



# St Monica's Catholic High School

URN: 148050

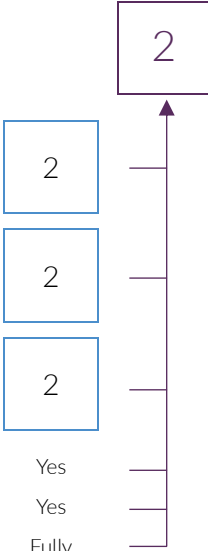
Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Bishop of Salford

28–29 February 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	2	
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 mission statement is based on clear Gospel values and is used as a means to inform and drive school improvement.
- The leadership of religious education is fully committed to providing a strong Catholic education for all and this is reflected in the improved pupil outcomes.
- Staff embrace the school's mission and bear witness to the five core values of the school.
- Pastoral care is strong and is founded on core Catholic values which are lived out in daily interactions.
- Governors know the school well and are clear and confident about how the school's ambitions will be realised.

## What the school needs to improve

- To further embed collective acts of worship to ensure that pupils' personal development and formation becomes intrinsic to school life.

- To develop the practice of evaluation of collective worship to ensure that the work within the chaplaincy and the GIFT (Growing in Faith Together) team is regularly reviewed and celebrated.
- To develop links between the school GIFT team and partner parishes and primary schools to embed community engagement.

## 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**

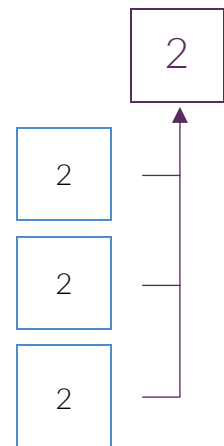
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

**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



The strong sense of a school on a journey driven by the school motto, *'Prayer and Service'* is tangible at St Monica's, underpinned by the five core values of prayer, service, justice, forgiveness and peace. There is a real strength in the value placed on each person as made in the image of God. The pastoral team have a sense of service to ensure pupils needs are met and relationships are strong. There is a deliberate and palpable effort to embed restorative practices to build relationships and community. This is reinforced through the mission statement, policies, weekly themes, assemblies and interactions. The school understands and fully embraces Catholic social teaching principles. These have influenced the school's compassionate commitment to its community, for example, local fund-raising initiatives such as the 'Red Door'. Curriculum subjects have a unique Catholic social teaching intent, ensuring it is embedded. The value of respect is a strength of the school. For example, the headteacher rewards staff for embracing the 5Ps (punctuality, preparation, proud, polite, participation) through adjustments to timetable. Adult-pupil interactions show great tolerance and respect. A recently appointed chaplain brings considerable skill and knowledge to the role with a clear understanding of liturgical practice and a proactive introduction of insights from the new prayer and liturgy directory.

All leaders could articulate the school's mission which was revised in consultation with all stakeholders. This has re-energised the Catholic mission. A new school prayer was launched in January 2024. Staff engagement with the Catholic mission and principles of Catholic social teaching is evident and this fosters a real sense of identity and purpose. St Monica's is a welcoming community. Displays celebrate the Catholic identity and are rooted in faith and scripture. The new inter-faith prayer room reflects the diversity of the community. Staff briefings start with a prayer and reflection which models good practice and sets the tone for the day. There is genuine service to all pupils especially the disadvantaged. Pastoral care is exceptional and benefits from a strongly collaborative approach. Systems, for example, pupil passports, have been simplified and made more personal to ensure all staff know the students well. Visible signs of its Catholic character around the school reflect St Monica's five core values. An additional

strategy, the 5 Ps – punctual, prepared, proud, polite, participants – ensure these values are lived out. The chaplaincy provides opportunities for pupil involvement in liturgy planning, prayer and action in the community. The school uses *Ten:Ten* as the resources are readily accessible and aligns with Catholic beliefs and teaching.

Catholic life and mission is absolutely integral to the school's vision. The deputy headteacher with responsibility for climate and culture oversees this vision with strategic and theological expertise. An assistant headteacher ensures it is embedded in practice. Diocesan links are strong. A *Laudato Si'* garden is being constructed which expresses the school's strong commitment to our Common Home. Links with the parish are good as evidenced by work with a number of local priests who support the faith life and the use of local churches for major seasonal celebrations, for example, the Advent Service at St Bernadette's. Parental survey feedback was positive overall. Careful thought has been given to staff wellbeing driven by Gospel values and a deep appreciation of the uniqueness of each colleague. Governors are experienced, provide strong direction, are ambitious for this community and fully committed to the Church's mission in education. The chaplain has made a difference to pupil participation. For example, the GIFT (Growing in Faith Together) team is more active with increased responsibility. They create resources for the Lenten reflection, co-ordinate charitable causes or set the example to other children through reading in assemblies or key services. The GIFT team epitomises the motto of prayer and service and have received Caritas training so they can lead new initiatives. However, evaluation is not as strong. Staff development including induction for new staff focuses on Catholic social teaching.

## Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

### Religious education key judgement grade

**Pupil outcomes**

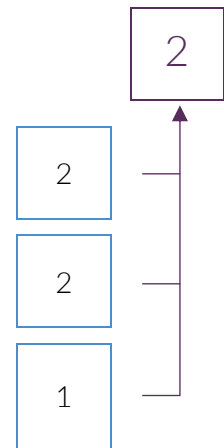
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

**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 making increasingly better progress and this is comparable with core subjects. Gaps highlighted in the last inspection between boys' and girls' achievement are being addressed through initiatives such as stars of the week, positive praise and pupil voice. Additionally, lessons are more creative, allowing for more planned debate. Religious literacy is strong, particularly in Key Stage 3 where teachers are ambitious in their embedding of higher level vocabulary. Pupils have good oracy skills and, when asked, were confident in their responses. Teachers use the correct balance of directed and general questioning and pupils respond accordingly. Teachers could develop more open-ended and challenging questions. Pupils would benefit from being given greater opportunities to work independently and develop a curiosity in their learning. Work scrutiny shows that curriculum plans are followed, cover key religious concepts and the standard was high. Within lessons pupils were compliant and no off-task behaviour was observed. In most lessons, it was clear pupils enjoy religious education and Year 7 pupils are benefiting from the new *Religious Education Directory*. However, pupil voice indicated that they would like to be challenged more. Assessment practices ensure that teachers can identify gaps in knowledge and this informs future planning. Pupils regularly respond and act on feedback. Within the department, all teachers are subject specialists, their subject knowledge is authentic and they are deeply committed to the relevance and importance of religious education as a core subject. The quality of teaching overall was strong. Quality assurance is robust. Fortnightly line management meetings focus on curriculum and teaching. Pupil voice and work scrutiny enables the leader to ensure consistency, that the curriculum intent is being followed and that standards of teaching are high. In most lessons, teachers had high expectations and provided suitable challenge. Questioning was effective and big questions in Year 9 allowed pupils to apply their knowledge, provoked thinking and consider alternative views. Planning is meticulous. New materials designed to help implement the *Religious Education Directory* effectively are bespoke. Feedback was appropriate but there is more scope for celebration and awards to further motivate pupils. Ethical issues and morality are well built into the curriculum at Key Stage 3. However, stronger links could be made to Catholic social teaching and pupils applying this to

their daily lives. The department is well resourced and are mostly created internally to ensure they are high quality and meet the needs of the pupils.

The planning of the introduction of the new *Religious Education Directory* was extremely well thought out and focused on the learning outcomes: understand, discern and respond. For example, when planning the topic of creation and covenant, leaders ensured the design was coherently arranged to allow pupils to make sequential progress. The curriculum builds on prior learning ensuring a smooth transition between the years and stages. The department is on track to meet *Religious Education Directory* compliance by September 2025. Resources are shared centrally to ensure consistent of delivery and knowledge trackers are used to monitor the delivery of the curriculum. The quality of work seen in books was excellent. Religious education is on parity with other core subjects and the subject leader has a clear vision and is strongly supported by the second in department. Both are knowledgeable, passionate about their subject and understand the strengths of the curriculum. They model good practice, work diligently and are reflective practitioners. The leaders partake in diocesan activities. The whole team would benefit from these opportunities. There are numerous enrichment opportunities, including debate club, multi-faith talks and 'show racism the red card'. The curriculum leaders were at the heart of self-evaluation.

## 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

Students are respectful and engaged in liturgy and prayer. For example, a Year 7 Mass was celebrated by a priest from a local parish with substantial student involvement in readings and prayers, a significant engagement with liturgical behaviour and a prayerful atmosphere. The majority of students chose to receive Holy Communion and did so in a reverent way. The liturgical seasons are clearly recognised and celebrated, although more could be made of the opportunity of Holy Days. The Diocesan prayer calendar informs daily prayers. Members of the GIFT team were able to give examples of times they have written and read prayers and helped plan liturgy. They also help to ensure that Catholic social teaching links liturgies and charitable initiatives. Evaluation of liturgy, however, is something to be developed. A strong, centralised effort has been made to link curriculum with Catholic life, especially Catholic social teaching. There is a discernible impact from the strategy of form Masses in Key Stage 3 – students are reverent and respectful in the chapel, and understand, and take a full part in liturgy – this is now being extended to Key Stage 4.

Prayer and liturgy form a central part of school life, with regular Masses, large liturgies, assemblies and daily prayer as an established part of form group routine, with some pupil involvement. Greater use could, however, be made of the rich tradition of Catholic music and art in such celebrations. Scripture is well used and linked to the Church's cycle. There is absolute commitment from leaders to ensure collective worship is embedded at school. They model good practice in prayer, contribute to events and embrace professional development. Student and wider staff involvement in the leadership of prayer and liturgy has begun, and plans are in place to develop it further. Chaplaincy staff in particular, and senior leaders with particular responsibilities in the area, are skilled, knowledgeable and very committed to their roles. The creative talents of students are used in whole school Masses. Student artwork frequently figures in chapel displays and the stations of the cross. The chapel is at the heart of the school. Links with the parishes and families of the school community are also growing. A particular area of good practice is the collaborative model of Confirmation preparation, shared between school-

based and parish-based initiatives, and are exceptionally well led by a religious sister from a nearby community.

The prayer and liturgy policy is clear and effective. Clear goals set by leadership are having an impact and steering the direction of travel. Chaplaincy and senior leaders ensure that professional development is available to all staff in leading prayer but this could perhaps be more systematic, universal and frequent. Important days like Ash Wednesday are celebrated with significant student leadership. There is ongoing training with regards to the distinct Catholic ethos and a real sense of a holistic and united curriculum. The head teacher has prioritized the development of Catholic life and mission in recent senior appointments as well as through a new lay Chaplain. This is having a significant impact on school improvement driven by mission. Good resourcing ensures prayer and liturgical life has the profile throughout school that it warrants. Governors and leaders resource prayer and liturgy well, building on excellent existing facilities. Self-evaluation is honest, accurate, systematically reviewed at senior leadership and governance level and forms an integral part of the strategy to move forward the school's Catholic mission at pace. Evaluation of Catholic Life forms a regular feature in senior staff and governors' meetings. Self-assessment is therefore of a good standard.



## Information about the school

Full name of school	St Monica's Catholic High School
School unique reference number (URN)	148050
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	3514006
Full postal address of the school	St Monica's Catholic High School, Bury Old Road, Prestwich, Manchester, M25 1JH
School phone number	01617736436
Headteacher	Emma Keenan
Chair of Local Governing Body	Catherine Parkinson
School Website	<a href="http://www.stmonicas.stoccat.org.uk">http://www.stmonicas.stoccat.org.uk</a>
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	St Teresa Of Calcutta Catholic Academy Trust
Phase	Secondary
Type of school	Academy
Admissions policy	Non-selective
Age-range of pupils	11-16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	01/07/19
Previous denominational inspection grade	Requires improvement

## The inspection team

Sheldon Logue	Lead
David Frost	Team
Marcela Foong	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