

Our Lady's Catholic Primary School

URN: 106114

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Bishop of Shrewsbury

15–16 October 2025

Summary of key findings

Overall effectiveness

The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school

2

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 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

N/A

Compliance statement

- Ten percent of teaching time is dedicated to religious education. The school is implementing *The Vine and Branches* in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 to deliver the new *Religious Education Directory*.
- The school fulfils its statutory duty to teach relationships, sex and health education and uses the *Life to the Full Plus* scheme. Personal, social, health and economic education is delivered through a Catholic lens.
- There were no areas for improvement from the previous inspection.

What the school does well

- Knowledgeable leaders and governors ensure the social, emotional, and spiritual needs of pupils are supported by funding external agencies and creating an atmosphere of trust and care in the school community.
- Parish and family links are prioritised, which results in the school being held in high regard in the local community.
- All staff are committed to developing their understanding of prayer and liturgy and to keeping the Catholic mission of the school central to their daily work.
- The dedicated subject leader shares her time and passion for quality religious education with staff to support them during this time of implementation of the new *Religious Education Directory*.
- The pupils' excellent behaviour and willingness to engage with all the school offers them means that they live and learn in faith as they develop a sense of their own self-worth.

What the school needs to improve

- Ensure that the staffing and professional development of religious education is comparable to other core subjects in order to secure sustained capacity for improvement.
- Develop more robust monitoring procedures to further improve planning and assessment of teaching and learning to raise attainment in religious education.
- Review the impact of the recently implemented prayer and liturgy policy through effective monitoring and evaluation so that support is clearly targeted to meet the formation needs of individual teachers and pupils.

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

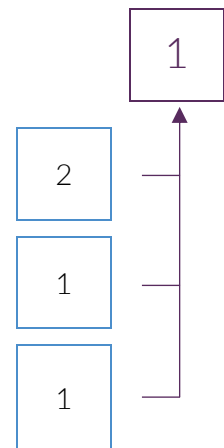
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

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



Our Lady's Catholic Primary School is an oasis of calm, where pupils live and learn in faith. They understand that their mission statement, 'Living and Learning in Faith', describes how they try to treat each other. The school's 'Bee Attitudes' are an effective way of making Gospel values central to daily life at Our Lady's. Caring relationships within the school demonstrate that pupils feel valued and because of this they are happy and 'feel safe and protected'. Visitors, parishioners, parents, staff and governors speak of how well behaved and polite pupils are in and outside school. School councillors, Mini Vinnies, prayer leaders and reading ambassadors articulate clearly how they enjoy making a positive difference in their roles, for example, a harvest food collection for the Olive Branch, which is the local foodbank, and Lenten fundraising for the Normandy veterans. Pupils are developing a knowledge of stewardship by finding ways to look after the environment. They willingly support fundraising events; however, pupils don't always have opportunities to use their own initiative to plan and lead these activities. They value and enjoy prayer times, celebrations of Mass as a school community and celebrations of the word which they participate in during the year.

Staff and pupils review the mission statement each year and because staff embrace its Gospel values it guides their daily life in school. One parent describes it as 'God's love in action'. Staff nurture and celebrate pupils' individual gifts and talents and are proud of the role they play in helping pupils to develop self-esteem and an understanding that each one of them is special and loved by God. Staff enthusiastically provide opportunities during the year for pupils to help those who are less fortunate, and because of this, pupils develop an understanding that they can make a positive difference to others. Christ is at the heart of the school. This sense of community shines through the caring relationships that staff have with each other and the pupils

in their care. Parents value the culture of welcome and respect for all which defines Our Lady's in the local community. It is 'like a big family' and a place where 'everyone is valued' and 'individual needs are recognised, accepted and supported'. Professionals from agencies such as the Mental health support team, Ethnic diversity service, Beacon counselling and the Stockport inclusion team ensure pupils' social and emotional needs are supported, and barriers to learning are recognised and reduced.

Leaders and governors are joyful in leading and guiding the Catholic life and mission of the school. They are dedicated, enthusiastic and demonstrate that Christ is at the centre of all they do by ensuring their policies and procedures reflect the Gospel values that underpin their mission statement. Because of this staff enjoy working in an environment where they know they are respected; pupils flourish, and families are supported. Parish and parental links are strengths of Our Lady's. Governors have many valuable skills and are ambitious for the school and as such are involved in many aspects of school and parish life; for example, leading the Baptismal programme and children's liturgy. They are also actively involved in a wide range of school events, including link governor visits and fundraising activities as well as providing high quality weekly hymn practices. They know the school well. The parish priest is proactive in engaging pupils and families in the liturgical year. Together with senior leaders he agrees an annual plan of Masses and celebrations, which are well attended by families and parishioners. School leaders invite parishioners to celebrations of Mass, the crowning of Our Lady, Passion plays, and special assemblies during Advent.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

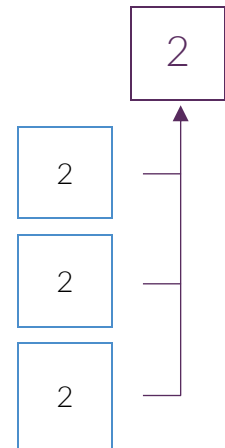
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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 an understanding of the learning required in the new *Religious Education Directory*. As pupils move through the school, they begin to make links with prior learning so progress from starting points is good. They engage in opportunities to reflect and understand how religious education can influence their daily lives. Key subject vocabulary is used effectively in discussion in some classes and pupils use this vocabulary correctly to explain their understanding. Reception class pupils can say who is in the Church family and Upper Key Stage 2 know a 'covenant is a promise between God and his people'. Pupils enjoy working with partners and in groups and are then able to concentrate on tasks set by teachers. These tasks are mainly written responses, although younger pupils do use story boards, artwork and drama to consolidate their understanding. Upper Key Stage 2 pupils have opportunities for debate to express their views. Because tasks are carefully planned and guided by teachers, pupils have limited opportunities to use their own initiative and creativity. Pupils of all ages engage in the religious education lessons and enjoy feeling 'so close to God'. Behaviour is excellent and pupils always show respect to each other and adults. Although the feedback policy is used, pupils do not always understand their next steps in learning.

Teachers are developing their knowledge and understanding of the new *Religious Education Directory*. As a result, planning and assessment skills are becoming more focused, so pupils make progress over time in school. The amount of written work in some books is limited and there is not always evidence of the smaller steps needed to deepen pupils' knowledge in each theme. Teachers and support staff have high expectations of pupils and ensure that they recognise the value of the religious education lessons in their daily lives. Staff refer to what pupils learn in these lessons when implementing the behaviour policy. In classes where teachers use effective questioning, pupils can make links with prior learning. All staff praise and encourage pupils to

share their views in a respectful classroom atmosphere. Feedback is given during lessons, as well as written feedback in books, but this is not consistently applied, and teachers do not always give time for pupils to respond.

Leaders and governors ensure *The Vine and The Branches* scheme is used as directed by the diocese. The subject leader supports the Reception class teacher to plan lessons using the *Religious Education Directory*. Leaders and governors consider religious education to be a core subject. However, as the *Religious Education Directory*, and the new directory for prayer and liturgy are implemented, to ensure that pupils continue to make good progress in religious education, governors and leaders should evaluate the impact of the staffing structure and address the wide-ranging responsibilities of the subject leader. Pupils' progress is reported to governors and regular updates are given in the head teacher's reports. Class teachers and new teachers access training provided by the diocese and opportunities to attend the *Christ at the Centre* course are offered. The subject leader is passionate about religious education and readily shares her expertise to support the staff. She has worked hard to implement changes in the curriculum and teachers value and appreciate this. They rely on this support as they deepen their own understanding of the new curriculum. Leaders and governors use a variety of self-evaluation activities that inform the development plan. These include lesson observations, book looks, pupil voice and feedback from the religious education link governor who visits class lessons. However, well-targeted actions to address identified areas for improvement are not always planned.

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

Pupils can pray silently as a community and pray joyfully in song. They are willing to share reflections and know 'prayer is a moment with God anywhere'. Pupils can take prayer bags home, which have a variety of resources and notes to help families pray together. They are developing a basic understanding of the liturgical year and can name different Church seasons and times of Marian devotion. Pupils in Key Stage 2 use planning sheets to help them plan celebrations of the word but are not yet able to plan independently. Prayer leaders speak confidently about how they help their friends choose scripture. They also check that each classroom has the correct colour cloth on their prayer focus to reflect the liturgical season. Some evaluation of prayer is carried out through discussions with pupils. They can articulate that scripture helps them to 'follow in the footsteps of Jesus' and give examples of what this means. Upper Key Stage 2 pupils express their understanding of prayer as 'knowing Jesus is listening to you and is always there for you'. During prayer times they 'feel peaceful and calm' and know it is 'a time to think of others'.

There is a well-established routine of daily prayer and staff provide opportunities throughout the year for pupils to experience the rich traditions of the Catholic Church. Praying the rosary and the crowning of Our Lady are particularly special devotions to Our Lady, who is patron of the school. Feast days, Advent, Lent, Eastertide, Harvest time, Remembrance Day as well as world events are all marked with prayer or liturgy. Staff are committed to the prayer life of the school and recognise the importance of prayer in daily life. The new class prayer book is used to record pupils' reflections. The proximity of the school to the church is one factor that helps to foster strong links with the parish and families. Parents enjoy coming to Mass and class assemblies. Parent responses to the questionnaire indicate 'children are encouraged to play an active role in Church life'. Staff use the space in their classrooms, appropriate music and resources to create an atmosphere in which pupils can reflect. Establishing further spaces outside the classroom is

currently being established. Teachers ensure scripture is read during celebrations of the word, but it is not always highlighted so that it is properly proclaimed.

After consultation with staff and governors there is now a comprehensive prayer and liturgy policy, which outlines the expectations of the new *Prayer and Liturgy Directory*. To plan effective support for the formation of staff and pupils it is important that this new policy is monitored and reviewed regularly to ensure it meets the needs of individual staff. The progression of prayer document is useful to staff and provides a starting point for increasing staff confidence. Leaders and governors recognise the importance of prayer and are committed to providing quality resources for use in each classroom. The annual plan of provision is agreed at the start of the school year with the parish priest. This prioritises liturgies and celebrations during the year. The parish priest is generous with his time and provides many opportunities for the school community to attend Mass and receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation during Advent and Lent. The subject leader is passionate about providing quality times of reflection for pupils and staff. Along with the head teacher and the deputy, she plans celebrations of Mass for the school community, and pupils from Year 1 to Year 6 read on these occasions. The link governor for prayer and liturgy leads weekly hymn practice, so pupils confidently sing the parts of the Mass and hymns.

Information about the school

Full name of school	Our Lady's Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	106114
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	3563506
Full postal address of the school	Old Chapel Street, Edgeley, Stockport, Cheshire, SK3 9HX
School phone number	01614805345
Executive headteacher	N/A
Headteacher	Mrs Anna Core
Chair of Governors	Mrs Catherine Gould
School Website	www.ourladys.stockport.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 pupils	5-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	3 July 2018
Previous denominational inspection grade	1

The inspection team

Susan Lyonette

Stephen Walsh

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