



Our Lady of Mount Carmel Roman Catholic Primary School

URN: 131285

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Bishop of Salford

15–16 October 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 fully compliant with the general norms for religious education laid down by the Bishops' Conference.
- There are no additional requirements for primary schools in the Diocese of Salford.
- The school has fully responded to the areas for improvement in the last inspection.

What the school does well

- Children take a leading and proactive role in responding to the demands of Catholic social teaching.
- Leaders and governors are inspirational witnesses who act as fastidious guardians of the Catholic life and mission of the school, ensuring Christ is always at the heart of the community.
- The school provides exceptional, integrated provision for the holistic flourishing of the whole child.
- Children are developing excellent knowledge, understanding, and skills in both religious education and prayer and liturgy, which directly supports their capacity to engage deeply.
- Visibly strong relationships between children, staff, and stakeholders at all levels has created a culture of trust, collaboration and shared responsibility which directly enhances the children's learning, wellbeing and sense of belonging.

What the school needs to improve

- Increase opportunities for celebration of the word to take place consistently in areas beyond the classroom or chapel, utilising the forest school, peace garden, and outdoor classroom spaces to provide creative and varied experiences.
- To enhance opportunities to increase creativity in the teaching of religious education as the new scheme becomes embedded.

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 children 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

Children understand and deeply embrace the distinctive Catholic identity and mission of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, actively contributing to its life and significantly enhancing its mission. They confidently articulate the school mission: of 'Enjoy, Excel and Grow in God's Family'. A culture of deep respect and mutual regard is clearly evident among all relationships and children flourish as they seek opportunities to grow in virtue and gladly embrace their personal responsibility to serve those in need. Children take a leading and proactive role in responding to the demands of Catholic social teaching. This high commitment is witnessed through initiatives, such as the Laudato Si' Ambassadors creating thermal blankets from recycled crisp packets for the homeless. Crucially, they are able to clearly articulate the impact of their actions. Children show a deep respect for others, confidently articulating the, 'golden rule: to treat others as you want to be treated.' They highly value the school's chaplaincy provision and willingly taking leadership roles within it, the growing in faith together (GIFT) team proudly sharing their motto 'if you help someone, they will help you back. If you treat people how you want to be treated, they will treat you well.' Feedback from children confirms strong enjoyment and pride in contributing to the school's Catholic mission.

The quality of provision for Catholic life and mission is excellent. The mission statement is a clear and inspiring expression of the Church's mission, deeply rooted in the Word of God and witnessed to throughout the school. Staff commitment is exceptional; they enthusiastically participate in and contribute to the Catholic life and consistently act as exemplary role models. Staff morale is exceptionally high, evidenced by one staff member stating, 'We really are a family here'. Pastoral care for children is of the highest levels, with an explicit and concrete commitment to the most vulnerable members of the community. This commitment is shown through highly

effective provision such as the rainbow room, bespoke therapies and the therapeutic support offered by Peggy, the dog. This robust provision ensures that everyone is welcomed in a spirit of generous hospitality. This embedded culture of welcome means that the school celebrates the presence of those from various cultures and belief traditions. The physical environment effectively witnesses to its Catholic identity, mission, and charism through signage and frequently updated displays reflecting the liturgical season. Significantly, the school chapel serves as a sacred, inclusive space cherished by all. Provision for relationships, sex, and health education is carefully planned to fully meet diocesan requirements and is firmly rooted in church teaching.

Guided by the inspirational leadership of the dedicated headteacher, leaders and governors are witnesses to the Gospel and act as fastidious guardians of the Catholic life and mission, ensuring Christ is always at the heart of the community. They embody the Church's preferential option for the poor by ensuring that resources are effectively targeted at those in greatest need, both materially and educationally. The school provides direct support to families, including providing essential clothing, household essentials and support with funding educational visits. All policies and procedures clearly reflect the priority given to the Catholic identity, charism, and mission of the school. Governors are highly ambitious for the Catholic life and mission and are actively involved in its evaluation, offering challenge as well as support where necessary. The leadership possesses accurate self-knowledge, evidenced by their rigorous self-evaluation, which demonstrates effective analysis and honest self-challenge. This leads to strategic action and well-targeted planning. Leaders and governors have developed structures that provide the highest levels of pastoral care for staff and children. Staff acknowledge that well-being and workload are stated as a 'top priority' for staff. Leaders are deeply committed to supporting new staff through effective induction programmes, ensuring they are inspired to participate actively in the Catholic life.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

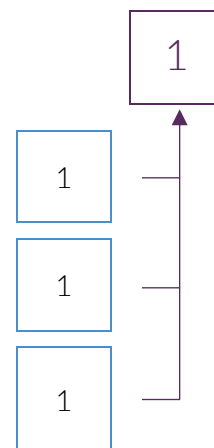
How well children achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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 demonstrate an excellent, growing knowledge and skills base that exemplifies the learning required by the *Religious Education Directory*. Data consistently shows that children make consistently good progress in religious education by knowing more, remembering more, and doing more across all groups, including disadvantaged children and those with special educational needs and disabilities. Attainment is above average compared to other core curriculum subjects. Children, relative to their age and capacity, are religiously literate; they effectively use their knowledge to reflect spiritually and think ethically and theologically. For example, in Year 4, when asked to consider the abstract concept of being 'made in God's image', one child articulately responded it meant: 'We can be kind & caring, trustworthy, honest & polite; unique'. Children can speak fluently and confidently about what they have learned, asking incisive questions that indicate curiosity and a desire to deepen learning. In a Year 5 lesson focused on Creation and Covenant, children could clearly explain why they categorised statements under 'love of God' or 'love of neighbour', demonstrating deep conceptual understanding. Children produce work of a consistently high quality with equal importance placed on presentation as in other subjects. They approach lessons with great interest, passion, and enthusiasm, leading to outstanding behaviour and sustained engagement, even in extended periods without adult direction.

The quality of teaching, learning, and assessment is of a high standard in the majority of classes. Teachers demonstrate a high level of confidence based on authentic subject knowledge and teaching expertise. They communicate high expectations effectively, inspiring children. Planning is linked precisely to children's current assessment and their knowledge of the individual, ensuring lessons consolidate and extend children's knowledge and understanding so they learn extremely well. Teachers use questioning skilfully during lessons to identify precisely where

children are in their understanding and to further develop children's thinking. Teachers have a solid understanding of the impact religious education has on moral and spiritual development. They deliberately ensure that space and time are consistently used for purposeful reflection in lessons. For instance, a Year 2 lesson began with a 'sacred silence' to reflect on a symbol of hope. High-quality resources, including the *Lighting the Path* scheme, Diocesan pilot materials, and knowledge mats, are utilised very effectively to provide extensive opportunities tailored to meet the differing needs of all children. Celebration of effort is clearly evident, leading to high levels of motivation from children. Teachers provide relevant and specific feedback which ensures that all children clearly understand what they need to do to make progress in their learning.

Leaders and governors effectively promote, monitor, and evaluate provision in religious education. They ensure the school curriculum is a faithful expression of the *Religious Education Directory*. Leaders ensure full parity for religious education, evidenced by allocating at least 10% of curriculum time in all year groups. The relatively new subject leader has an inspiring vision of outstanding teaching and learning. Staff benefit from the subject leader's supportive monitoring and coaching, ensuring teaching remains consistently good. Leaders prioritise securing regular, high-quality professional development in religious education for all practitioners, drawing on diocesan resources and external expertise. The systematic implementation of the diocesan endorsed curriculum, *Lighting the Path* and the diocesan pilot resources, ensures that content is introduced sequentially and progressively. Leaders ensure that religious education is imaginatively and thoughtfully planned to meet the needs of different groups of children. Leaders' and governors' self-evaluation is derived from a range of monitoring sources and is a true reflection. This rigour results in strategic action and well-targeted planning, notably addressing the need to further challenge the most able children and integrate cross-curricular links for Catholic social teaching. Excellent links are forged with other appropriate agencies and the wider community to provide a wide range of enrichment activities, such as forest school, that promote children's learning and engagement.

Collective worship

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

Collective worship key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

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

1

Provision

The quality of collective worship provided by the school

1

Leadership

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

1

1

Children engage in liturgy fully demonstrated by their response to scripture, participation in prayers and enthusiastic communal singing. Children demonstrate this depth through attentiveness, quality of prayerful silence, and confidently recalling school prayers. They work collaboratively with others, including the GIFT Team, to prepare creative and well-constructed experiences. Children lead and participate in worship, collaboratively undertaking liturgical ministries—such as planning elements of collective worship and leading the celebration of the word—with developing skill and confidence; this spiritual literacy enables them to articulate the connections between their prayer life and how it shapes the curriculum and the life of the school community. The GIFT Team led a Rosary reflection with parents attending, which was described as 'Simply beautiful!'. Children readily reflect on their experience of prayer and liturgy with confidence and in detail. For example, in a reflection focused on the week's Gospel, children offered spontaneous 'thank you' prayers, including: 'Thank you for Peggy' (the school dog). In a Year 3 celebration of the word, children were fully engaged and participated in prayers. In upper Key Stage 2, children reflected on their experiences of prayer and liturgy with a growing confidence and detail. Leaders plan to disseminate this further through a progression of skills, across all year groups.

A daily pattern of prayer that reflects the rhythm of the prayer life of the Church is central to the school. Our Lady of Mount Carmel have dedicated a lot of time and resources into creating beautiful prayer spaces which enrich the opportunities provided for the children. At the heart of the school is the chapel that is cherished by all serving as a dedicated and inclusive space regularly used by the community. A rich variety of resources are provided across the school to enhance environments for prayer and liturgy, creating opportunities for this to be developed outside the classroom would further develop this. Scripture readings are the foundation of all

prayerful gatherings, they are well chosen, and they enable all to fully participate. Staff at all levels were visibly engaged in both leading and participating in celebrations of the word setting an excellent example to children and staff, often beginning staff briefings with prayer or reflection. Children are supported by staff in planning and delivering thought provoking celebrations of the word. The school works hard to secure a flourishing partnership with the local parish and families to help children participate more fully in worship, exemplified by inviting parents to reflections throughout the year.

Leaders and governors ensure inspiring promotion, monitoring, and evaluation of collective worship. The well written school policy on prayer and liturgy provides a useful tool for relevant staff to refer to. Leaders have a clear knowledge of the varying levels and skills dependent on the age and ability of the children. This is evidenced by the progression of skills and participation through the year groups. High priority is given to appropriate professional development around the planning of prayer and liturgy. Leaders have a thorough understanding of Catholic prayer and liturgical sources, leaders work together to provide engaging, high-quality, and accessible worship for the whole community. Resources are of a high quality enhancing the experience of prayer and liturgy. Leaders and governors, embed the process in the school's annual review cycle, with pupil voice being an integral and valued part of the evaluation.

Information about the school

Full name of school	Our Lady of Mount Carmel Roman Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	131285
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	3573331
Full postal address of the school	Holden Street, Ashton-Under-Lyne, Lancashire, OL6 9JJ
School phone number	0161 3309521
Executive headteacher	N/A
Headteacher	Mrs Helen Hayes
Chair of Governors	Mrs Liz Aspin
School Website	www.ourladys.tameside.sch.uk/
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	N/A
Phase	Primary
Type of school	Voluntary Aided School
Admissions policy	Non-selective
Age-range of children	3-11
Gender of children	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	23 January 2018
Previous denominational inspection grade	Outstanding

The inspection team

Jane Myerscough
Danielle Ellison

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