



St Oswald's Catholic Primary School

URN: 106488

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Archbishop of Liverpool

22–23 October 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

Religious education (p.5)

The quality of curriculum religious education

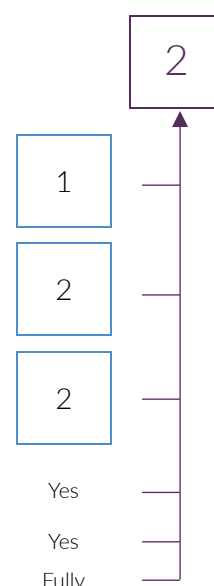
Collective worship (p.7)

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

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 of the diocesan bishop

The school has responded to the areas for improvement from the last inspection



Compliance statement

- The school meets the requirements for religious education laid down by the Bishops' Conference.
- The school is fully compliant with any additional requirements of the Archbishop of Liverpool.
- The school has fully responded to the areas for improvement identified in the last inspection.

What the school does well

- St Oswald's is a welcoming school with a strong sense of community, where behaviour is excellent, relationships are strong, and priority is given to pastoral care and support for pupils and their families.
- The mission statement is known and lived out through 'Ozzie's Way'.
- Links with Malawi provide pupils with a unique opportunity to develop their understanding of Catholic social teaching and see the direct impact of their actions.
- The subject leader is an inspiration to staff; passionate, knowledgeable and driven, with a clear vision and plan for further development.
- Professional development and support is having a positive impact on staff practice to secure consistency of provision for religious education and collective worship.

What the school needs to improve

- Provide pupils with an understanding of the principles of Catholic social teaching so that they can better express how their actions are guided by the example of Christ and the gospels.
- Structure religious education lessons to provide sufficient time for independent learning, using questioning to challenge and deepen learning.
- Expand opportunities for wider pupil participation and ministry in prayer and liturgy by continued use of a broader variety of prayer and celebration of the word.

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

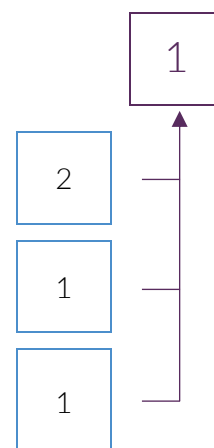
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

Provision

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

Leadership

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



At St Oswald's, pupils actively engage in living out the mission statement through 'Ozzie's Way', which guides daily actions and attitudes. From joining Reception, children are nurtured in the understanding that they are loved by God and valued as unique individuals. This sense of belonging fosters a genuine culture of care and respect. Pupils actively support others by organising competitions and fundraising initiatives for causes both local and global, including partnerships with Malawi and contributions to the Ashton Food Bank. The school supports families with uniform and 'freebie Friday'. They are inspired by role models including two local parish deacons whose compassion and service reflect the values that they strive for. Through willingly leading and participating in fundraising activities, community events such as carol singing and the Faith in Action award, pupils take personal responsibility for serving others and living out the principles of Catholic social teaching. While their commitment is evident, they are still developing confidence in linking their actions directly to the example of Christ and teachings of the Church. Nonetheless, their enthusiasm and proactive spirit demonstrate strong foundations in faith and service that continue to flourish.

The mission statement, 'love Jesus, love learning, love each other' is at the heart of school life. Staff consistently use it to guide pupils' actions and interactions, during religious education lessons, celebrations of the word and through the wider curriculum. For example, Year 5 and Year 6 pupils created items in design and technology lessons to sell and raise funds for pupils in Malawi. This commitment fosters a strong sense of community, rooted in kindness, love, and care; a real strength of the school. Relationships also reflect this, with staff showing deep compassion for pupils and their families. The school offers pastoral care that is highly valued by parents and carers, with one parent sharing that, 'my child is in the safe hands of staff who know

her and love her'. Opportunities such as retreat days, the Malawi partnership, and the Faith in Action award support the development of the whole person, with staff and pupils embracing these experiences wholeheartedly. These initiatives enrich the spiritual and moral life of the school. Provision for relationships, sex, and health education is fully aligned with archdiocesan expectations and is faithful to Church teaching. Pupils clearly articulate their learning about relationships and personal development.

Leaders and governors have Christ at the heart of the school's vision and daily life. They lead by example, placing faith and mission at the centre of their decision-making and ambition for the school. Governors play a vital role in school improvement, offering challenge and support to leaders and staff. Staff feel valued and supported by school leaders, with pastoral care and wellbeing prioritised. Leaders actively engage with archdiocesan opportunities to strengthen Catholic life and mission. They serve the local parish through attendance at Mass, sacramental preparation, and events for parishioners such as sing-along bingo, with a parish deacon taking a key role in bringing faith alive for the pupils. Parents are welcome participants and understand how the mission is lived out through 'Ozzie's Way', which helps them to appreciate the strong partnership between home and school. Catholic social teaching is evident most notably through the school's passionate partnership with Malawi. Though not always evident in policies, staff make meaningful links to the mission statement and Catholic social teaching across the curriculum and wider school life. This is recognised as a strength by parents, with one stating, 'the Catholic ethos spreads widely into all that the children do at school'. Rigorous monitoring and evaluation inform professional development and formation, including retreat days and opportunities for staff and governors to contribute to self-evaluation.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

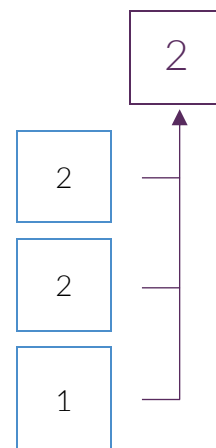
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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 are developing secure knowledge, understanding and skills, which is reflected in their confidence in lessons and high levels of attainment. Over time, they demonstrate the ability to know more and remember more, supported by regular opportunities to reflect on and recall prior learning. This progression is evidenced in their books and online portfolios, which include photographs and videos showcasing increasingly varied learning. As the new *Religious Education Directory* becomes embedded, greater individuality and creativity is emerging. Pupils speak confidently about their learning and use their knowledge to reflect ethically. This was particularly evident in a Year 1 lesson, which focused on caring for our common home, drawing on teachings from *Laudato Si*. Pupils are introduced to a wide range of religious vocabulary and use it effectively, although opportunities to deepen their understanding of new vocabulary are not always taken. Behaviour for learning is consistently strong across all lessons, with pupils showing independence, high engagement, and enjoyment of religious education. Older pupils can articulate how they have progressed and identify areas for improvement. However, within some lessons, there is still a need to provide more time and opportunity for pupils to apply their learning independently, which would further enhance their understanding and increase opportunities for greater challenge.

Teachers consistently demonstrate strong subject knowledge in religious education lessons and as a result pupils learn new content well. Planning is aligned clearly with the *Religious Education Directory*, ensuring that expectations are appropriate and learning is purposeful. Questioning is used to check understanding and gather feedback. However, it is not always used effectively to stretch and deepen thinking or challenge pupils' understanding. In lessons, pupils' efforts and achievements are celebrated, and verbal feedback helps them to move forward in their learning. Pupils recognise that this feedback helps them to improve. Teaching assistants play a valuable

role in supporting learning, contributing to the overall effectiveness of lessons across the school. Lessons are thoughtfully designed to include opportunities for moral and spiritual reflection, and pupils are increasingly able to respond in varied ways; verbally, in writing, and creatively through art and drama. These responses are captured in books or online portfolios, showcasing the growing breadth of pupils' engagement. Parents also have access to these online portfolios and appreciate being kept well informed about learning and progress in religious education.

Religious education is given the highest priority across the school and leaders and governors ensure it has full parity with other core subjects. Staff benefit from a wide range of professional development, which is informed by rigorous monitoring and evaluation. The impact of this training is increasingly evident in classroom practice. Staff are led and inspired by the deeply committed and highly knowledgeable subject leader who provides detailed guidance and support through feedback, coaching, and modelling. Her expertise is greatly valued by colleagues. Supported by senior leaders she has a clear vision for the ongoing development of religious education. The subject leader's engagement with the local Catholic cluster assures leaders and governors that provision and outcomes for religious education are moderated and quality assured. Adaptations to learning are made thoughtfully to meet the needs of different groups of pupils, promoting inclusion and progress for all. This was observed in different ways: through use of different driver words and skills, level of independence or support and through peer support and partnership. Lessons are enriched by visitors including a local member of clergy who supports older pupils in learning about vocation and the sacraments. There are contributions from Cafod, and representatives of other faiths and religions. These experiences deepen pupils' understanding and engagement with religious education.

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

1

2

Pupils participate fully in prayer and liturgy, demonstrating reverence during silent reflection and joy through song. As pupils progress through school their understanding of liturgical norms deepens, enabling them to participate confidently in the celebration of the word by using appropriate responses and actions to greet the Gospel and respond in prayer. They also develop an awareness of liturgical colours, with older pupils able to explain their significance within the liturgical calendar. Roles during worship support pupils' spiritual development and they are keen to take on ministry roles. These roles are tailored to their age and stage. Reception pupils helped prepare the focus table and distribute prayer cards, while children in Year 4, were supported by their class teacher to plan and lead celebration of the word in class. Older pupils show greater independence in planning and leading celebration of the word both in class and in key stage celebrations. Further focus on developing pupils' skills and understanding will secure their greater confidence and consistency in participation and ministry. Pupils recognise that scripture is integral to prayer and liturgy and when given the opportunity they respond thoughtfully. Pupils are encouraged to reflect on the celebrations they lead, evaluating their impact and discussing how the 'go forth' element inspires them to connect prayer with action in their daily lives.

The daily rhythm of prayer is central to the school life of St Oswald's, with pupils able to articulate the importance of their regular prayer routine as 'time to focus on my faith' and to 'enjoy learning about scripture'. Celebration of the word is thoughtfully planned to reflect the liturgical year, incorporating feast days, holy days, and Masses that deepen pupil understanding of the Church calendar. Provision needs to be further broadened to offer increasingly varied opportunities for prayer to reflect the richness of Catholic tradition. Themes for celebration of the word are carefully mapped out using appropriate scripture. Whole-school Wednesday word celebrations, led by a member of clergy and the subject leader, provide meaningful opportunities for pupils

to reflect on the Sunday Gospel. Staff have embraced professional development to ensure greater consistency in how celebration of the word is delivered, with all teachers leading class and key stage worship. A variety of music, imagery, and artefacts enhance these experiences, while outdoor spaces and a dedicated prayer and reflection room are used for communal and private prayer. Families are actively invited to engage in the prayer life of the school, and pupils have the opportunity to celebrate Mass at church, further strengthening the partnership between school, home, and parish.

The policy for prayer and liturgy provides a clear framework that supports staff in their preparation and planning, ensuring consistency across all year groups. Leaders and governors know that pupils develop skills over time. The subject leader ensures that expectations are clear for all staff and pupils through a progression document that outlines expectations for pupil participation and ministry. Additional guidance and support provided by the subject leader ensures that staff have the necessary information and resources to plan for the celebration of the word. The school prioritises opportunities for pupils to celebrate the Eucharist, alongside the observance of holy days and significant feast days. Leaders actively use evidence from monitoring and evaluation to inform professional development, drawing upon effective practice within the school, the expertise of the subject leader, and support from the archdiocese. Accurate analysis and evaluations made from monitoring ensure that the subject leader has a clear vision for further development of prayer and liturgy. There is a focus on offering wider opportunities for pupil participation and ministry by using a broader variety of prayer and celebration of the word. This ensures that prayer and liturgy continue to evolve in meaningful ways, enriching the spiritual life of the school community.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Oswald's Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	106488
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	3593382
Full postal address of the school	Council Avenue, Ashton-in-Makerfield, Wigan, Lancashire, WN4 9AZ
School phone number	01942724820
Headteacher	Mrs Julie Hassan
Chair of governors	Dr Andrew Wilkinson
School Website	www.stoswaldswigan.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	4-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	November 2018
Previous denominational inspection grade	1

The inspection team

Dominic Vernon
Charlotte Hillier

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