



# St William's Catholic Primary School

URN: 106497

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Archbishop of Liverpool

12–13 November 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

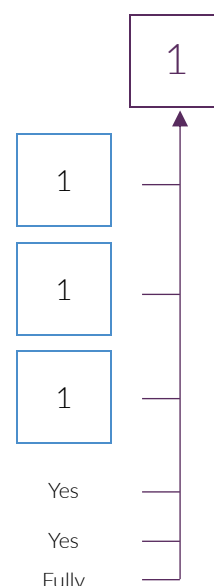
#### Collective worship (p.7)

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 is entirely compliant with the Bishops' Conference curriculum requirements for Catholic life and mission, religious education and prayer and liturgy.
- The school undertakes the additional requirements of the Archbishop of Liverpool.
- Areas identified for improvement in the last inspection have all been addressed.

## What the school does well

- All stakeholders are outward-looking, passionate, and dedicated to advancing the school's mission.
- Pupils are exemplary ambassadors for the school community, living out the ministry of Jesus through their service to others.
- Pupils confidently recall prior learning and speak articulately using key religious vocabulary accurately during discussions.
- Pupils consistently demonstrate excellent behaviour, showing respect, focus, and positive attitudes that support learning and contribute to a safe, inclusive environment.

## What the school needs to improve

- Further strengthen connections with the parish community to support and enrich the Catholic life and mission of the school.
- Enrich the outdoor area to become an even more serene and reflective environment for all users.
- Leaders and governors should fully implement the developing robust and structured approach to evaluating religious education.

## 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



Pupils understand and value the Catholic identity and mission of their school. They confidently explain what makes St William's distinctive and special. Pupils know they are loved, valued, and created in the image of God. They are happy, confident, and feel safe. One pupil commented, 'It is our calling to be part of Faith in Action; it feels safe to talk about Jesus in our school.' Pupils recognise that the school follows the teachings of Jesus and, as a result, are encouraged to grow in goodness. They develop virtuous habits, make positive choices, and show compassion, respect, and integrity in all they do. Pupils actively lead and take part in meaningful actions that express Catholic social teaching locally, nationally, and globally. They clearly explain the reasons behind their choices. They take responsibility in caring for God's creation, protecting the environment, supporting those in need, and promoting fairness and justice. This includes participation in fundraising activities for the Brick charity in their local community and contribute to Cafod world gifts in support vulnerable communities worldwide. Pupils show deep respect for people of all faiths, religions and beliefs. Their behaviour is excellent in lessons and around the school. This is why they value activities that support their faith and often take on leadership roles such as School Council and Faith in Action.

The school's mission statement clearly expresses its Catholic purpose and unique character. It is regularly reviewed, understood, and actively lived out. The mission shapes daily life and enables the school to flourish as a Catholic community. Staff are committed to the mission and apply it consistently in their teaching and all areas of school life. They take part wholeheartedly in activities that express the school's call to serve. With Christ at the centre, the school fosters a strong, welcoming community with warm relationships. It values every person, recognising Christ in all, and offers exceptional care, especially to those most in need. Everyone is greeted

with kindness and particular attention is given to the most vulnerable. One member of staff remarked, 'St William's is a place where faith, love, and kindness are at the heart of everything we do.' The school celebrates and supports people from diverse cultures and faith traditions, showing deep respect for their beliefs. The school environment clearly reflects its Catholic identity through prayerful spaces, and a culture of respect. The well-maintained surroundings express the school's belief in the dignity of every human person and help all flourish. Relationships and sex education follows Church teaching and diocesan guidance. The content helps pupils understand Christian belief in the human person and to speak confidently about what they have learned.

Leaders and governors clearly understand and articulate the Church's mission. They regard the development of Catholic life as a core leadership responsibility, with all policies and decisions faithfully reflecting this vocational call. Leaders and governors fully support the archbishop's vision and participate actively in events and initiatives. Partnerships with local parishes are central to the school's Catholic life. Leaders and governors build trusting relationships with parents and carers, which clearly benefit pupils. Parents understand and support the school's mission. Leaders and governors prioritise those in greatest need, ensuring resources are used to support them. They show deep respect for the dignity of all staff, providing outstanding pastoral care and attending to staff wellbeing. Governors are ambitious for the school's Catholic mission and make it a central focus of improvement. They listen carefully to the views of pupils, parents, and staff, providing appropriate challenge and support. Self-evaluation is honest, rigorous, and improvement-focused, leading to creative and well-planned actions for continued development. As a result, staff share a strong understanding of the school's mission, with new staff well supported through effective induction programmes.

## Religious Education

The quality of curriculum religious education

### Religious education key judgement grade

#### Pupil outcomes

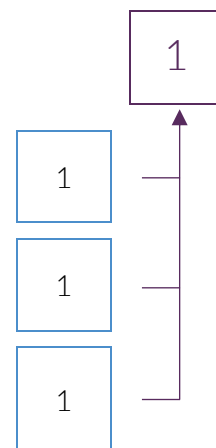
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

#### 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 develop strong knowledge, understanding, and skills in religious education, meeting the expectations of the Religious Education Directory. They make good progress from their individual starting points, learning more, remembering more, and applying their understanding confidently. All pupils, including those who are disadvantaged or have special educational needs, achieve well across all year groups. Pupils are becoming religiously literate and engaged young people who think deeply about faith, morality, and theology. They understand what it means to live out their faith in daily life. Pupils speak confidently about their learning in religious education, using key terms and subject-specific vocabulary accurately. They work independently, showing focus, initiative, and perseverance. Their work is well presented and demonstrates growing creativity and individuality. Pupils are enthusiastic, reflective learners who want to deepen their knowledge and understanding. They enjoy religious education lessons and participate actively, demonstrating high levels of interest and motivation. Behaviour in lessons is outstanding because pupils are fully engaged and purposeful. Pupils understand how well they are doing, know what they need to do to improve, and can clearly explain the progress they have made. Attainment in religious education is at least as strong as in other core subjects, with clear evidence of improvement over time.

Teachers have strong subject knowledge and are deeply committed to religious education, setting high expectations for all pupils. Their enthusiasm and belief in the value of religious education inspires pupils to learn well, take pride in their work, and approach challenges with confidence. Careful lesson planning ensures that new learning builds securely on what pupils already know, allowing them to make meaningful connections and deepen their understanding. Teachers use questioning skilfully to check understanding and extend thinking. They adapt lessons so that all pupils remain engaged and make effective progress. Pupils' efforts and

achievements are recognised and celebrated, motivating them to do their best and take responsibility for their learning. Teachers provide clear, specific feedback, helping pupils understand how to improve and achieve their potential. They understand the importance of religious education for pupils' moral and spiritual growth and provide opportunities for quiet reflection, thoughtful discussion, and prayer. Pupils are encouraged to express their learning in a variety of ways that reflect their individual needs, strengths, and creativity. Teachers use high-quality resources and collaborate effectively with other adults to support, scaffold, and enhance learning for all pupils in religious education, so that each can flourish and grow in knowledge and understanding.

Leaders and governors ensure that the curriculum faithfully follows the requirements of the Religious Education Directory. They give religious education equal importance to other core subjects by providing appropriate staffing, resources, teaching time, professional development, and effective systems for feedback and reporting. This commitment ensures that religious education remains central to the life of the school and pupils receive a rich, well-balanced, and meaningful curriculum. Leaders prioritise targeted professional development for all teachers, enabling them to deepen their subject knowledge, refine their teaching skills, and deliver engaging lessons. The subject leader has a clear, ambitious, and inspiring vision for excellence in teaching and learning. She uses her expertise to guide colleagues, share best practice, and drive improvement across the school. The curriculum is thoughtfully adapted to meet the needs of different groups of pupils, ensuring that all can access learning and achieve well. A range of engaging enrichment activities, including themed days, visits, and opportunities for creative expression, enhances pupils' understanding and appreciation of the subject. Leaders and governors are increasingly rigorous in evaluating religious education. They have established a structured monitoring approach that allows them to identify priorities, implement strategic actions, and secure sustained improvements in pupils' outcomes, engagement, and spiritual development.

## 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

1

#### Provision

The quality of collective worship provided by the school

1

#### Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for collective worship

1

1

Prayer and liturgy at St William's fully engages pupils, leading to active, reverent, and meaningful participation. They demonstrate this through prayerful silence, thoughtful responses, and joyful communal singing. They understand and value a wide range of Catholic prayers and practices, including scripture, symbols, silence, reflection, and liturgical music. One pupil shared, 'In our school we have time for prayer, and we are taken on retreat to have a special time together.' This highlights the deep importance pupils place on the prayer and liturgical life of the school. Pupils have a strong understanding of the Church's liturgical year and how it shapes the rhythm of worship throughout the school. They collaborate with teachers to prepare creative, well-planned, and inclusive acts of prayer and liturgy. These opportunities develop their confidence, leadership skills, and sense of belonging. Pupils are confident and skilled in participating in liturgical ministries, including reading, leading prayers, preparing sacred spaces, and supporting younger pupils in prayer. They can articulate how prayer and liturgy connects with the curriculum and wider school life. Pupils reflect thoughtfully on their experiences, describing how prayer and liturgy helps in understanding themselves, strengthen their relationship with God, and inspires them to act with compassion and integrity.

Prayer and liturgy is central to life at St William's and integral to all school gatherings. The school marks significant moments of joy and sorrow through meaningful acts of prayer, helping the community come together in reflection and celebration. A daily pattern of prayer reflects the rhythm of the Church's liturgical life, providing opportunities for reflection. Prayer and liturgy balances routine and creative approaches, offering pupils a wide range of engaging experiences rooted in the Catholic tradition. Carefully chosen scripture passages, linked to the liturgical season, form the heart of each act of prayer, supporting full and thoughtful participation from all. Staff are inspiring role models, demonstrating reverence, leadership, and commitment in

prayer and worship. School spaces are used creatively to support prayer, with time and care taken to make these areas welcoming. School works closely with local parishes to provide pupils with additional opportunities to engage fully in the liturgical life of the Church. Parents are invited to participate in the school's spiritual life through stay and pray sessions, further strengthening the bond between home and school in nurturing faith. These experiences help families appreciate the significance of prayer in daily life and feel part of the wider Catholic community.

The school's prayer and liturgy policy is carefully written, reviewed, and practical for staff to use when planning worship. Leaders and governors have a clear understanding of different levels of pupil participation and maintain a structured plan to develop these skills as pupils progress through the school. Consequently, pupils take part in prayer and liturgy with confidence, understanding, and reverence. The school provides regular opportunities to celebrate the Eucharist, particularly at key liturgical times. Holy days of obligation are prioritised so that all members of the community can participate. The Sacrament of Reconciliation is offered at key points in the year, including Advent and Lent. Leaders give priority to professional development, ensuring that staff are well prepared to lead meaningful, engaging acts of prayer and worship. Their knowledge of Catholic prayer traditions and liturgical sources enables them to plan high-quality experiences and support colleagues to do the same. Leaders and governors ensure that budgets and resources support excellent prayer and liturgy. The quality and impact of worship is regularly evaluated and central to the school's self-evaluation process. One parent reflected, 'I am proud to be part of a thriving Catholic community where prayer and worship is at the heart of school life.'



## Information about the school

Full name of school	St William's Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	106497
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	3593394
Full postal address of the school	Ince Green Lane, Ince-in-Makerfield, Ince, Wigan, Lancashire, WN2 2DG
School phone number	01942235782
Executive headteacher	Not applicable
Headteacher	Emily Ellis
Chair of governors	John Warburton
School Website	<a href="http://www.saintwilliams.wigan.sch.uk">www.saintwilliams.wigan.sch.uk</a>
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	Not applicable
Phase	Primary
Type of school	Voluntary Aided School
Admissions policy	Non-selective
Age-range of pupils	3-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	February 2019
Previous denominational inspection grade	1

## The inspection team

Jude Ryan	Lead
Joanne Harrison	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