pupils, that the recently appointed Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher provide transformational leadership. This can be evidenced by the pride in which pupils take on leadership roles and the rich wealth of experiences that are now on offer to pupils. Further examples include the comprehensive high quality staff training programme which is valued by staff, and the stunning indoor and outdoor environment. This has been enhanced by the artist in residence, and it truly celebrates the school's Catholic identity. As one staff member wrote, 'We have become a powerful Catholic family that can make a difference.' Leaders and governors know the school community extremely well and make every effort to involve families in the life of the school. Parish links are strong. Leaders and governors make staff wellbeing a high priority, and as a result, staff morale is high.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

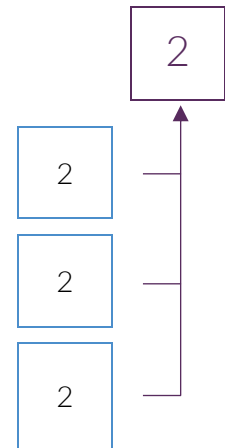
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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 say they enjoy their religious education lessons, thanks to the variety of tasks and activities on offer and they are developing a secure knowledge and understanding. One older pupil said that religious education, ‘strengthens our relationship with God’. Pupils make good progress from their varying starting points, and outcomes in religious education are improving. Lessons routinely begin with a recall activity, and this means that pupils are knowing more and remembering more. Pupils answer questions and ‘BIG’ questions with eagerness and confidence, and thanks to their positive relationships with adults, they are not afraid to have a go. Pupils are encouraged to ask ‘BIG’ questions for themselves, and this deepens their understanding. Pupils can work independently and with partners in lessons and are always on task. Their behaviour is exemplary, and this means that lessons move at a fast pace. Scripture is a regular feature of lessons and often a reflection time is included, which enhances pupils’ moral development. For instance, in a Year 2 lesson on The Good Samaritan, whilst setting up the reflection space, one of the pupils, without being prompted, searched for the relevant Catholic social teaching card showing ‘putting people most in need first’.

Staff have high expectations and make links to other subjects as well as to previous and future learning in religious education. This builds up the pupils’ knowledge, understanding and religious literacy. For instance, in a Year 1 lesson on All God’s Children, the teacher challenged some pupils to extend their answers by giving an example. One pupil answered, ‘We can be kind by showing respect and mercy’. Teachers have good subject knowledge and give clear explanations, thanks to the professional development on offer. Teachers adapt tasks where necessary for all pupils to achieve the objectives of the lesson. Well briefed teaching assistants support learning very well, including for those pupils with special educational needs. There is good consistency of teaching across the two classes in each year group, thanks to the school’s bespoke planning

document, written by school leaders, which is faithful to the *Religious Education Directory*. Teaching across the school is at least consistently good, although there are some inconsistencies in pupils' books in relation to feedback. This means that pupils do not always have a clear understanding of how they need to improve. The display in the dining hall shows the school's religious education curriculum provision and what skills the pupils are developing through it. This recognises the high value placed on the subject and puts the subject in a wider context.

Leaders and governors are ambitious for religious education and are forward looking and outward facing. The Deputy Headteacher, who is also the subject leader, has a clear vision for the subject. Together with the Headteacher, they are innovative and tireless in their pursuit of excellence in religious education, and have without doubt, made a positive impact on the subject since their appointment. As a result, there is a richness to the wider opportunities offered by the school, particularly in relation to learning about and from other faiths. Conversations with staff acknowledge the support from leaders and early careers teachers feel fully supported by their mentor. Governors have a wide range of skills and being frequent visitors to school, are in a good position to support and challenge the school. They carry out planned monitoring and evaluation activities alongside senior leaders. Leaders and governors have ensured that there is core parity with other core curriculum subjects. They have ensured that access to high quality national training is positively encouraged, in the hope of securing future Catholic leaders.

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

2

Provision

The quality of collective worship provided by the school

2

Leadership

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

2

2

Pupils engage well in and are responsive to the prayer and liturgy life of the school. They sing joyfully, pray with reverence and respect, and they recognise that other pupils pray in different ways, according to their personal faith. Those pupils who are not of the Catholic faith are invited to share in the wide range of experiences provided by the school. Contributions from the school's two choirs Sign Divine, which is a British Sign Language choir, and the Gospel choir Divine Voices, enhance gatherings in school and in the wider community. Pupils are very proud to have been chosen to be part of the Prayer and Liturgy and GIFT Teams, and they enjoy taking on the responsibilities that their role brings, such as setting up prayer foci in the chapel and planning and leading prayer sessions, with the support of adults. Members of the Prayer and Liturgy Team particularly enjoy leading prayer sessions with the younger pupils and the impact of this can be evidenced by a comment from a Year 1 pupil, as reported by the chaplain to the inspectors-in the meditative part of a session, the Team had selected heart shaped crystals for the younger pupils to hold. The Year 1 pupil commented, 'I can see Jesus in it. He's keeping his promises!' They told inspectors that they enjoy sharing with others the message that God loves us. Pupils are given many and varied opportunities to write their own prayers, and they do so willingly and with considerable skill. They know a range of traditional prayer by heart. As yet, those pupils who are not in leadership groups, do not have enough opportunities to plan, lead and evaluate prayer and liturgy at an age-appropriate level.

Across each week, there is a wide range of opportunities for pupils, staff and families to participate in prayer and liturgy, including Mass celebrated in school. 'Start the day in the best way (in prayer)' is known by all. This shows that prayer and liturgy are at the core of the school and central to its daily life. Pilgrimages play an increasingly significant part in the life of the school and some staff and pupils have been to Walsingham, with others planned to the sites of the

apparitions of Mary, which are the names of the House Teams. The school's chapel is a calm and peaceful setting which, along with the prayer garden, enhance the pupils' experiences. Beautiful, well thought out and cared for prayer stations around the school give pupils a moment to pause in their busy day and reflect on a variety of themes. The school engages extremely well with families and with the wider community and includes them in its prayer life. The school's newsletter makes reference to the liturgical year and includes appropriate prayers for families to pray at home. Weekly, year group assemblies are routinely very well attended by families. Links with the parishes are flourishing, and the local clergy are fully supportive of the school's work.

Over recent months, leaders and governors have invested significant funds in transforming the environment to reflect scripture references, as well as the charism of The Divine Mercy, including a beautiful display in the entrance hall with the school's mission statement prayer of 'Jesus, I Trust in You' written in the many languages spoken in the school. They also ensure that there is a full calendar of opportunities to celebrate Mass on holy days of obligation and on other significant days. Leaders have a clear understanding of a broad range of ways of praying and are exemplary role models for other staff.

Information about the school

Full name of school	The Divine Mercy Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	135648
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	3523507
Full postal address of the school	The Divine Mercy Catholic Primary School, 20 Blue Moon Way, Rusholme, Manchester, M14 7SH
School phone number	01616728660
Headteacher	Clare Campbell
Chair of Governors/Trustees	Eileen O'Sullivan
School Website	www.thedivinemercy.manchester.sch.uk/
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	N/A
Phase	Primary
Type of school	Voluntary Aided School
Admissions policy	N/A
Age-range of pupils	3-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	1 st March 2016
Previous denominational inspection grade	Outstanding

The inspection team

Julie Johnson	Lead
Sarah-Jane Carroll	Team
Patricia Peel	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