



St Mary's Catholic Primary School

URN: 105250

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Bishop of Salford

14–15 March 2024

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

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

2

What the school does well

- The Headteacher is enthusiastic, passionate, and relentless in her drive and ambition for the school.
- The leader for religious education has been strategic and systematic in rapidly developing and improving provision and outcomes.
- The training and support for staff to develop creativity is resulting in improved outcomes and increased enthusiasm and engagement in religious education.
- Pupils value the mission leadership opportunities and are proud of the impact they have in school and beyond.
- A commitment to building relationships at all levels and commitment to the mission has resulted in a joyful and happy community.

What the school needs to improve

- Further develop and embed high quality systems for collective worship, including pupil leadership and staff confidence.
- Continue to develop and improve curriculum provision in aligning with the new *Religious Education Directory* and promoting pupil engagement with scripture.
- Provide opportunities to recognise and celebrate the strength of provision with families, the wider community and beyond.

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. They understand the Catholic identity of the school and are keen to be part of opportunities planned and offered. They can articulate they are special, cared for and valued. Without exception, the children talked about feeling safe, happy, and secure. Whilst they recognise that sometimes people find things difficult, they know there are people who will help them overcome any challenges and are keen to help others as a result. The Laudato Si team talked with enthusiasm about their responsibilities towards the common home and are proud of their achievements in improving the school and helping the environment. The work the children do, not only during World Faith weeks but throughout the year has helped them develop respect for other faiths, religion and beliefs. Throughout the inspection, across school, behaviour of pupils was good. The mission leader groups have helped develop the school's chaplaincy provision and pupils are enthusiastic about the contribution they can make and the impact this has.

The mission statement is consistently borne out across school; it is well known by all and has a significant impact on the life of the school. Pupils and staff talk with confidence about the mission of the school with pupils stating confidently, "we follow in Jesus' footsteps". Through opportunities such as regular visits to Mass, child-led liturgies, and 'Stay, Pray and Learn' sessions, the wider community is embraced in the school mission. The school is a supportive and joyful community, overwhelmingly positive in all interactions. There is a clear spirit of welcome for all which is evidenced in visitors' books, feedback from parents after assemblies, speaking with parents and through the surveys. Staff love and care for all pupils. They are committed to making a difference to children's lives. There is the highest level of pastoral support

for the most vulnerable. The physical environment has been well developed over recent years to enhance and celebrate the Catholic identity of the school. Pupils talk warmly about the impact this has had on them. There is a wide range of opportunities for pupils to participate in chaplaincy through the mission teams, including school council, Laudato Si Team, GIFT (Growing in Faith Together) Team, Caritas ambassadors and many more. The GIFT team said they “want to get closer to God, to live out the mission Statement and do it in Jesus’ way”. Through the comprehensive development of *Life to the Full*, introduced in 2022, the provision for relationships, sex and health education meets both statutory and diocesan requirements. The children can talk about what they have learnt and the impact this has on them.

The headteacher, supported by her senior leadership team and the governors, has ensured that Christ is at the centre of everything. Her inspirational leadership, enthusiasm and relentless ambition has ensured the mission of the school is fully embraced and understood by all. Governors are equally ambitious and keen for the school to be recognised for the special place it is. They are committed and fastidious in their ambition whilst supporting and encouraging the headteacher to fulfil her mission. The school is very well supported by the parish priest with strengthening links being developed, including parishioners supporting classes to visit Mass, the sacramental programme and parishioners becoming prayer sponsors. The school have worked closely with the Diocese to develop and improve provision in school with comprehensive professional development which has empowered leaders at all levels. Leaders have developed relationships with parents recognising their importance in their child’s life. Children are proud to share their experiences with parents when they attend school. Staff talk enthusiastically and openly about the support they have received from senior leaders, particularly during times of challenge. There is a clear commitment to staff wellbeing and development. The self-evaluation has been very carefully considered and developed. Leaders and governors know their school well and are committed to developing it further with clear evidence of their impact since the last inspection.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

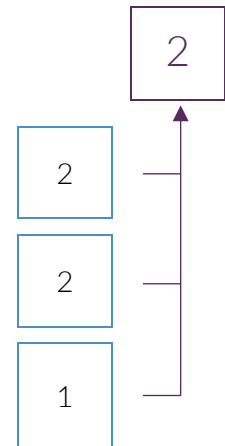
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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 are developing secure knowledge, understanding and skills. There is clear commitment to knowing more and remembering more which is having an impact on the progress and attainment across school for all children, including special educational needs and/ or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils. Pupils are articulate, confident, and enthusiastic to talk about what they know and understand. Their religious literacy is promoted and recognised consistently. The introduction and development of knowledge organisers, check in and check out tasks and reflection opportunities at the end of each unit has resulted in pupils being confident about what they have learnt. During the inspection, pupils were observed to work independently and with enthusiasm across the school. They are keen to learn more and talk about their experiences. They are proud to present their work to highest standard. Behaviour in lessons was observed to be good and children talked confidently about their enjoyment of different topics they have studied. They have a good understanding of their achievements and know what they need to do next. Standards in religious education are at least as good as those in other core subjects, sometimes better. To further develop and improve this, they should promote independence and curiosity to deepen learning for all pupils including those with special educational needs, consistently encouraging all pupils to have a clear understanding of what they have already learnt and what they need to do to improve.

As a result of high-quality professional development and a commitment to improving standards, teachers are confident in what the children need to be taught and how this should be presented. They have high expectations and are ambitious for the children. Children's achievements are valued, recognised, and celebrated across school. Through the use of assessment tasks and comprehensive monitoring, planning is carefully linked to pupils' current assessments to ensure

they learn well and build on their prior learning. Since the last inspection, staff have worked tirelessly to explore and develop different ways of presenting work. There are high quality and meaningful tasks provided for children to present their work and ideas in different ways, including art, hymns, poetry, letters, drama, and sustained writing opportunities. Resources used are of the highest quality and there has been a commitment to raising the profile of religious education across school. Without exception, pupils and staff recognised the improvements in religious education over recent years. Pupils talked about enjoying learning about other faiths as well as their own and being given more opportunities to be creative when sharing their own ideas. To be outstanding, they should ensure all teachers have consistently high expectations and pupils in all classes are provided with relevant and specific feedback to ensure they know what they need to do to make progress.

The subject leader, supported well by the headteacher, is ambitious and determined to ensure religious education is of the highest quality. She has worked hard to ensure there are rigorous systems for monitoring and evaluating the quality of provision. She understands the context in which she is working and has planned professional development and support to address any needs. There is clear support planned for staff new to the school which results in consistent ambition for the highest standards. This has resulted in improved standards and provision, as well as raising the profile of religious education across school. The curriculum has been carefully considered and adapted to meet the needs of the pupils in school with support provided to staff to ensure this is relevant and meaningful to their classes. Throughout the inspection there was clear evidence of adaptive teaching, including the deployment of support staff, visual prompts, and widget resources to help pupils access the learning. The use of triads in empowering staff to reflect on and develop their own practice as well as supporting one another has rapidly improved provision across school. The effectiveness of this has been recognised and appreciated by staff resulting in this best practice being used in other areas of the curriculum. Governors and leaders have been rigorous in monitoring the improvements in school and this has resulted in strategic action and planning to promote ambition for outstanding outcomes.

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

Children respond well to all experiences of prayer and liturgy. They were observed to participate fully, reflecting in silence, and joining in with responses and prayers. They enjoy singing at different times and there are carefully planned links to the liturgical year. There is a clear commitment to and use of scripture across school. There are a range of opportunities provided for children including pupil led class worship, GIFT team and chapel time. Pupils work well with others and are enthusiastic about taking responsibility and being involved in ministries, such as leading prayer, adding to prayer stations, reading scripture, and giving others a mission to take forth. There is a commitment to reflecting on and evaluating their prayer times and can talk about when these experiences have led to action. They talked confidently about the prayer life of the school and the impact it has on the behaviour of others around school. The development of outdoor prayer spaces, including a prayer garden, a sensory garden and Miss. Honey's Garden offer outdoor opportunities for prayer which is appreciated and valued by the children. To further develop this, pupils should be provided with further opportunities to work collaboratively and creativity to prepare creative prayerful opportunities across school, building on the foundation they have been provided over recent years. They should be given opportunities to reflect on the impact this has on them within school and beyond.

Prayer and liturgy are central to the life of the school and there is a clear pattern and routine to worship with children showing reverence from an early age. There is progression of prayer document which has been developed by leaders ensuring there is a daily pattern of prayer which is rich in tradition. Seasonally appropriate scripture passages are used to support children's understanding of the liturgical calendar. Staff are models of good practice. They have valued the professional development offered resulting in them being more confident in supporting pupils

to prepare prayer and liturgy. The commitment to this during staff training opportunities has ensured there is a consistent approach to developing prayer and liturgy across school. Use of creative opportunities have enhanced experiences for pupils across the school. During the inspection, the Caritas team enjoyed sharing the school prayer, singing with enthusiasm and confidence. Skills of staff in school have been used to enhance the prayer life of the building which is appreciated and valued by the children. Families are welcomed warmly to share prayerful opportunities and many parents spoke enthusiastically about this. To be outstanding they should build on the creative skill and expertise of pupils and staff to increase confidence and independence in broadening opportunities within school and beyond. They should build on the flourishing partnership with the parish to enable pupils and families to increasingly participate fully in the liturgy.

Leaders including governors have committed to developing and improving the prayer life of school over recent years through resourcing, staff development and enhancements within the school. The skill strategy has been well developed by senior leaders and is known and understood by staff. There is a clear timetable for celebrating the sacraments, holy days of obligation and other significant days. Leaders have ensured there are regular opportunities for professional development which staff spoke enthusiastically about, including individual support for those new to school as well as ensuring training days start with a carefully planned liturgy and all meetings start with prayers. Pupil leadership has been well developed and opportunities for pupils to lead prayer across school are welcomed and appreciated. There are regular reviews of provision through leader and governors' monitoring activities, and this is having an impact in improving provision and outcomes. Pupil groups all talked confidently about having the opportunity to share their ideas and plans with school leaders. Leaders have planned opportunities for pupils to celebrate Mass in the parish church, developing relationships with parishioners who volunteer to support these visits. Having developed the progression in prayer, leaders and governors should ensure this is well embedded across school and pupils and staff are equipped with the skills and resources to provide opportunities that are engaging, meaningful and relevant to the whole community. They should continue, as a team, to reflect on and evaluate their provision as it is embedded across school, ensuring all stakeholders are an integral and valued part of the developments.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Mary's Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	105250
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	3503367
Full postal address of the school	St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Victoria Road, Horwich, St Mary's RC Primary School, Horwich, Bolton, BL6 6EP
School phone number	01204333625
Headteacher	Dominique Hayes
Chair of Governors	Elizabeth Gillies
School Website	www.st-marys-horwich.bolton.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	5-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	28 th November 2019
Previous denominational inspection grade	Requires Improvement

The inspection team

Sinead Colbeck	Lead
Joanne Butterworth	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

