



CATHOLIC SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

THE NATIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE INSPECTION OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS, COLLEGES AND ACADEMIES



St Mark's RC Primary School

URN: 105956

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Bishop of Salford

25 February 2026 – 26 February 2026

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

Religious education (p.5)

The quality of curriculum religious education RE

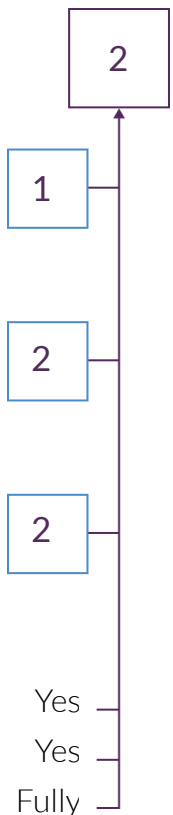
Collective worship (p.7)

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

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

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

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



Compliance Statement

- The school has responded appropriately to the areas for improvement identified in the previous inspection and has made clear progress in addressing these, although some developments are still in the process of being fully embedded.

What the school does well

- The Catholic identity of the school is clearly evident and deeply embedded. Pupils, staff and parents articulate a strong sense of belonging, forgiveness, dignity and welcome. The mission is reflected consistently in relationships, behaviour and decision-making.
- Pupils demonstrate a strong understanding of Gospel values. Their behaviour reflects reconciliation, compassion and inclusion. Opportunities through chaplaincy, parish engagement and pupil leadership enable pupils to participate actively in the lived mission of the school.
- The partnership between the parish and the school is strong and well established. Regular sacramental preparation, liturgical celebration and priest involvement make a significant contribution to the Catholic life and mission of the school.
- Leaders demonstrate clear self-evaluation and strategic oversight of Catholic life and religious education. Monitoring is systematic and there is a clear trajectory for development, particularly through the implementation of the Religious Education Directory.
- Prayer and liturgy are structured, reverent and well understood by pupils. Pupils recognise the pattern of 'gather, word, respond and mission' and participate respectfully and meaningfully in celebrations of the word.

What the school needs to improve

- Ensure that teaching across all phases enables pupils to articulate the theological meaning of scripture, doctrine and Catholic Social Teaching, so that pupils routinely move beyond moral description to age-appropriate theological explanation.
- Ensure assessment and moderation processes in religious education are applied consistently across all phases, including moderation within and across year groups so that teacher judgements are accurate and comparable.
- Ensure that pupils across all key stages plan, lead and evaluate prayer and liturgy with increasing independence, including explaining the theological meaning of scripture used and reflecting on the impact of worship.

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

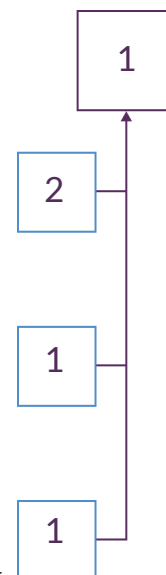
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

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 contribute positively to the Catholic life and mission of the school and demonstrate a secure understanding of Gospel values. During discussions, pupils explained that every person matters because 'God made everybody', and that they are called to show kindness and respect to others. Relationships across the school reflect these values. Pupils recognise the importance of forgiveness and reconciliation and understand that mistakes are opportunities to rebuild relationships. Behaviour observed during the inspection was calm and respectful, and pupils show care and consideration for one another. Pupils also demonstrate awareness of service to others and understand that Catholic teaching calls them to support those in need. In discussions about Catholic social teaching, pupils explained that it involves 'helping other people when they need it most,' referring to charitable activities supported by the school. Parents recognise the positive influence of the school's Catholic ethos. One parent commented that their child 'often tells us excitedly about what he has learnt about God, Jesus and His teachings', demonstrating that learning continues beyond the classroom. These experiences show that pupils benefit from the Catholic life of the school and are developing an understanding of faith, service and community. While this impact is strong and clearly evident across the school, it is not yet consistent across all areas of pupils' articulation and understanding of Catholic teaching.

Provision for Catholic life and mission is outstanding and forms a clear and visible foundation for the identity of the school. Catholic values shape daily life and are reflected in relationships, routines and expectations across the community. Prayer and reflection are embedded within the rhythm of the school day and provide regular opportunities for pupils to encounter

scripture and deepen their relationship with God. The environment reflects the liturgical year and supports pupils' understanding of the Church's traditions. Pupils participate regularly in prayer and liturgy and understand the significance of these moments within school life. Families recognise the importance of these experiences. Parents commented positively on opportunities to participate in Mass and celebrations, explaining that the school community encourages parents to join Mass. Pupils also benefit from opportunities to attend Mass at the parish church, enabling them to experience the wider life of the church. Lived formation contributes to pupils' understanding of faith and values, and parents recognise that learning continues beyond the school day. Through prayer, worship and shared values, the Catholic identity of the school is consistently visible and experienced by pupils and families.

Leadership of Catholic life and mission is outstanding and ensures that the mission of the school is clearly articulated and consistently promoted. Leaders demonstrate a strong commitment to Catholic education and ensure that faith informs the strategic direction of the school as well as daily experiences for pupils and staff. Staff recognise that the mission statement is central to the life of the school and guides relationships, behaviour and expectations. One member of staff explained that Catholic life is not simply something that is taught but something that is lived through daily actions and relationships. Leaders promote a culture in which compassion, forgiveness and respect shape the school community. Staff describe the school as a supportive environment where adults and pupils are encouraged to grow in faith. Leaders ensure that the Catholic identity of the school is sustained through prayer, charitable activity and opportunities for reflection. The community is widely recognised as welcoming and inclusive, with visitors often commenting on the supportive atmosphere experienced by pupils and adults. Through clear vision, reflective leadership and a shared commitment to the mission of the Church, leaders ensure that Catholic life and mission are deeply embedded within the culture of the school.

Religious education

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

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

2

Provision

The quality of teaching, learning, and assessment in religious education

2

Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for religious education

2

2

The quality of teaching and learning in religious education is consistently good. Lessons observed demonstrate secure subject knowledge and clear planning that reflects the requirements of the *Religious Education Directory*. Teachers present content confidently and ensure that pupils are familiar with key scripture and theological vocabulary. Classroom discussions show that pupils are encouraged to share ideas and respond thoughtfully to religious questions. The learning environment supports reflection, and pupils approach religious education with confidence and respect. Teaching strategies support engagement and participation across classes, with pupils given opportunities to explore scripture and reflect on its meaning for their lives. In several lessons, questioning enabled pupils to explain ideas and make connections between religious concepts and their own experiences. Teachers provide support to ensure that pupils can access the learning and participate in discussions. Pupil voice confirms that they recognise religious education as a subject that requires thoughtful engagement, with one pupil explaining that 'religious education requires you to think a bit more about your learning'. However, the depth of theological reasoning is not yet consistently evident across all classes. In some cases, responses remain descriptive rather than analytical, and opportunities to extend thinking are not always fully developed. While teaching is effective across the school, greater consistency in challenging pupils to deepen theological understanding would strengthen provision further. Overall, teaching enables pupils to make good progress in religious education.

Outcomes in religious education are good. Pupils demonstrate secure knowledge of the content they have studied and are able to recall scripture and key concepts accurately. In discussions and written work, pupils show understanding of religious ideas and are able to communicate their learning with increasing confidence. Across year groups, pupils demonstrate respect for religious belief and show willingness to engage with questions of meaning and faith. Book scrutiny and lesson observations indicate that pupils are developing their ability to explain and describe religious ideas. Pupils engage positively with the subject and show interest in discussing faith and values, contributing to a purposeful learning atmosphere in religious education lessons. Pupil voice suggests that pupils recognise the challenge involved in developing their understanding. One pupil commented that 'understanding religious education requires a lot more thought', reflecting the expectation that pupils engage with ideas rather than simply recalling information. However, the depth of evaluation is not yet consistently strong across all classes. In some work, responses remain focused on recall rather than deeper reflection or theological interpretation. Assessment systems are developing but do not yet consistently demonstrate how pupils are supported to move from knowledge to more developed understanding. Overall, pupils achieve well in religious education and make good progress, but outcomes are not yet consistently exceptional across the school.

Leadership and management of religious education are effective and demonstrate a clear commitment to improvement. Leaders have established systems to monitor the quality of teaching and learning and to support staff in developing their practice. Documentation and planning reflect an awareness of diocesan expectations and show that religious education is given appropriate priority within the curriculum. The religious education leader demonstrates understanding of the strengths of the subject across the school as well as areas that require further development. Monitoring activities such as book scrutiny and lesson observations contribute to a developing picture of provision. Leaders recognise the importance of strengthening consistency in theological articulation and assessment practice. Staff are supported through guidance and opportunities to develop their understanding of the curriculum. While leadership is reflective and purposeful, systems for evaluating the impact of monitoring are still developing. Continued refinement of assessment and moderation processes will strengthen consistency across year groups. Overall, leadership secures good provision and demonstrates clear strategy for further improvement.

Collective worship

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

Collective worship key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

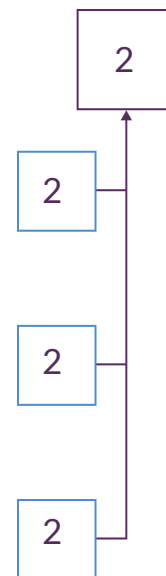
How well pupils participate in and respond to the school's collective worship

Provision

The quality of collective worship provided by the school

Leadership

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



The quality of prayer and liturgy is good and forms an important part of the daily life of the school. Acts of prayer and liturgy are structured and follow the recognised pattern of gathering, listening to scripture, responding in prayer and reflecting on how the message can be lived out. Pupils demonstrate familiarity with these structures and understand that prayer provides an opportunity to reflect on their relationship with God. Observations during the inspection confirmed that pupils participate reverently and respectfully. Pupil voice indicates that pupils are accustomed to participating in a variety of forms of prayer. Pupils explained that 'we pray at lots of times of the day – dinnertime, home time, in the morning, at assembly and at the end of the day'. Pupils described how prayer is incorporated into class routines and how they have opportunities to contribute through writing and sharing prayers. One pupil explained that 'we write our own prayers' and another described prayer as a time when 'we speak to God'. These comments demonstrate that pupils understand the purpose of prayer and recognise its place in the life of the school. However, while prayer and liturgy are regular and meaningful, the depth of theological explanation and pupil-led planning is not yet consistently evident across all phases. Opportunities for pupils to deepen their understanding of scripture and liturgical practice are developing. Overall, the provision for prayer and liturgy contributes positively to the Catholic life of the school.

Pupils participate well in prayer and liturgy and demonstrate positive engagement. During celebrations of the word, pupils show reverence and respect and are able to explain why prayer is important in the life of the school. Many pupils described how they take responsibility through roles such as prayer monitors or chaplaincy representatives, helping to

organise prayer times and support worship within classes. Pupils also described how prayer and liturgy take place in different contexts across the school. For example, pupils explained that, 'In Year 6 we sit in a circle and have little liturgies', showing that pupils experience prayer in forms appropriate to their age and stage of development. Pupils also demonstrate an emerging understanding of how worship can be improved. Some pupils described how they reflect on prayer afterwards, explaining that 'we normally meet afterwards and think about what went well and what needs to improve.' While participation is strong, opportunities for pupils to take greater responsibility for planning and leading celebrations of the word independently are still developing. Overall, pupils engage well with prayer and liturgy and participate respectfully and thoughtfully.

Leadership of prayer and liturgy is effective and ensures that opportunities to engage take place regularly across the school. Leaders have established clear structures that ensure prayer is integrated into the daily rhythm of school life. Planning reflects the liturgical year and provides opportunities for pupils to encounter scripture and respond through prayer and reflection. Leaders ensure that staff understand the importance of prayer and that it is treated with reverence and respect. The school provides opportunities for pupils to take part in leadership roles connected to prayer and liturgy. Chaplaincy groups and pupil leadership roles support the organisation of prayer events and encourage pupils to contribute ideas for worship. Monitoring of prayer and liturgy takes place through observation and discussion with pupils and staff, enabling leaders to identify strengths as well as areas for development. While leadership is reflective and purposeful, systems for evaluating the impact of prayer and liturgy are still developing. Continued development of pupil leadership and deeper engagement with scripture will strengthen provision further. Overall, leadership ensures that prayer and liturgy remain central to the life of the school and contribute positively to pupils' spiritual development.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Mark's RC Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	105956
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	3553520
Full postal address of the school	Queensway, Clifton, Swinton, M27 8QE
School phone number	0161 794 3876
Headteacher or Head of School	Mrs Emma Woodruff
Chair of Governors	Mrs Victoria Allen
School Website	www.st-marks-clifton.salford.sch.uk
Trusteeship	Diocesan
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	09 May 2018
Previous denominational inspection grade	Good

The Inspection Team

Carl Mciver Lead

Nicole Hadfield

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