

# St Mary and St Michael's Catholic Primary School, Garstang

URN: 151563

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Bishop of Lancaster

26–27 June 2025

## 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 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

2

## 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

- The mission statement is regularly reviewed and is known throughout the school.
- Pupils behave well around school and during times of prayer and liturgy.
- Pupils recognise they are unique and made in the image of God.
- The Catholic character of the school is thoughtfully reflected in the whole of the school environment.
- The headteacher strives to live out her faith in her relationships with pupils and their families.

## What the school needs to improve

- Leaders and governors should ensure that pupils understand the theology underpinning Catholic social teaching so that they can articulate how to pursue the common good and serve those in need.
- Provide pupils with greater opportunities in religious education lessons in order to consolidate their learning.
- Continue to develop the role of prayer leaders in leading prayer and liturgy across the whole school, to increase their impact on the spiritual life of the school.

## 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 know they are valued and cared for as unique individuals, and they recognise this in others. Through the school song, pupils are able to articulate the school's mission, which is known throughout the whole school community. Pupils told inspectors how their peers are kind to each other in both their words and actions.

Pupils are developing an understanding and awareness of Catholic social teaching. Those who are members of the Laudato Si group are proud of the work they have done to protect the environment, for example through recycling and growing fruit and vegetables. They recently planted a tree for the Jubilee Year of Hope. They support a range of local and global charities including a local hospice, foodbank, Cafod and Macmillan. Pupils work with the parish Saint Vincent de Paul group, making Christmas cards for the sick and housebound. Not all pupils are able to make the link between their actions and the teachings of Jesus and leaders recognise developing this would enable pupils to respond more proactively to those in need.

Behaviour overall is good in lessons and around school. Where needed, there are clear strategies to include those children who need additional support, in line with the school's mission statement and the mission of the Church.

This is a fully inclusive school. Those new to the school feel welcomed and settle quickly, making lots of friends. Parents appreciate the work of the staff and leaders, recognising the inclusivity of the school. One parent told inspectors, 'communication with the school is excellent; the headteacher is always there for me if I need to talk to her.' There is a clear commitment to supporting the most vulnerable, driven by the vision of the headteacher. Visitors to school are warmly welcomed.

The learning environment reflects the school's mission through explicit and effective signs of the school's Catholic character. For example, the mission statement and religious artefacts are displayed in classrooms and communal areas. Each class has a religious education working wall and a prayer space, which reflects the liturgical year. These support teachers in ensuring the spiritual development of pupils is considered daily.

The school's provision for relationships, sex and health education meets both statutory and diocesan requirements and is faithful to the teachings of the Church. These lessons are planned carefully throughout the year, with prayer at the heart.

There is a firm commitment from leaders at all levels to promote and support the Catholic life and mission of the school. All leaders promote the bishop's vision and ensure that Christ is always at the heart of everything. This is reflected through their engagement with the diocese and the Mater Ecclesiae Multi Academy Trust, which they joined in May 2025.

Leaders communicate frequently with parents and carers about the school's mission through a variety of means including the weekly newsletter, which always make reference to the Sunday gospel. Parents are invited to share and celebrate regularly in school and in church with staff and pupils. Parents recognise the inclusivity of the school and support this through their feedback and participation in events. Leaders and governors ensure the curriculum is well planned, cohesive and progressive in its support of Catholic life and mission.

The school benefits from being close geographically to the church. Children regularly attend Mass and other liturgies in church, joined by parishioners and parents. This helps strengthen the parish links.

Governors are supportive of the leadership within the school and challenge appropriately. Self-evaluation is mostly a true reflection of the work of the school. Some priorities in recent years need to be further embedded in order to see full impact and therefore improve outcomes in the Catholic life and mission of the school, in line with the school's evaluation.

## 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

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

2

Pupils at St Mary and St Michael's Catholic Primary School are developing secure knowledge and understanding which reflect the requirements of the *Religious Education Directory*. Pupils enjoy their lessons and show interest and enthusiasm. They are keen to share their ideas with their peers and the whole class. Behaviour in lessons is good, as pupils are engaged in their learning and are able to concentrate well and work independently.

Across the whole school pupils are developing an ability to ask questions about their learning. For example, during inspection in a lesson observed in Key Stage 1, pupils enjoyed working in pairs devising questions to ask about a religious painting which showed the compassion of Jesus. Pupils would benefit from greater opportunities for recall and feedback strategies in individual lessons to consolidate previous learning. This would ensure all pupils make consistently good progress and achieve well.

Across the school pupils are becoming religiously literate; this is because teachers share and reinforce key vocabulary throughout lessons. This is included explicitly in teachers' planning for religious education lessons. Overall pupils' work is of a good standard, although in some classes presentation of pupil work is not always as good as that of other subjects.

Teachers are confident in their subject knowledge and have embraced the new *Religious Education Directory* using the Vine and Branches programme to support the teaching of religious education. All staff create a positive climate for learning with pupils being encouraged to support and help each other. As teachers become more familiar with the content in the *Religious Education Directory*, they are seeking ways to help pupils record their work in a range of ways. For example, in a lesson observed in Key Stage 2, the teacher was creative in the implementation of the suggested activity from the programme, ensuring the practical task gave

opportunity to engage and challenge the thinking of the pupils. In most classes the impact of the religious education curriculum on the moral and spiritual development of pupils is evident as pupils are given time to reflect on the discussions that take place. Pupils understand the marking system used. However, they have a limited understanding of how well they are doing, how to improve their work and the progress they have made.

Leaders and governors are committed to ensuring that religious education is comparable to other core subjects in terms of resourcing, staffing and timetabling. Religious education is given the required time and is timetabled carefully to maximise learning. As there are mixed-age classes in school, careful thought has been given to the curriculum for religious education, so that pupils can develop knowledge and skills across the year groups. The subject leader is confident in her role and attends all diocesan training, ensuring teaching staff are kept up to date by disseminating the information. This forms part of a professional development plan for all staff. Where possible, opportunities for enrichment activities are provided, to enhance learning.

Moderation of religious education work has taken place with other leaders in Catholic schools both within the Trust and in a wider diocesan group. This work supports consistency of standards. Leaders have ensured that teaching and learning in religious education is consistently good over time. Regular self-evaluation, which includes monitoring by leaders and governors, will need to continue to inform of the standards in religious education and so ensure all pupils continue to make progress.

## 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 prayer and liturgy provided by the school. They fully embrace the opportunity to reflect in silence. Pupils enjoy singing the school hymn, which is the school's mission statement.

Pupils are developing an understanding of the different parts of the liturgical year. When invited, pupils undertake ministerial roles in prayer and liturgy with reverence and respect. For example, some pupils are chosen as prayer leaders. They are supported by staff to prepare experiences of prayer for their class and the whole school. They use this knowledge to support other pupils in planning and leading prayer and liturgy. Developing this leadership further so that more pupils are able lead and plan prayer would increase the participation and deepen the understanding of prayer and liturgy for pupils.

Some pupils spoke to inspectors about the impact of the prayer life of the school on their own lives. They spoke of praying daily at home, both independently and with their families.

Prayer and liturgy is central to the life of St Mary and St Michael. It is evident that gathering to pray is routine and that the daily pattern of prayer is embedded in every year group. During inspection, pupils were reverent and responded very well to periods for personal reflection.

Pupils and adults are offered a range of ways to pray within the Catholic tradition. Each classroom has an age-appropriate prayer space. During inspection, on the feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, pupils were given heart-shaped pieces of paper and responded to prayer by writing down ways in which they could show compassion to someone else. They later placed these on the prayer table with the statue of the Sacred Heart.

The start of the Year of Jubilee was marked across the whole school and pupils wrote thoughtful prayers on the theme of hope. These were displayed with beautiful artwork, creating a focus for prayer in the school hall.

Consideration is given to the choice of scripture and is adapted for age and stage appropriateness, ensuring clear progression.

Music is used appropriately to enhance the prayer experience. In addition, careful consideration is given to the use of space for prayer. For example, a spare classroom is used by classes during times of prayer, so that all pupils can be seated comfortably, with attention given to lighting and music.

The policy for prayer and liturgy has been rewritten in line with the *Prayer and Liturgy Directory*. It includes appendices which support the development of different levels of skills of participation in prayer and liturgy. Leaders and governors have planned the school calendar to celebrate key times in the liturgical year. For example, there is an annual plan which ensures pupils and staff are given opportunities to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation, attend Mass, pray the Rosary and participate in special liturgies. For example, opportunities are offered that help celebrate the holy seasons of Advent and Lent. Parents value the opportunities to join their children for many of these Masses and liturgies in church.

Leaders have attended diocesan training on the *Prayer and Liturgy Directory* and have shared the outcomes with staff through staff meetings. Further support and guidance from the diocese has been accessed and acted upon to help staff and pupils in planning and leading prayer and liturgy. Priority is given to resourcing prayer and liturgy, demonstrating its high importance to the school. Prayer and liturgy is reviewed as part of the school's monitoring and self-evaluation cycle and identified areas to improve are acted upon. Focusing this more clearly on outcomes for pupils will further improve practice.



## Information about the school

Full name of school	St Mary and St Michael's Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	151563
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	8883702
Full postal address of the school	Castle Lane, Garstang, Preston, PR3 1RB
School phone number	01995603023
Headteacher	Luena Archibald
Chair of Governors	Paul McCann
School Website	<a href="http://www.st-mary-st-michael.lancs.sch.uk/">www.st-mary-st-michael.lancs.sch.uk/</a>
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	Mater Ecclesiae Catholic Multi-Academy Trust
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	March 2019
Previous denominational inspection grade	2 - Good

## The inspection team

Jacqueline Hampson  
Fiona Robinson

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