



# Catholic Schools Inspectorate inspection report for St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Great Eccleston

URN: 149264

Carried out on behalf of the Right Rev. Paul Swarbrick, Bishop of Lancaster on:

Date: 25<sup>th</sup> May 2023

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The school is fully compliant with the curriculum requirements laid down by the Bishops' Conference	✓
The school is fully compliant with all requirements of the diocesan bishop	✓
The school has responded to the areas for improvement from the last inspection	Fully

## Summary of key findings

### What the school does well

- Relationships between staff and pupils, which are excellent, are a strength of the school and reflect the school's inclusive practice.
- Pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to learning are exemplary.
- Teachers have secure subject knowledge in RE and plan lessons which engage pupils well.
- The provision for collective worship is good across the whole school and enables pupils to engage in a range of ways of praying that are part of the Catholic tradition.
- Parents and carers are overwhelmingly supportive of the work of the school.

What the school needs to improve:

- Further improve the impact of the governing body on the Catholic life and mission of the school by ensuring there is challenge and support in equal measure.
- Pupils need to be able to articulate the theology which underpins their charitable works.
- Provide more open-ended written tasks which challenge the more able and reflect more closely the depth of knowledge that pupils acquire in lessons.

## 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 show a developing understanding of the Catholic identity of the school. They are active participants in the Catholic life and mission of the school. They can speak knowledgably about the school's patronal saint and the links to the parish. They speak with pride about being a member of the school and the wider faith community. During inspection they discussed their recent visit to Ladyewell shrine and of pilgrimage as a way of becoming closer to God. They engage in many activities to support charities both locally and globally and recognise the value in helping others. However, leaders are aware of the need for pupils to develop a deeper understanding of the theology which underpins their actions.

The behaviour of pupils is excellent in lessons and throughout school. They treat each other with respect, speak of being part of a family and show a developing understanding of religious and cultural differences. As a result, all pupils feel happy and safe in school and are able to flourish.

Parents and carers value the work of the school and say that their children are well cared for. They enjoy joining the pupils in church for liturgies throughout the liturgical year. One parent spoke to inspectors about the positive impact the school had on older siblings who are former pupils saying that Christian values have guided them on their learning journey beyond St Mary's.

Staff are positive role models and demonstrate commitment to the mission of the school. During inspection, they explained how, with Christ at the centre of all they do, there is a true culture of respect and forgiveness in school.

As a result of the inclusive culture, rooted in the teachings of Christ, visitors and those new to the school are welcomed joyfully into the school community. Pupils say that when new children join school, they are quickly included, invited to play games, make friendships and are cared for. This has been key to the success with which the school has successfully doubled its number on roll in the last two years.

The provision for relationship, health and sex education (RHSE) meets both statutory and diocesan requirements. There are plans to review this with other schools in the Blessed Edward Bamber Catholic Multi-Academy Trust (BEBCMAT).

Leaders ensure that all policies and procedures demonstrate the Catholic identity, charism and mission of the school. Leaders engage with the Diocesan Education Service and the school joined the BEBCMAT in September 2022.

Governors provide good support for the Catholic life and mission of the school. They ensure the mission of the school is shared and reviewed with everyone in school and they understand that they have a moral imperative to love one another. Governors are active in the daily life of the school. For example, the parish priest and chair of governors joined pupils on the pilgrimage to Ladyewell shrine and they regularly join pupils and staff for prayer, liturgies and Masses. They accept that there is a need to develop their role further by becoming more involved in rigorous monitoring and evaluation procedures which will enable them to develop a more ambitious vision for the school.

There are good and developing parish links. The church is used well as a resource for worship and for religious education. Masses and liturgies throughout the year bring school and parish together. Pupils' religious artwork is displayed in the church. The new parish priest is a regular and welcome visitor to school.

Directors, leaders and governors demonstrate a commitment to the wellbeing of staff. As a result, there are harmonious relationships amongst all staff and a commitment from everyone to ensure the best opportunities for the pupils. The head teacher of this small school leads by example, demonstrating a pursuit of the common good and service to those in the greatest need.

School self-evaluation is accurate and inspection confirms the school's judgements.

## 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



Pupils make good progress in curriculum religious education and are developing secure knowledge, understanding and skills. They are fully engaged in their learning and are becoming more religiously literate. For example, during inspection, in a lesson observed in upper key stage two, pupils reflected on the conversion of Saul. They worked in small groups to compare scripture to religious art. They reflected and asked relevant, thoughtful questions. For example, some of the pupils recalled and compared scripture of Jesus as healer and this piece of scripture where Jesus took Saul's sight.

In a lesson observed in the lower school, pupils demonstrated a good understanding of Eastertide scripture, from Good Friday to Pentecost. They used their knowledge of the fruits of the Holy Spirit to articulate the impact on the lives of the disciples and also on their own lives. In lessons observed across the whole school, pupils worked extremely well together, listening to the ideas of others in the class or small group and this extended their learning. In the mixed aged classes across the whole school, pupils work extremely well together in groups, with older children supporting their younger classmates.

Work scrutiny shows that pupils produce work which is presented well and shows signs of emerging creativity. The standard of work and the presentation in curriculum religious education is comparable to that in other core subjects. There is a clear sequence with activities building on prior learning. Occasionally, the work in books does not reflect the high standard of discussion in the classroom. Planning more open-ended recorded activities would address this.

Pupils report that they enjoy their religious education lessons. They like being able to record their work in a variety of ways, including spider diagrams, leaflets and storyboards. Pupils demonstrate a developing awareness of some key concepts, using some key vocabulary. Pupil effort and achievement in religious education is celebrated along with other celebrations in whole school assemblies.

The school's records on pupil progress and attainment show parity with other core subjects. A baseline assessment is completed on entry to school. This is used to track progress across the early years foundation stage. Where children's progress is slower than expected, teachers know what needs to be done to help them make more rapid progress. This has been effective in ensuring that those who join the school mid-way through the year, or in year groups other than the reception class, are able to gain the knowledge necessary for them to access the curriculum.

Across the school, teachers have secure subject knowledge. They plan well for the mixed age classes and ensure tasks are differentiated, either by task or by outcome. In religious education lessons, teachers use questioning effectively to identify where pupils are in their understanding. They are skilled in identifying any misconceptions and improving learning for pupils. During lessons, pupils are given time for reflection and they respond very well to this. As a result, the school effectively ensures the spiritual and moral development of all pupils. The religious education curriculum influences other curriculum areas, including science and geography, with care of God's world as a priority and all staff are committed to the value of religious education.

Religious education is resourced to the same level as other core subjects. Timetabling shows that religious education lessons are given a high priority. Leaders have begun to plan for the implementation of the new *Religious Education Directory* and plan to work with other small schools and schools within BEBCMAT to ensure effective planning for mixed-aged classes.

Staff value the support and professional development they receive, in particular from staff at a local partner school in Blackpool, which is also a member of the trust. New members of staff receive tailored support from the head teacher, who is also the religious education subject leader. This ensures that teaching of the subject is good across the whole 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 .....

2



Pupils respond very well to the experiences of prayer and liturgy provided by the school. There is a clear daily pattern of prayer with traditional and modern prayers which is given a high priority. Signs placed on classroom doors ask others not to disturb, as class prayer is taking place. All pupils know the school prayer and can reflect on what it means to them as members of the school community. Scripture is used every prayer and liturgy. This is either linked to the liturgical year or to themes covered in curriculum religious education lessons.

During inspection, in the early years, children responded to a call to prayer when the teacher rang a small bell and they moved quietly to the space at the front of the room. They listened carefully to scripture and then took turns passing a saying aloud their name and recognising that they are special to God. Across the whole school, pupils show reverence during times of prayer. They gather quietly, reflect in silence and join in with sing traditional hymns and prayers.

Pupils say they enjoy prayer and liturgy and are able to discuss what they have gained from it. Some are able to talk about the gospel message they will take forward, as they work in school or go home to their families. Pupils are aware of their patronal feast and enjoy celebrating in school.

There is a clear policy on prayer and liturgy, which is followed by all staff. As a result, there is consistency of practice across the whole school in this with everyone using an agreed planning format. This ensures all gather quietly with quiet music used appropriately to enhance the experience, listen to the Word of God, respond and reflect, then go forth and share the Gospel. Staff support pupils in planning these prayerful activities and then spend

time with them, reflecting and reviewing the prayer experience.

The head teacher leads whole school prayers and each week, modelling good practice to other staff and to pupils and bringing the school community together. With the support of leaders, all staff understand the liturgical year and are role models for pupils in leading prayer. They use a range of resources, including Cafod prayer materials, to enhance the prayer life of their pupils.

This is a small school with little communal space, however, each classroom has a dedicated prayer space, the colours of which reflect the liturgical year. These are well maintained and resourced.

Leaders work hard to maintain the good relationship with the parish to help pupils participate more fully in the liturgy. For example, pupils, staff and families regularly attend liturgies, Masses and other significant events, including on Holy Days, in the church, which is within close proximity.

Although not written, discussion with leaders and teachers shows there is a clear strategy for building up skills of participation, reflective of the age and capacity of the pupils. This results in a progression of the involvement in pupils in prayer and liturgy across the school leading to older pupils successfully planning and leading acts of worship, both in the classroom and for the wider school and parish.

## Information about the school

Full name of school	St Mary's Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	149264
Full postal address of the school	St Mary's Road, Great Eccleston, Preston, PR3 0ZH
School phone number	01995 670364
Name of head teacher or principal	Mr David Ramsay
Chair of governing board	Mr Geoff Lyons
School Website	<a href="https://www.st-marysgreateccleston.lancs.sch.uk/">https://www.st-marysgreateccleston.lancs.sch.uk/</a>
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	Blessed Edward Bamber Catholic Multi Academy Trust
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy
Age-range of pupils	4-11
Trustees	Lancaster Roman Catholic Diocesan Trustees Registered
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	June 2016
Previous denominational inspection grade	2 - Good

## The inspection team

Mrs Jacqueline Hampson

Lead inspector

Mr Alan Parry

Team inspector

## 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