

# St Bernard's Catholic Primary School, Preston

URN: 149312

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Bishop of Lancaster

26–27 September 2024

## 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

1

#### 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

## What the school does well

- The mission statement is known and lived out by all members of the school community.
- The school has a strong Catholic identity which is valued by the community it serves.
- Behaviour in lessons and around school is exemplary.
- Pupils make a significant and highly valuable contribution to the Catholic life of the school
- The new senior leadership team and the religious education subject leader provide excellent support for all staff.

## What the school needs to improve

- Ensure the school's website and other forms of communication reflect the priority given to the Catholic identity and mission of the school.
- Develop opportunities in lessons for pupils to be able to ask questions of adults and peers, to deepen learning and understanding of key vocabulary.
- Leaders should familiarise themselves with the *Prayer and Liturgy Directory* and implement a plan of provision and progression.

## 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

St Bernard's Catholic Primary School is a happy and vibrant school, where children know they are loved by the staff and by God. Pupils are proud to be part of the St Bernard's 'family'. The mission statement 'You are precious in my eyes.' is understood and lived out by all. As a result, there is a culture of safety, respect and love.

Pupils understand and can articulate Jesus' mission in the Gospels to serve others. Pupils are actively involved in responding to the demands of the Church's social teaching. They demonstrate a keen sense of justice and through their actions, seek to serve those in need. For example, they support many charities, including *Mary's Meals*, *Cafod* and *Metanoia*. They regularly suggest ways to support these charities and older pupils do this independently and spontaneously. In this way, they significantly enhance the Catholic life of the school. Across the whole school, pupils have a well-developed understanding of stewardship and care for our common home, and they understand their personal responsibility for this. Behaviour is exemplary, with love and respect at the heart of all interactions.

Staff embrace, and are committed to, the school's mission statement. They recognise the unique talents and gifts of each child and acknowledge the presence of Christ in each other. The pastoral team, guided by senior leaders, provides exceptional support to many pupils and their families, some of whom are vulnerable. They work tirelessly to build and maintain trusting relationships with parents and carers. Their work supports a culture of inclusivity, where all are welcomed without exception and where every child flourishes. As a result, the school is a welcoming and joyful place. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the work of the school. They told inspectors it is a 'safe haven' and a place where children are

'safe, respected and loved.' Families from different faiths and backgrounds state they feel welcome and respected.

The school has a welcoming and extremely engaging Catholic environment. Senior leaders have worked hard to ensure the Catholic character of the school is evident throughout. In all classrooms and in communal areas, scripture and gospel values are artfully displayed.

The provision for relationships, sex and health education is carefully planned, using the 'Life to the Full' programme, meeting all statutory and diocesan requirements.

The newly appointed headteacher has a clear understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement in the school. He is enthusiastic about the continued success of this popular school. Governors are highly committed, have a clear and robust vision and know the school exceptionally well. They are mindful of their duty as guardians of the Catholic faith and mission of the school. They are fully involved in the work of the school and the wider mission of Catholic social teaching. They regularly join staff and pupils for liturgies and Masses. Policies and procedures demonstrate the priority given to the Catholic identity of the school.

The school has embraced the Bishop's vision for collaboration and became a founding member of the Mater Ecclesiae Catholic Multi Academy Trust. Several staff members take an active role in research groups within the Trust.

There is a flourishing partnership with the parish. The deacons and parish priest are regular visitors to school. Children and staff attend Mass and other liturgies both in school and in church, including on Sundays.

Staff report they are by supported by senior leaders and value the expert help and support from governors, senior leaders and the religious education leader. There is excellent provision for the continued professional development of all staff, including with the diocese and the trust. Induction procedures are robust and ensure the highest pastoral care for staff.

## Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

### Religious education key judgement grade

**Pupil outcomes**

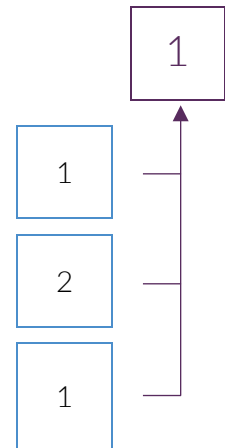
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

**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



Across the whole school pupils are developing excellent knowledge, understanding and skills in religious education. They make consistently good progress, as evidenced in the school's tracking system. As a result, pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs, achieve excellent outcomes. Behaviour is very good in religious education lessons because pupils are actively engaged and enthusiastic. Across the school, most pupils are able to work independently.

They are religiously literate and demonstrate a growing awareness of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life. Pupils are skilled in using subject-specific vocabulary in their responses to questions in lessons. Outcomes for pupils are above average when compared with those in other core subjects. Pupils are proud of the work they produce and talk about the importance of religious education in their lives. One pupil told inspectors, "Jesus sets a perfect example for us all to follow in his footsteps." Overall, pupils work is of a high quality although leaders recognise the need to ensure this in every year group.

Pupils speak confidently about previous learning, using relevant vocabulary. They enjoy their learning and approach lessons with great interest. They enjoy learning about other religious faiths. Pupils understand how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve further. Teachers are confident in their subject knowledge and are committed to the value of religious education.

Planning is thorough and teachers use high-quality resources including art, music and technology to enhance the provision. This enables teachers to tailor learning to meet the needs of all children. Visits to places of worship and regular visitors to school further enhance the provision. Pupil effort is celebrated and motivating.

During inspection of Early Years/Foundation Stage, children were excited to think that God would be proud of them when sharing the creation story at home. In some classes, teachers introduce new vocabulary and refer to this throughout the lesson, which supports pupils in their written work. Teachers and support staff also use the new vocabulary when supporting or challenging pupils, so that by the end of the lesson pupils have a secure understanding. Some teachers use questioning skilfully to extend learning and deepen understanding. They encourage other pupils to build on responses, so that all pupils are able to develop a deeper understanding of new concepts and build on previous learning.

Leaders recognise that ensuring consistency of practice in questioning, using time for personal reflection and paired discussions will help maximise learning for all pupils. Leaders and governors are committed to securing high quality professional development opportunities for staff. For example, the subject leader provides individual professional development alongside regular diocesan training. The passionate, ambitious and supportive subject leader of religious education, along with the newly appointed senior leadership team, has a clear vision of outstanding teaching and learning. Religious education ambassadors in every class work effectively with staff to articulate their learning in religious education and the impact it has on their lives.

Excellent links are forged with the wider community to allow pupils to benefit from a wide range of enrichment activities, for example visits to places of worship. Religious education has full parity with other core curriculum subjects including for professional development, resourcing, timetabling, communicating and reporting to parents.

The school has chosen to fully implement the *Religious Education Directory* across all year groups this year, writing plans for some year groups and using suitable programmes to support teachers. Self-evaluation is rigorous and accurate. Leaders and governors understand the strengths of the school as well as what needs to improve.

## 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 respond well to the experiences of prayer and liturgy provided by the school. In particular, they show their love of singing by joining in enthusiastically. All pupils know the school prayer and school song and can reflect on their meaning to them as members of the school community. Across the school pupils respond well to the ringing of a bell or singing bowl, by closing their eyes or bowing their heads to engage in quiet, personal reflection.

Scripture is used in every liturgy and celebration of the Word. This is either linked to the liturgical year or to themes covered in curriculum religious education lessons. Pupils understand there are different ways of praying and recognise it is a "a chance to feel close to God and communicate with him." There is a daily pattern of prayer for all pupils, including those in the nursery class. They pray every day and some pupils in key stage two work with their peers and staff to prepare and lead liturgies. Across the school, pupils show reverence at times of prayer. 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 the school's patronal feast and enjoy celebrating this in school.

The school makes good use of spaces available and provides well-cared for prayer areas in all classrooms. Staff work well with parents and include them in the prayer life of the school by inviting them to assemblies and liturgies.

During inspection, older pupils planned and led a class prayer and liturgy on service. They stood to greet the gospel, singing Alleluia and showed reverence when reading from scripture. Pupils were encouraged to reflect on how they might serve others while passing

around a cross in a moment of quiet reflection. However, this practice is not consistent across the whole school and pupils do not always know traditional responses used in Mass or liturgies. Leaders recognise that there needs to be a clearer strategy for building up skills of participation, reflective of the age and capacity of the pupils so that there is progression of the involvement in pupils in prayer and liturgy across the school. This will also ensure that pupils know a range of traditional prayers by the end of key stage two, as detailed in the *Prayer and Liturgy Directory*.

There is a policy on prayer and liturgy, which is followed by all staff. Staff support pupils in planning prayerful activities and the pupils enjoy the opportunity to lead prayer and liturgy in class. This needs to be reviewed in line with the new *Prayer and Liturgy Directory*.

The head teacher leads whole school prayers each week, bringing the school community together. The scripture and prayers guide the work of the school in the coming week. With the support of leaders, all staff understand the liturgical year and are becoming 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. Leaders recently engaged with the diocesan religious education advisor to support in the development of staff confidence in leading prayer and liturgy.

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 and on Sundays, in church.



## Information about the school

Full name of school	St Bernard's Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	149312
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	8883352
Full postal address of the school	Victoria Park Avenue, Lea, Preston, PR2 1RP
School phone number	01772 728153
Headteacher	Roy Turner
Chair of Local Governing Body	Angela Harding
School Website	<a href="http://www.st-bernards.lancs.sch.uk">www.st-bernards.lancs.sch.uk</a>
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	Mater Ecclesiae Catholic Multi-Academy Trust
Phase	Primary
Type of school	Academy
Admissions policy	N/A
Age-range of pupils	3-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	March 2018
Previous denominational inspection grade	1 - Outstanding

## The inspection team

Jacqueline Hampson  
Nicola Holt

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