

# Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School, Preston

URN: 151084

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Bishop of Lancaster

11–12 June 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 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

## Compliance statement

- The school is fully compliant with the general norms for religious education laid down by the Bishops' Conference.
- The school is fully compliant with any additional requirements laid down by the Bishop of Lancaster.
- The school has responded fully to the areas for improvement from the previous Catholic school inspection.

## What the school does well

- Sacred Heart is a joyful school, where pupils flourish and thrive due to the love and care they receive from all staff members.
- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are excellent.

- The school environment has been carefully considered to enhance the mission statement, so that all are loved, valued and encouraged to be the best they can be.
- Governors are highly ambitious for the Catholic life and mission of this school.
- Staff and leaders work exceptionally well together to serve the Sacred Heart community, ensuring Christ is at the heart.

### What the school needs to improve

- Plan opportunities to make connections between discrete subjects so that the whole of the taught curriculum, with religious education at the core, expresses the Catholic understanding of God's Word.
- Develop the use of creative approaches to teaching Religious Education, so that pupils' work reflects their individuality and creativity.
- Enhance the pupil leadership of the prayer life of the school by developing a clear skills strategy which also takes account of pupils' gifts and talents.

## 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

1

**Provision**

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

1

**Leadership**

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

1

1

Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School is a fully inclusive school which serves a diverse community in Preston. Pupils know and understand the school's mission statement; this is reflected in their understanding that their school is 'a place where everyone is loved and valued.' Pupils are proud to be part of the community and could speak to inspectors about its uniqueness where everyone is 'welcomed and respected for who they are.'

Pupils are actively involved in responding to the demands of the Church's social teaching to meet the needs of others, both locally, nationally and globally. They refer to the teachings of Jesus and to letters from the Pope and are able to make links to their own lives and their personal responsibility to help others. For example, pupils in the Cafod group raise funds for those less fortunate than themselves locally. They also respond to international natural disasters and make the link to the Corporal works of Mercy. They reflect that, by helping others, they are 'letting Jesus into our hearts.'

Pupil behaviour is exemplary in classrooms and around school. Pupils understand the importance of being respectful to all and are able to link this to their own school values and the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

The school has a very strong Catholic identity, built on strong Catholic values and tradition. The staff are a close, strong team who are exemplary role models for the pupils and make an excellent contribution to activities which enhance the Catholic life and mission of the school. There is a very strong culture of welcome to all members of the community and staff have worked hard to establish trusting relationships with parents and carers. This culture of

welcome also ensures that those families from different faiths and backgrounds feel well received and respected.

The school is a joyous place to learn and work, with a sense of calmness and safety which is felt by all who visit and work there. The school environment has been very carefully considered, and bears witness to the school's distinctive Catholic character. For example, a small space for pupils to spend time reflecting on and responding to their learning in religious education has been created in the main corridor.

The provision for relationships, sex and health education is carefully planned and monitored and meets both statutory and diocesan requirements.

Governors and leaders embrace and actively promote the bishop's vision for the diocese. They were proactive in joining the Mater Ecclesiae Trust, recognising the opportunity to protect the unique Catholic identity of their school. They are now working closely with Trust leaders in communities of learning, sharing expertise and best practice. Governors give the highest regard to the Catholic life of the school. They are regular visitors to school, providing both support and challenge in all aspects of school life.

The headteacher and deputy headteacher are supporting staff to begin to make connections between discrete subject areas and the teachings of the Church. They recognise the need to ensure the whole curriculum reflects the richness of Catholic contributions to culture and aim to develop this further across all key stages. This good practice should continue so that it is apparent and rooted in all aspects of school life.

There are good links with the parish and many parishioners are involved in the life of the school. In addition to the parish priest, the school is supported by a deacon, who is a regular visitor to school, assisting the religious and spiritual formation of staff and pupils.

Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school, recognising the love and care shown for their children. One parent told inspectors she was proud of who her daughter has become since joining the school.

## Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

### Religious education key judgement grade

**Pupil outcomes**

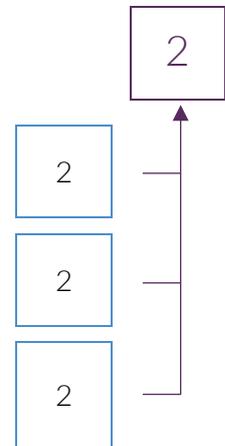
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

**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 follow a well-planned and sequenced curriculum based on the *Religious Education Directory*. Staff share knowledge organisers for each unit so that the children can identify prior learning and also what new learning they will encounter. The staff use effective methods to ensure the children are remembering and building on their prior knowledge.

Pupils are fully engaged in all lessons recognising how they “bring us closer to God”. They enjoy lessons and show enthusiasm and interest in the units that they are studying. In Key Stage 1 the pupils recognised how Mass was said and used the church role-play area to reinforce their understanding. Pupils present their work in their books to a good standard; they are proud of this work and respond positively to it being celebrated on displays in the classroom and around the learning environment.

Pupils use religious language appropriate to their age and use this to explain and develop their understanding. In Key Stage 1 children referred to parables and explained aspects of the Mass and in Key Stage 2 pupils talked about persecution and mysteries.

Staff have a good subject knowledge that they are committed to strengthening through opportunities for professional development. This has allowed them to become confident in supporting the children’s learning experiences. They are committed to the value of religious education. Planning is thorough and follows a clear structure that has enabled the children to make good progress and attain well. Staff use thoughtful questioning in lessons to ensure that pupils’ knowledge and skills are being developed and make clear adaptations for some pupils.

Staff are committed to ensuring that what the pupils learn about in religious education can be used to support the development of the whole child. Pupils speak of how religious education helps them to make decisions in their daily lives.

There are good relationships between staff and children, and this means that the pupils are comfortable to share their ideas and suggestions, as they know that their teachers and peers will respect them. One pupil remarked that she loved religious education because “in our whole school we help and support each other”. Pupils recognise that staff will support them in lessons and will challenge them to develop their independence.

Pupils’ attainment in religious education is in line with that of other subjects and tracking has shown that disadvantaged children are making good progress against national averages.

Leaders and governors ensure that religious education is given a high priority within the curriculum. They recognise the importance of resourcing and staffing this area in line with other core subjects and are committed to providing staff with training opportunities. They regularly meet with school leaders to discuss attainment and provision within religious education.

The subject leader has a clear vision for teaching and learning and ensures that the school curriculum meets the requirements of the *Religious Education Directory*. There is a robust monitoring system in place so that leaders can acknowledge strengths and give support where needed. Through this system leaders have recognised that, as staff embed the curriculum and gain confidence in its delivery, more creative opportunities should arise to develop pupil’s individuality and pupils should begin to develop more creative responses.

The subject leader and all staff are very clear about the high expectations that they have for pupils, and they have ensured that adaptations are being made for disadvantaged pupils so that they can achieve alongside their peers.

The school’s self-evaluation is a shared document that has been informed by clear monitoring and detailed analysis and as such is leading to good outcomes for all children.

## 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

Prayer and liturgy is central to the life of the school and is valued by all. Pupils know about the Church's seasons, and they can speak about the liturgical colours for each season and prayer and liturgy at particular times of the year, including Advent, Lent and Pentecost. They enjoy praying and can make links between their prayer and actions during difficult times; for example, when they see the suffering caused by natural disasters in the news.

Some pupils work well with staff to prepare meaningful experiences of prayer and liturgy and those who are members of the class mini mission teams are confident to take part and lead. They are supported by staff to do this. Leaders recognise the need to develop this further, giving all pupils the opportunity to plan, lead and evaluate prayer, with increasing confidence and skill.

From a young age, pupils respond well to experiences of prayer and liturgy; they are able to sit in silence for respectful reflection, join in prayer and sing. During inspection, pupils in Year 2 led celebration of the Word for the whole school. All pupils showed reverence, and the singing was joyful. In discussion, the lead group explained that they had planned it with the support of adults in school.

There is a daily pattern of prayer that reflects the rhythm and prayer life of the church. Prayer is routinely planned and is a central part of every school day, forming routine gatherings of pupils, staff, and leaders. Prayer and liturgy sessions observed demonstrated a variety of ways of praying, including scripture readings, singing, traditional prayers and opportunities for short reflections. This could be developed further, for example to include opportunities for spontaneous prayer, Christian meditation, Visio Divina and opportunities for deeper reflection.

The school provides regular opportunities for pupils to visit the parish church for the celebration of Mass, both in class groups and as a whole school.

Seasonally appropriate scripture is shared across the liturgical year with the Sunday gospel of the week shared and reflected on the following week. Pupils interviewed said they enjoy prayer and liturgy and are able to discuss what they have learned. Parents, parishioners, and governors are welcomed to share in the spiritual life of the school through various services, including assemblies and Masses throughout the year. Leaders understand the liturgical year and are good role models to both staff and pupils. Parents value the opportunities offered to join the staff and pupils for assemblies, Masses and other times of prayer and feel very welcomed in the prayer life of the school.

The school has an up-to-date prayer and liturgy policy, and staff are aware of how this is used across school. A whole school calendar is in place with opportunities for Mass, Holy days of Obligation and important saint days.

Staff model good prayer and liturgy using seasonally appropriate scripture. All the classrooms have dedicated prayer spaces which are well cared for and contain seasonally appropriate content and themes.

Leaders offer regular opportunities for professional development in prayer and liturgy, and the subject leader attends diocesan training when required. A recent focus has been on the four parts of the *Celebration of the Word*. Leaders recognise this can now be developed further in line with the *Prayer and Liturgy Directory*, to enable all staff to have a secure knowledge about Catholic traditions.

Prayer and liturgy is monitored by the subject leader and constructive feedback is given, enabling all staff to develop their knowledge and skills further. Information about the quality of prayer and liturgy is shared with governors at meetings and observed by governors during visit days.

## Information about the school

Full name of school	Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	151084
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	8883642
Full postal address of the school	Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School, Poulton Street, Ashton, Preston, PR2 2SA
School phone number	01772726937
Headteacher	Lucy Scanlon
Chair of Governors	Michael Crowther
School Website	<a href="http://www.sacredheart.lancs.sch.uk">www.sacredheart.lancs.sch.uk</a>
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	N/A
Phase	Primary
Type of school	Mater Ecclesiae Catholic Multi-Academy Trust
Admissions policy	N/A
Age-range of pupils	4-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	November 2018
Previous denominational inspection grade	2 - Good

## The inspection team

Jacqueline Hampson  
Liz Kendall

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