CATHOLIC SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

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

St Mary's Catholic Primary School

URN: 119683

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Archbishop of Liverpool

13–13 February 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	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

Compliance statement

- The school is fully compliant with the general norms for religious education laid down by the Bishops' Conference.
- The school is compliant with the additional requirements of the Archdiocese of Liverpool.
- The school has addressed all areas identified for improvement in the last inspection.

What the school does well

- Relationships at every level are a strength of the school. St Mary's is a warm and welcoming Catholic environment.
- There is a lived and shared vision between school, governors and parish that is on course to enhance and further develop the Catholic ethos and holistic mission of the school.
- Leaders, staff and governors are dedicated and committed to moving the school forward, thereby ensuring the best outcomes for all.
- Charitable work undertaken at St Mary's demonstrates the school's commitment to supporting those in need.
- The sacramental offer at St Mary's is to be celebrated; it is detailed and comprehensive involving leaders, staff, governors and the wider school community working in partnership.

What the school needs to improve

- The archdiocesan programme for relationships, sex and health education requires full implementation across all terms in each year group, together with a process for monitoring improvement.
- The monitoring and evaluation of religious education and prayer and liturgy requires strategic planning and full implementation to ensure rigorous pursuit of the best outcomes for all.
- Provide greater consistency in the quality of prayer and liturgy experiences across the school by sharing best practice and access to archdiocesan training.

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	2
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

Pupils at St Mary's understand the distinctive Catholic identity, charism and mission of the school by 'Living and Learning Together – Shining in our Faith.' They have an increasing sense of belonging and pride in their school. They value the school's distinctiveness and actively participate in its Catholic life and mission. One child commented that, "Being part of a Catholic school helps you be closer to Jesus and grow stronger with Him." Pupils can articulate their Catholic life and provide examples of their actions such as collecting food for the foodbank and donating clothing for the needy, holding coffee mornings for fund raising and operating a uniform swap shop, which all serve the common good. Pupils at St Mary's have an increasing sense of belonging and pride; they designed their new physical education kit which they are very proud of. They have a clear respect for each other, their community and the wider world. The pupils present as happy, safe and confident. They understand that St Mary's is committed to following the teachings and examples of Jesus as expressed in the gospel. Relationships are positive and the pupils are aware of the need to behave as Jesus did.

The school's self-evaluation of its provision is realistic. The mission statement at St Mary's is clear, owned and lived by all. There is a plan to revisit and review the mission in Summer 2025. The headteacher explained that the warm and lived culture of welcome is part of the school's Benedictine charism. Pastoral care exemplifies a Catholic community that is faithful to the Word of God. A pupil in the Early Years foundation stage pointed to the church and said, "That is St Elizabeth's Church where Jesus welcomes us." Parish links are being strengthened over time with whole school events such as Advent Reflection, Year 6 Leavers Mass and pupils reading at

Christmas Eve Mass in church. St Mary's has links with the parish branch of the St Vincent De Paul Society, and shares with supporting families in need. Staff are trained by the Thrive West Lancashire Family Hub which is used to support those in need. The school has invested in achieving the Cafod LiveSimply award. The school uses the archdiocesan approved programme for relationships, sex and health education but its provision needs to be planned across each term in year groups. Overall monitoring and delivery of the content is inconsistent.

Leaders and governors articulate the Church's mission in education and are thorough in exercising their duty as guardians of the Catholic Life. They ensure that Christ is at the heart of St Mary's. They are ambitious and determined in the pursuit of this mission and are regarded as models of Catholic leadership. A parent commented that the headteacher, "Is doing a wonderful job reconnecting us with our faith and with the children, reintroducing the Bible." The new parish priest offers great support and is highly valued by all stakeholders. Governors use their skills set well and are actively involved and openly invited into school. St Mary's leaders are supporting staff to ensure that they are confident in continuing to develop the Catholic life and mission through their own roles. The partnership with the archdiocese is strong. Leaders and governors fully participate in continued professional development. The headteacher prioritises wellbeing, ensuring regular check-ins and open communication. The headteacher shows a strong faith and a lived mission. She has a clear vision for progress and drives the Catholic life and mission of St Mary's. She has already made improvements since taking up the post in January 2024, a fact that is valued by the whole school community. These have already included attention to the planning of the required archdiocesan content for relationships, sex and health education.

Religious Education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade	2

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

Over time, pupils at St Mary's are developing good knowledge, skills and understanding in religious education that reflects the learning required by the Religious Education Directory. Their attainment is in line with that of other core subjects. Pupils, relative to their age and capacity, are engaged and are embracing religious understanding in everyday life. They enjoy their learning. In one lesson observed, a Year 1 pupil retold and made relevant links using the story of Zacchaeus. Observations in the early years' foundation stage, showed that children were able to apply their understanding of shared Scripture and be welcoming to one another in the name of Jesus. Pupils are religiously literate, they can speak with confidence about what they have learnt in religious education, showing an understanding of key concepts and using some subject specific vocabulary. They enjoy role play and being active in lessons. Pupils can work independently, concentrating and responding well to different tasks. A Year 6 pupil spoke enthusiastically about researching the Archdiocese of Liverpool as it helped them to understand its workings and the roles of the bishops. Pupils' work in religious education books is to be celebrated because of standards of presentation, which show that the pupils take a great pride in their work, using a range of creative styles.

Teachers are confident in their subject knowledge and have a good understanding of how pupils learn, relative to the phase in which they are teaching. Pupils value religious education because

their teachers prioritise it as the core subject and communicate this effectively. Through careful questioning, staff enable pupils to review their existing knowledge and understanding. The pupils have been introduced successfully to the Religious Education Directory. Learning in the Early Years' foundation stage is a real strength as continuous provision activities are centralised around the religious education branches, so enabling children to develop the skills required to progress. In the Early Years foundation stage, the children particularly enjoyed making St Elizabeth's Church using a labelled photograph, they talked about their work and were observant throughout the activity. Golden boxes were used successfully to retell stories from scripture, which supported and led to greater understanding. Overall, pupils' efforts are celebrated during lessons with praise and encouragement. It is evident that staff are beginning to provide pupils with feedback, therefore ensuring more opportunities for deepening their understanding. Teachers recognise the impact that religious education has on the spiritual and moral development of pupils. Pupils spoke with awareness knowing that to be a peacemaker you need to get on with others and make sure everyone is included. They were able to inform inspectors about the statue for the Pilgrims of Hope describing Jesus as the anchor. One pupil commented, "We hold on to Him and Jesus will be our saviour and will support you. "

Leaders and governors ensure that religious education is a faithful expression of both the current and the new Directory which is being phased in throughout the year groups. Religious education is given fully parity with other core subjects, which results in good outcomes for pupils. The curriculum is planned to provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to progress, a factor that is evident in the school data. The subject leader has a clear vision and is on a journey of driving improvement over time with a planned, step-by-step approach. The headteacher is an experienced religious education lead who is committed to supporting staff in their further development of good practice and the sharing of expertise. The content of religious education meets the needs of different groups of pupils. Adaptive teaching is evident in the tasks provided for each year group which match their age-related learning. Governors are informed about religious education through meetings, updates contained in the religious education action plan, the developing self-evaluation document, and from the termly headteacher's report. Leaders agree that the development of rigorous monitoring of religious education is a priority to ensure consistently high-quality teaching across the school.

Collective worship

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

Collective worship key judgement grade	2
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	3

Pupils at St Mary's respond well to the experiences of prayer and liturgy provided by the school. During observations pupils reflected in silence and joined in with community prayer. Appropriate to their age and capacity, pupils understand a variety of ways to pray that are part of the Catholic tradition. They can describe parts of the liturgical year and enjoy the seasonal events and celebrations. They are given the opportunities to reflect on the Word of God that has been shared and then 'Go Forth' with the message from the scripture. At school Masses, pupils participate by reading prayers and sharing scripture. Older pupils are developing their skills of ministry well supported by the religious education lead, not least in their preparation of worship spaces. Pupils can recognise and articulate ways in which prayer and liturgy influences their contributions to the wider life of the school. They seek to take on areas of responsibility such as assembly monitors and are keen to take further responsibility in planning, leading and evaluating their acts of worship. As identified in the school's self-evaluation document, continuing staff professional development will further enhance prayer experiences for the pupils at St Mary's.

There is an effective daily pattern of prayer and liturgy provided by staff. Quality prayer spaces are provided within each classroom, which are treated with reverence, cared for and related to the liturgical year and current events. The celebration of the Jubilee Year of Hope is evident and

highlighted throughout the school. This is supported by prayers of hope written by all pupils and older pupils understand and can articulate its meaning. Pupils and staff use their gifts to enhance the prayer and liturgy of the school. Music and art forms could be used more appropriately to reflect the richness of the Church. The school's self-evaluation document is accurate in its judgement that provision for prayer and liturgy is an area for ongoing improvement. Continuing professional development will further improve staff skills, formation of liturgy, creative accessibility and the gradual enablement of further pupil involvement. The headteacher is providing ongoing support and encouragement of parents and parish clergy to engage more closely with prayer and liturgy. There is ongoing provision for the staff to engage in training

The school has a policy for prayer and liturgy which currently provides a limited impact but is a useful basis for ongoing development. Leaders, including governors, plan opportunities throughout the liturgical year to celebrate the Eucharist on holy days of obligation and other significant feasts. St Mary's provides quality sacramental preparation, on a two-year cycle which is a comprehensive programme based upon an approved archdiocesan resource. Leaders, including governors understand the importance of prayer and liturgy and its centralisation within school life. The new headteacher is knowledgeable of the Church's understanding of the relationship between participation and ministry. She enhances prayer and liturgy through her leadership and as a role model to pupils and staff. The self-evaluation of prayer and liturgy is reflective of practice seen on the day of inspection. A robust action plan and process for monitoring and support is required and will provide a strengthening of the current knowledge and understanding of governors, leaders, staff and pupils. This in turn will continue to impact upon the development of a worshiping home, school and parish partnership.

Information about the school –

Full name of school	St Mary's Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	119683
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	8883803
Full postal address of the school	St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Hall Road, Scarisbrick, Ormskirk, L40 9QE
School phone number	01704 880626
Headteacher	Joanne Preston
Chair of governors	Les Rippon
School Website	www.stmaryscps.co.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	3-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	1st May 2018
Previous denominational inspection grade	1

The inspection team

Joanne Harrison	Lead
Louise Vose	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