



# St Mary's Roman Catholic Primary School

URN: 105957

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Bishop of Salford

20–21 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

2

#### 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

2

## Compliance statement

- The school meets the 10% teaching compliance status in relation to the general norms for religious education laid down by the Bishops' conference.
- There are currently no additional compliance requirements for primary schools in the Diocese of Salford.
- The school has met the one area for improvement from the previous inspection.

## What the school does well

1. The school epitomises a welcoming Catholic environment. There is a culture of welcome through a caring and nurturing environment where everyone, including new staff, visitors and families feel valued.
2. Pupils, staff and governors truly understand and live out the mission statement of their school: God is love and He loves us as we are.
3. Teachers have secure levels of subject knowledge and use effective questioning to draw on prior learning enabling the children to make at least expected progress.
4. Prayer and Liturgy is truly central to school life providing pupils and staff with meaningful opportunities to reflect and pray together.
5. There are a range of opportunities provided for children to lead the prayer life of the school in creative and innovative ways which leads to high levels of engagement.

## What the school needs to improve

1. To adapt the new religious education curriculum, including the development of assessment, so pupils continue to make at least expected progress.
2. Ensure that pupil-led celebrations and ministries (e.g. Gospel reading) become a regular and embedded feature of school celebration of the word, with a broad proportion of pupils confidently participating in ministry roles.

## 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**

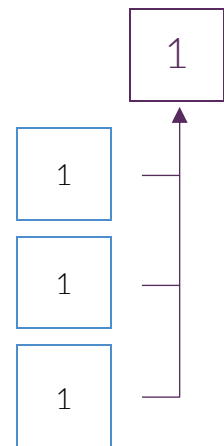
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

**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



This joyful community demonstrates a strong Catholic identity where every person is valued and committed to the school's mission of 'God is love and He loves us as we are.' All stakeholders can clearly articulate how they are cared for as unique people in God's family with one parent stating that staff, 'lay excellent foundations for the pupils' and 'make a real difference' to the lives of all.' Through well-planned Caritas days, pupils are beginning to understand the demands of Catholic social teaching and have a genuine passion for making a difference. Pupils at St Mary's show a deep respect for others with one adult noting that, 'pupils love celebrating each other's achievements' in weekly assemblies. This respect is evident in the Growing in Faith Together (GIFT) team who lead by example in everything they do. They talk confidently and openly about the difference they can make and value it highly. Pupils in this group love contributing towards events to help others in the community such as; help for the homeless through donating items.

The provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school is outstanding. This is because the mission statement is known by all and therefore impacts greatly on all pupils. Older pupils genuinely enjoy supporting others of all ages at St Mary's. Pupils clearly know they are missionaries and understand the role they have in today's society in order to make a difference in the future. For example, the Guardian Angels team help others at break and lunchtime which they see as an opportunity to 'spread God's love' and, 'get to know new children in our school'. In addition, staff fully embrace the mission and apply it in all they do from their teaching to being actively involved in charity events with Christ being at the heart of all they do. Everyone is welcomed at St Mary's. This is witnessed in the quality of all relationships across school with one adult stating, 'St Mary's is an amazing school, where everyone - children and adults alike - are valued and respected'. Due to this culture of welcome, everyone is included and the school

celebrates all faiths and cultures. There is a 'genuine care' for all, and staff act as exemplary role models through their relationships with pupils and the wider school community. All staff provide the highest levels of pastoral care and there is a commitment to support all pupils, in particular those who are the most vulnerable. Systems such as, 'I wish my teacher knew...' help pupils engage with staff in non-verbal ways. The physical environment effectively witnesses clear Catholic character enabling pupils to know their clear mission. Coincide this with the chaplaincy provision which allows every member of St Mary's to flourish with dignity. The provision for relationships, sex and health education (RSHE) is planned in line with the teaching of the church and most pupils are able to articulate this clearly.

Leaders at all levels at St Mary's articulate the Church's educational mission clearly, ensuring pupils develop values and morals inspired by Jesus. The headteacher's dedicated and humble leadership has fostered a school highly respected by all. Leaders' strong commitment to Catholic social teaching is evident, making the mission a top priority in all they do. This commitment is reflected in the professional development of new staff, who gain a deep understanding of the school's mission. St Mary's values its partnership with the parish priest, who plays a vital role in supporting and enriching the local community in challenging circumstances. Parents express feelings of love, understanding, and a strong sense of family within the school. Staff feel their dignity is respected at all times and experience robust support from leadership, including access to high-quality continuing professional development. Overall, the school embodies a welcoming, supportive community rooted in Catholic tradition, where the mission is lived and witnessed daily by staff and pupils alike.

## Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

### Religious education key judgement grade

#### Pupil outcomes

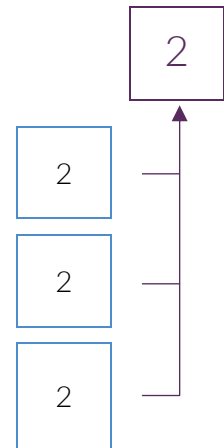
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

#### 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 at St Mary's are developing a secure and growing knowledge, understanding and application of the *Religious Education Directory*. They engage confidently with the clear lesson structures and actively embrace the use of scripture to deepen their learning. For example, new knowledge of the Old Testament in a Key Stage 2 lesson. Pupils have a clear awareness of their progress, reflecting the school's effective marking and feedback policy. Across all year groups, pupils demonstrate care in their work, particularly through a strong emphasis on religious literacy. They are beginning to think more critically about the selection of scripture, showing a readiness to enhance their knowledge and skills further. To build on this strength, pupils would benefit from increased opportunities to ask and respond to thought-provoking questions, fostering their natural curiosity. Pupils enjoy their religious education lessons, participating with interest and contributing well to discussions, which supports excellent behaviour. For example, a lesson in the early years, demonstrated a high level of engagement due to the adaptations and risks taken by staff and the adult to child interactions being very strong. Pupils produced work of high quality with signs of emerging creativity and individuality. To progress further, more evidence of this is needed. Attainment in religious education is comparable to other core subjects and higher in some year groups. Pupils understand their achievements clearly through regular, constructive verbal feedback from teachers.

Teachers are confident in their subject knowledge depending on the phases they are teaching and progress is developing well with the new scheme of learning in place for religious education. All staff create a positive atmosphere for learning at St Mary's with pupils being encouraged to support and help each other. The staff have high expectations of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and disabilities. Learning is always celebrated, as witnessed in a weekly assembly, and provides good levels of motivation for the pupils to

make further progress. Where questioning is more effective, teachers heavily structure this to enable thought-provoking ideas and allow children time to engage and debate with each other. For older pupils, presenting their learning in a variety of forms would benefit them giving a deeper level of understanding. Staff and parents recognise the impact religious education has on the spiritual development of people. For example, one parent stated the, 'fantastic learning environment for my children...develops them mentally, physically, and spiritually.' Teachers provide opportunities for most pupils to learn effectively, which was evident in most lessons and books.

Leaders ensure that the school curriculum for religious education is a faithful expression of the *Religious Education Directory*. It is given at least the same core parity as other core curriculum subjects and St Mary's have implemented successful training on the new scheme for all staff. The religious education subject leader has a clear vision for the teaching and learning of the subject and is enthusiastic in his role. He attends diocesan training and has a clear vision of provision and aspirational development for the outcomes of all pupils. He is effectively supported by all leaders, most noticeably, the relatively new senior leadership team, in continuing to drive the progress of the subject forward. For example, he worked alongside the headteacher in the development of the new self-evaluation document. This was supported by the governing board. In addition, the parish priest, who stated, 'this is a school of joy', visits school for Mass, and loves hearing the development of pupils' knowledge and skills through their religious education learning. To develop further, leaders, including governors, should carefully monitor the adaptations of the subject to enhance opportunities for all pupils with the new scheme in its infancy.

## 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

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

The experience of prayer and liturgy at St Mary's provides its pupils with deep and meaningful opportunities to explore their moral and spiritual identities. Pupils engage in a variety of prayer where it is clear they, 'love to sing' as mentioned by several adults across the community. They have strategically planned opportunities to build up their ministries throughout the year groups. For example, in a Key Stage 2 worship, pupils confidently reflected in silence whereas Key Stage 1 have shorter periods of silence and learn how to set up the altar. Through these experiences, pupils understand how to reflect upon their immersion in prayer and liturgy and turn this into action. This now translates to the home where pupils confidently take scripture home to prepare for worship in school. Most pupils have evaluated the quality of prayer and liturgy so that they improve next time in order to deepen the impact. This is evident in class prayer books. Pupil leaders, across different groups, can confidently articulate how they are influenced by prayer in age-appropriate ways. For example, the GIFT team spoke of the impact a recent visit to Wardley Hall has had on them and how they were called and inspired to speak to staff in school on their ideas for the local community.

As witnessed in a school assembly, prayer forms the clear focus for St Mary's. Constant moments of joy are witnessed across the community with prayer where pupils, staff and parents all contribute. Prayer is naturally embedded and all pupils spoken to confirmed the balance between daily patterns of prayer and increasing opportunities for innovative prayer. Well-chosen scripture for their 'Celebration of the Word' in keeping with the liturgical year, offers pupils opportunities to reflect on the word of God and link to modern day life. Staff are excellent and inspiring examples to all pupils with prayer. For example, in a Key Stage 2 celebration, staff used Jesus' warmth as a message for all pupils to relate to. Staff have successfully coached pupils to plan and deliver worship more independently. More opportunities are being given to think

creatively in prayer. For example, praying through paint. More use of the creativity in the form of space, inside and outside the building, would further enhance this. Staff work with families to enhance prayer and the parish priest commented how well the pupils at St Mary's are prepared by staff for fully participating in liturgy.

Leadership of prayer, at all levels, demonstrates the highest level of importance and there is a clear progressive plan in place which demonstrates the expectations of prayer moving up the school. The views of pupils, parents and staff are regularly sought with one parent stating, 'the school offers lots of opportunities for prayer for both the children and their families'. The ambitious headteacher leads prayer, 'with warmth, faith and heart' and is the example for all. These examples demonstrate how integrated the prayer life is at St Mary's and this is due to the strong leadership in this area. The school is meticulous in their planning of prayer life across the year including holy days of obligation and plays a strong role in supporting the church. The continuous cycle of self-evaluation has been integral to the development in this area alongside budgeting and resourcing areas in school such as the outdoor chapel. To develop further, leaders, at all levels, need to continue to develop the work already undertaken by many pupils to increase the number of pupils taking ministries, such as reading the Gospel, with increased confidence.

## Information about the school

Full name of school	St Mary's Roman Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	105957
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	3553521
Full postal address of the school	Milner Street, Swinton, Manchester, M27 4AS
School phone number	01617944028
Headteacher	Suzanne Brown
Head of school	N/A
Chair of governors	Alison Stones
School Website	<a href="http://www.stmarys-swinton.co.uk">http://www.stmarys-swinton.co.uk</a>
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 pupils	3-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	8 <sup>th</sup> May 2018
Previous denominational inspection grade	Outstanding

## The inspection team

Matt Lawrence  
Dave Proctor

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