



# St Mary's & St Benedict's Roman Catholic Primary School

URN: 119704

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Bishop of Salford

13–14 November 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 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 is fully compliant in relation to the general norms for religious education laid down by the Bishops' Conference.
- The school is fully compliant in relation to any additional requirements of the diocesan bishop.
- The school has responded fully to areas for improvement identified in the last inspection.

## What the school does well

- There is a high level of commitment from staff and governors to providing the very best opportunities for every pupil as members of a Catholic community.
- The school has excellent links with the parish, which begin from the exceptional level of support from the parish priest. The connection between school and parish is highly valued.
- The school uses innovative and effective methods to welcome and support those most in need.
- Pupils clearly appreciate the importance and power of prayer.
- Pupils are confident when articulating responses, in curriculum religious education, to teacher questioning, discussions and exploring the theology that underpins their faith.

## What the school needs to improve

- To enhance the overall standard of teaching and learning in religious education to ensure that the quality of written work accurately reflects the level of understanding and attainment for every pupil; and that every member of staff is confident in delivering teaching which is consistently good where summative and self-assessment accurately reflects attainment and informs planning for progression.
- To ensure full understanding of the mission statement which is embraced and lived by all pupils, staff and stakeholders.
- To ensure that the experience of prayer and liturgy, for all pupils, is a time of contemplation and reflection which inspires them to action through the words of scripture.

## 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

2

#### Provision

The quality of provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school

2

#### Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school

2

2

Pupils at St Mary's and St Benedict's understand the Catholic identity and charism of their school. All members of this community actively promote their Catholic life and mission. Pupils at the school spoke about the opportunities that they have to grow in virtue, and to become happy, confident and secure. Pupils are beginning to be involved in responding to the demands of Catholic social teaching and can clearly articulate how their actions can have a positive impact upon others. They are excited about the opportunities to support the needs of those locally, but require further opportunity to consider how their actions can have impact both nationally and globally. Behaviour in the school was good, with pupils demonstrating a sense of respect for themselves and for others. Chaplaincy in Key Stage Two is effective, offering a range of opportunities for pupils to support their school. This requires further development to offer similar opportunities for pupils of all ages in the school to be active participants and leaders.

The school has redeveloped their mission statement to be relevant to the community and to be a clear expression of their educational mission. Although known throughout the school, further work is required to ensure that everyone understands this mission and that it shapes the school's life. Staff embrace the mission statement and are highly committed to ensuring that this underpins all aspects of school life. In every element of the school, there is a lived sense of community and Christ is clearly at the centre of all decisions made. The school strives to welcome all, especially those who are most vulnerable. Staff are exemplary role models for their pupils. They consistently bear witness to the school's Catholic life and mission and provide the highest level of pastoral care for all pupils. St Mary's and St Benedict's have developed their environment over time to ensure that it expresses the mission and identity of a Catholic school. The school is considering further steps in making best use of available space throughout the building. There

is outstanding support offered to the school by their parish priest and his contribution to the school is very highly valued and appreciated. This offers an excellent starting point for the spiritual and moral development of pupils and staff. The provision for RSHE meets both the statutory and diocesan requirements.

Leaders in this school are firmly committed to the Church's mission in education and are fastidious in exercising their duty as guardians of the Catholic life and mission of the school. All policies clearly demonstrate the Catholic identity of this school. There are excellent links between the school and the local parish, with the school welcomed into the church and the parish into school. Governors and parishioners commented upon the support offered both to and from the school and the development of the relationship between the two. The majority of parents spoke about the good level of support that they receive from the school and they are supportive of the school's mission. Leaders in this school clearly demonstrate respect for the dignity of workers and ensure that their decisions reflect this. There is an explicit and concrete commitment to the physical and mental wellbeing of staff. The governing body is highly ambitious for all aspects of the school and lead in their example. They are passionate, have high levels of expertise and are well organised in their work. They have a clear understanding of the values of Catholic life and Mission at St Mary's and St Benedict's and offer clear levels of challenge and support. The school has undertaken self-evaluation to establish the next steps for development, however there needs to be a greater level of pupil involvement in this. There has been some staff development around Catholic life and mission, but the school needs to ensure that there is a carefully formulated development plan to continue improvements in this area.

## Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

### Religious education key judgement grade

**Pupil outcomes**

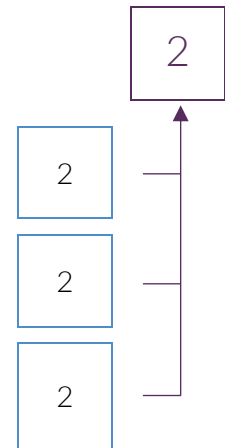
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

**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



Over time, pupils are demonstrating that they are developing secure knowledge, understanding and skills. Pupils demonstrate that they know more over time and are able to speak with confidence. Pupils are able to hold discussions about religion and ask challenging questions of themselves, their peers and their teachers to enhance their learning. Verbally, pupils can speak with confidence about what they know and what they have learned. Pupils do struggle to remain focussed for longer timeframes, especially when asked to work independently. Pupils spoke about enjoying religious education lessons in school and consistently rated this as, 'one of the best if not the best things we do.' Although pupil's understanding is generally good, they have a limited understanding for how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve further. Although outcomes are broadly in line with other core areas, further development is required in developing staff confidence when completing assessments that leads to accurate planning for future progression in religious education.

Teachers are developing their subject knowledge and they are fully committed to the value of religious education. Some staff show a high ability in delivering religious education and they will be pivotal in the development of this throughout the school. All staff are highly committed to the value of religious education and they communicate this effectively to their pupils. Teachers use a variety of assessment opportunities within and following each lesson and pupils are able to explain the 'traffic light' system they use to indicate their level of understanding; however, this needs to indicate a clear understanding from pupils around the next steps that they need to take in order to further their own levels of knowledge and understanding. There are some good examples of effective feedback given to pupils, but this needs to have a clearer impact upon the pupils' progression. The quality and output of work produced by pupils in their books needs to be of a consistently high standard, as this does not consistently match the attainment of the

pupils verbally. Further development is required with summative assessment judgements to ensure that there is consistent application from every teacher giving an accurate representation of the attainment for every pupil in the school. Where pupils have the opportunity to be creative in their presentation they demonstrate a much higher level of engagement and willingness to complete tasks that leads to optimised learning for most pupils.

The school curriculum is a clear reflection of the *Religious Education Curriculum Directory*. The school follows the 'Come and See' curriculum as their basis for learning and is considering how they adapt this to more closely meet the differing needs of their pupils. Planning for religious education aims to meet the needs of different groups of pupils and to secure coherence across key stages. Religious education is comparable to other core curriculum subjects in resourcing, timetabling and staffing. Time for professional development is given; however, this needs to relate directly to the school's self-evaluation to ensure that staff confidence and ability are growing consistently over time. The school has recognised the need for developing the role of the religious education subject leader and has made a suitable appointment for this position. The school has identified a training and support pathway for this newly appointed leader. Leaders and governors have completed self-evaluation that recognises the need to develop the religious education curriculum to ensure that outcomes in all areas are consistently at least good.

## 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

St Mary's and St Benedict's offer their pupils a wide range of experiences of prayer and liturgy. Pupils participate with enjoyment, joy and reverence and many commented on this being a 'special time of the day'. Pupils are able to access scripture which is appropriate to their age and understanding and can speak confidently about how scripture is chosen to reflect the theme of the liturgy or for certain points of the liturgical year. Pupils, particularly those in Key Stage Two, are able to effectively prepare and lead experiences of prayer and liturgy. The school needs to develop the ability of children in younger classes in the delivery of prayer and liturgy at a level appropriate to their age and experience. Pupils also need to have the opportunity to fully reflect upon and evaluate the quality of prayer and liturgy they have planned. Pupils recognise that there is a daily pattern of prayer within the school and see this as a 'time to think' and a 'time to talk with God'. Pupils are beginning to see how their prayers can lead to action but require further support in effectively planning this and articulating examples.

Prayer and liturgy is a central part of the school's life. This links directly to opportunities for pupils to pray within Mass. Pupils participate confidently in all elements of parish Masses and are welcome visitors to the church. All members of the community see prayer and liturgy as central to their day, with suitable prayers chosen to reflect the part of the school day and the liturgical year. Staff are role models to pupils when engaging with and leading prayer and liturgy. They ensure that every child has the opportunity to participate in liturgy that is authentic and 'heartfelt'. Where this is most effective, staff use other art forms such as music and times of silence and reflection to add to the sense of awe and wonder within liturgy. To be outstanding this requires further development in all classes, particularly in those classes where teachers have less experience or confidence in the delivery of prayer and liturgy. In most classes, effective use was made of the spaces available to provide a prayer space that is 'a special place' by the pupils

and allowed them to appreciate the presence of God within their liturgy. Spaces within the classroom are well cared for and prominently show that they are a central part of the classroom and of the school. There are some opportunities taken to involve parents in the prayer life of the school but these require further development.

The school has a carefully formulated policy for prayer and liturgy that is accessible and relevant to staff who feel that this is a reference point for prayer and liturgy. Leaders understand the skills of participation that are reflective of the age and capacity of pupils however this is seen most clearly where staff have been given the skills and confidence to support this to happen. Pupils in later years of the school grow considerably in their skills of participation. Where this was most effective, pupils and staff work alongside one another to support and enhance prayer and liturgy to ensure that this is a meaningful and special time for all participants. Pupils regularly have the opportunity to participate in Mass and are welcome visitors to the parish church. Pupils were able to speak happily about the celebrations put into place to commemorate the feast day of their patron. Staff have benefitted from the professional development put into place in the school and they are developing in confidence and understanding of the importance of prayer and liturgy. The school now needs to ensure that there is a personalised development plan for staff to ensure that they are able to progress from their varied starting points.



## Information about the school

Full name of school	St Mary's & St Benedict's Roman Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	119704
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	8883981
Full postal address of the school	St Mary's & St Benedict's Roman Catholic Primary School, Brownedge Lane, Bamber Bridge, Preston, PR5 6TA
School phone number	01772336650
Headteacher	Daniel Ballard
Chair of governors	Richard Hodgson
School Website	<a href="http://www.smsb.lancs.sch.uk/">www.smsb.lancs.sch.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	4-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	4 <sup>th</sup> April 2017
Previous denominational inspection grade	Good

## The inspection team

Carl McIver  
Louise Lavery

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

