

St Ambrose Roman Catholic Primary School

URN: 105520

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Bishop of Salford

02–03 April 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

3

Religious education (p.5)

The quality of curriculum religious education

3

Collective worship (p.7)

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

3

The school is fully compliant with the general norms for religious education laid down by the Bishops' Conference

Yes

The school is fully compliant with any additional requirements of the diocesan bishop

Yes

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

N/A

3

Compliance statement

- The school meets the 10% requirement for teaching religious education, as laid down by the Bishop's Conference.
- The school is fully compliant with any additional requirements of the Diocesan bishop.
- Areas for improvement identified in the last inspection are not applicable to the CSI framework.

What the school does well

1. St Ambrose is an inclusive school where all children are welcomed, valued and loved. The pupils know they are cared for and are unique.
2. Relationships within the staff group are strong and they show support and care for each other.
3. Pupils are engaged in religious education lessons, showing respect and enjoyment.

What the school needs to improve

1. To further develop the areas of Catholic Life and Mission, Religious Education and Collective Worship, all leaders and governors need to ensure that self-evaluation is accurate, and evidence based.
2. To monitor the teaching and learning of religious education as part of the school's monitoring programme.
3. To continue to develop class prayer and liturgy so that these sessions are prepared and confidently led by all pupils, and are of a consistently high quality.

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

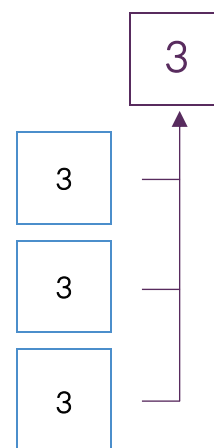
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

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



The mission statement of St Ambrose Roman Catholic Primary School is known and understood by all pupils. The strapline, 'loving hands, loving hearts, loving minds.' is displayed in every classroom and around the school. Pupils know they are valued and cared for and understand, and can express, how they are made in the image and likeness of God. The behaviour of pupils in the majority of lessons and around the school observed during inspection was good. Opportunities are available for pupils to be leaders in a variety of roles: these include membership of the 'Growing in Faith Together' (GIFT) team, Caritas leaders, and student leaders who help with tasks around the school. However, opportunities for these pupils to flourish and contribute greatly to the life of the school is underdeveloped. The Caritas team, who are enthusiastic in seeking opportunities to raise funds and support others, are only infrequently involved with charity work. Further work and opportunities need to be undertaken with all pupils, so they are more knowledgeable about their responsibility to care for our common home. They need to understand the importance of Catholic social teaching and know why we are called to serve others. Continue to further develop the role of the GIFT team in leading prayer and liturgy across the school, so they can impact on the spiritual life of all pupils.

The mission statement expresses the educational mission of the church and is known throughout the school. A regular review of the mission statement is needed by all involved in the life of St Ambrose to ensure it has a significant impact on the daily life of everyone. The school and staff welcome pupils of all faiths and cultures, including the most vulnerable. International new arrival families are frequent visitors to St Ambrose before settling in other localities. They receive immediate support and school undertake work to provide for the most marginalised of

families. All members of the school community are involved in charity work which has included support for: Macmillan Coffee mornings, CAFOD and local foodbanks. Staff show love and care for their pupils, but more work is needed to ensure that the many varied needs are fully understood and met by all. Relationships within the staff group are very strong and they show support and care for each other. The school environment bears witness to the Catholic mission in education and is a clean and well- maintained space. The relationships and sex education (RSE) curriculum is fully rooted in the teachings of the church, and the scheme of work adopted is compliant. The policy, however, needs to be reviewed, updated, and published on the school website.

Leaders and governors are committed to promoting the Church's mission and developing the faith life of the pupils. Parish links are very strong and the parish priest is a regular and valued visitor to school. Recent changes within school are ensuring that the well -being of staff is given a high priority, with leaders and governors recognising good pastoral care for staff as a core duty. The teaching staff new to school receive the relevant induction programmes and are supported in their role. They feel valued in school. Parents are recognised as the first educators of their children and the newly formed interim leadership team are ensuring they engage with parents and carers. Families are greeted each morning by senior staff and parents welcome this opportunity for quick communication with school personnel. A greater commitment to care for our common home needs to be displayed by leaders and governors and so develop and influence pupils to accept their own personal responsibility. A detailed evaluation of the Catholic life and mission of the school involving parents, staff and pupils by all leaders and governors needs to be undertaken to ensure it is relevant, up to date and with prioritised next steps for action.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

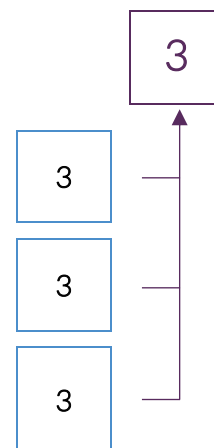
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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 enjoy their religious education lessons, with the majority listening with interest and responding well to questions asked of them. Pupils observed during inspection were able to work independently, willing to learn and most concentrated well. In Upper Key Stage 2 lessons, pupils were asking good questions of their teachers and each other, and so further enhancing their learning. These pupils talk about the scripture work they research and analyse. Meetings with pupils demonstrated they can speak with confidence about what they are currently learning in religious education, but with limited knowledge of previous learning and little use of subject specific vocabulary. Pupils would benefit from greater opportunities for recall and feedback strategies in individual lessons to consolidate previous learning and ensure all are developing secure knowledge and understanding. Pupils understand the marking system used in school and most respond to questions asked of them in their work, however they have a limited understanding of how well they are doing, how to improve their work and the progress they have made. The quality of pupils' work across the school is inconsistent, and often poorly presented. Progress in religious education is difficult to track for pupils, as assessment systems are often incomplete.

Teachers are confident in their subject knowledge appropriate to the phase in which they are teaching. The *Come and See* programme is followed by all classes and the resources, including adults who support pupils in lessons, are used well. A Gospel assembly takes place each week and this has given pupils a good knowledge of Gospel stories. However, the practices in the teaching and learning of religious education, to an expected standard, are not consistent across the school. In the majority of lessons observed, the learning objective was unclear and recall and recap was insufficient to enable pupils to develop secure knowledge and understanding of previous learning. Where practice was effective, thorough detailed feedback and recap enabled

pupils to demonstrate and recall previous learning and understanding and their knowledge of key scripture passages. Marking and feedback is used effectively in some books, but not in all. The development of religious literacy for all pupils needs a greater focus in every year group, and there was little evidence of reflection in lessons for the moral and spiritual development of pupils. Assessment strategies are weak, and the understanding and use of assessment is not consistent across the school.

Leaders and governors ensure that the curriculum for religious education is faithful to the aims of the *Religious Education Curriculum Directory* through the use of the *Come and See* programme used across all key stages. Religious education is comparable with other core subjects in terms of resourcing, staffing and timetabling, and is given the 10% required time. Policies for this subject are in place. However, a decline in the teaching and learning of religious education has taken place over time. Leaders and governors have not ensured that the professional development of most teaching staff, responsible for teaching religious education, has taken place. The curriculum leader has supported staff, particularly those new to the profession, in their planning and understanding of this subject and they are grateful for her support. However, the 'blurring' of responsibility for leadership of religious education has resulted in a lack of monitoring of the curriculum delivered, and lack of professional development, both external and internal. All leaders and governors need to ensure they have a thorough knowledge and understanding of the standards expected in the religious education of their pupils and plan regular monitoring of this subject as part of the school's overall monitoring programme. Self-evaluation is an important process and the Catholic School's Evaluation Document (CSED) needs to be an accurate representation of the practice that is currently being undertaken, with clear and relevant actions.

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

3

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

3

3

Pupils respond to the experiences of prayer and liturgy provided by the school, and the majority showed reverence and respect in the services observed during inspection. A prayer area is established in each classroom. Pupils recognise the importance of prayer in their everyday lives and can state the prayers that are said daily at various time of the school day. They can describe the parts of the liturgical year, and the specific colours used for the different seasons of the Church. Pupils leading and participating in class prayer and liturgy, however, is very limited across the school. The majority observed during inspection were teacher planned and led, with little opportunity for pupils to read from scripture, use their own prayers or sing self-chosen hymns. The majority of pupils did not experience a variety of forms of praying such as silence, reflection and meditation. Opportunities are given, however, for pupils to be involved in ministries of the church during their own class Masses, which take place in the parish church. All pupils need support and guidance to take on leadership roles in class and whole school prayer and liturgy gatherings. They need opportunities to plan, lead, reflect and evaluate these services.

The school calendar is planned so that holy days of obligation, significant celebrations and key feasts such as the feast of St Ambrose and other important occasions in the liturgical year are celebrated. Leaders, with the parish priest and parish catechist, have planned the sacramental programme. Weekly Gospel assemblies take place, which are attended by all staff. School are involved in the diocesan singing programme and music and hymns taught used to enhance whole school services. Class prayer and liturgy would be further enhanced by pupils engaging in the music taught in these sessions. Pupils attend Mass on a regular basis, which take place both in the parish church and the school chapel. The school has designated areas for prayer: these include a chapel, prayer garden, and designated prayer areas within classrooms. However,

leaders and staff need to plan for these areas to be used to enhance the quality of the prayer life of the children and allow for pupils to undertake spontaneous prayer. Some aspects of worship seen during inspection had elements of a lesson, therefore losing the opportunity for the pupils to be immersed in a prayerful time. Relevant staff need further professional development in becoming highly skilled in planning and leading class prayer and liturgy and so, in turn, confidently help pupils to prepare and lead these sessions.

Leaders and governors recognise the importance of prayer and liturgy for the faith development of St Ambrose school community. The school calendar is planned, and opportunities to celebrate the Eucharist are regularly offered. Parents and carers are invited to these occasions. The school has a policy on prayer and liturgy, however more detail is needed so that it is a useful and effective document, impacting on the work of the staff who prepare prayer and liturgy. The policy needs to include a strategy for the building up of the pupils' skills as they progress through the school. Professional development is needed for all staff to ensure that quality prayer and liturgy is delivered by all and opportunities provided for pupils in every class. A monitoring programme and evaluation of services delivered is required by leaders and governors to ensure that prayer and liturgy opportunities are offered that are engaging and of a consistently high quality. Further development would be to include the views of pupils as part of their own reflection and evaluation of the services they prepare. Governors have ensured that whole school collective worship is appropriately resourced.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Ambrose Roman Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	105520
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	3523418
Full postal address of the school	St Ambrose Roman Catholic Primary School, Princess Road, Chorlton-Cum-Hardy, Manchester, M21 7QA
School phone number	001614453299
Headteacher	Michelle Waterworth
Chair of governors	Matthew Johnson
School Website	https://www.st-ambrose.manchester.sch.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	3-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	29 th November 2016
Previous denominational inspection grade	Outstanding

The inspection team

Fiona Robinson
Robert Tanti

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