

St Christopher's Catholic Primary School

URN: 106117

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Bishop of Shrewsbury

18–19 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

1

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

1

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

2

Compliance statement

- Ten percent of teaching time is dedicated to religious education.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage is taught according to the *Religious Education Directory*. *The Way, The Truth, and The Life* is taught in Year 5, and Year 6. *The Vine and The Branches* is taught in Years 1 to 4. The school is using *Journey in Love* to teach relationships and sex education. Leaders ensure that personal, social, health and economic education is done through a Catholic lens.
- There were no areas for improvement from the last inspection.

What the school does well

- The committed and passionate senior leadership team, governors, and the parish team, ensure that the school's motto to 'Carry Christ to all' is evident throughout this Catholic community.
- The highest priority is given to pastoral care and inclusivity; pupils feel safe and supported. Members of the school community feel cared for, valued and nurtured.
- Pupils make good progress in religious education, from their starting points, and this is in line with, or better than other core subjects.
- The inspiring religious education subject leader and the headteacher, drive improvements in religious education and personal, social, health and economic education, through their support and commitment to developing staff knowledge, expertise and confidence.
- Prayer and liturgy are integral to the life of this school. The school community has regular opportunities to practise and develop their faith, including many enrichment activities for pupils.

What the school needs to improve

- In religious education lessons across the school, ensure that pupils are given regular opportunities to present their learning in a variety of ways.
- Ensure that all lessons are consistent in providing appropriate challenge and support so that all pupils achieve their best.
- Ensure that the guidance for progression in liturgy and prayer is used consistently across the school so that pupils develop ways of praying that are meaningful and age appropriate.

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

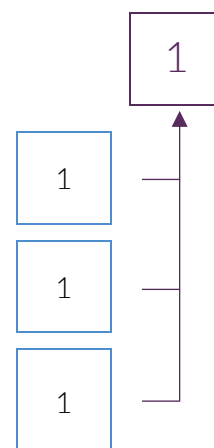
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

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



St Christopher's pupils live out their school motto, 'Carry Christ to All' in their daily interactions with everyone they meet. They enjoy strong and supportive relationships with their peers and with adults in the school community. Parents comment 'it is like a family'. Pupils' clear understanding of 'St Christopher's Way' values: *Caring, Fairness, Honesty, Resilience, Respect and Responsibility* is evident in their response to the Church's call to serve others in their school, parish community and beyond. For instance, the Faith in Action Team (FIAT) actively seeks ways to support others in an annual 'Lenten Walk' for Cafod, visiting a local nursing home weekly, undertaking roles in climate action activities within the local authority and helping to maintain the school environment. Pupils describe how much they are all valued and cared for and they articulate a deep respect for others. They talk about how they are each unique, with 'some who have an extra box' who need additional support and understanding. Behaviour is excellent throughout the school, in lessons, in prayers and outside. Pupils respect and support the FIAT chaplaincy team in their work, with those in the team committed to expressing the school motto and values in all that they do.

All staff are fully committed to the values and vision of this school. This is demonstrated in: the strong links with parents, families, and the parish; their enthusiasm for school and community events; their attendance at parish Masses, and their dedication to continuing professional development. Outstanding pastoral care for vulnerable pupils in the nurture room and hub continues throughout the school. Staff are exemplary role models, evident in their care and support of all pupils. Relationships are strong; valuing all is intrinsic in this school. This joyful, supportive school family, with Christ at its centre, is enriched by the warm, welcoming environment. In each classroom, around the school and outside, well-resourced prayer tables,

areas such as the Peace Garden, and striking displays reflect its Catholic ethos. Respect for other faiths is also evident. Catholic social teaching is linked to the school values, to scripture, and to the whole school curriculum. Staff and parishioners dedicate time and expertise to the FIAT. With the pupil team, and the parish clergy, they are proactive in providing regular activities to support and enhance the spiritual and moral development of their school family. Relationships and sex education is taught using the scheme *'Journey in Love'*.

St Christopher's benefits from strong, dedicated, and enthusiastic leaders who work in partnership, in a calm and professional manner that inspires confidence. Leaders' commitment to professional development, both diocesan, and that provided in school, is a strength. Leaders are proactive in attending diocesan training in curriculum, prayer and liturgy, and governance. Staff induction is considered and effective. Governors are highly ambitious for the school. Every other year, they actively seek the views of parents, pupils, and staff in the evaluation of Catholic life and mission. Following this, they take opportunities to put ideas into action. One parent comments, 'the Catholic ethos of the school is evident and permeates through all aspects of my children's education'. Staff understand and actively support the Catholic ethos of the school, saying they feel supported and valued by leaders. They comment 'everyone is supportive, everyone will help'. This applies to sharing knowledge and skills and in 'amazing' support for personal and family times of difficulty. One staff member comments 'you become part of the Catholic ethos'.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

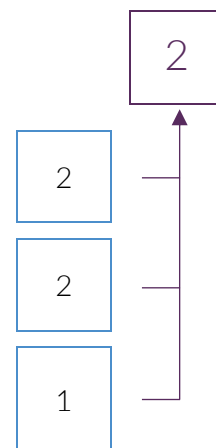
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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



From their starting points, pupils make good progress in religious education. Their attainment is at least average and is in line with other core subjects. Many pupils use religious vocabulary with confidence, showing good knowledge and understanding about their learning. For instance, one pupil explains that 'Jesus is the Lamb of God, he was a sacrifice' in reply to a teacher's question about the Exodus preparations. The youngest pupils voice their understanding of the actions of Jesus, 'He went on a journey' and how he influences their actions in everyday life. For example, one pupil comments 'The Good Samaritan shows us how to be kind to others; it is in our school values'. Pupils' behaviour in lessons is good and their work is generally well presented. However, this is not consistent across the school. More regular opportunities for pupils to demonstrate their personal creative responses to tasks would enhance their learning. Pupils say they 'enjoy learning' in religious education and recall their past learning. Pupils explain that teachers help them to improve their work. In lessons, according to their age and ability, most pupils work independently, and ask relevant questions, which supports their understanding of their learning.

Teachers have good subject knowledge, know their pupils well, and are mostly confident in their delivery of religious education. They show good understanding of the impact of religious education on their pupils, demonstrating this when they allow time in lessons for pupils to reflect on what they have learnt and make links to decisions about how they and others behave. Teachers enhance pupils' learning when they assess pupils' understanding of prior learning, use effective questioning, adapt explanations and correct misconceptions straight away. The lesson challenge is frequently supported by reference to the word of God. Resources are of high quality. When relevant passages of scripture are read, however, the use of an age-appropriate Bible or lectionary would be preferable. Other adults effectively support pupils in their learning through targeted questioning and explanation of tasks. Although teachers plan varied ways in which

pupils can respond to their learning, opportunities for more creative, individual responses would ensure that teaching meets the needs of all learners. Most lessons provide appropriate challenge and support for pupils to achieve their best, but this is not consistent across all lessons. Some pupils 'would like more writing'. There is excellent practice in the school and this needs to be shared across all classes.

Leaders and governors ensure that the *Religious Education Directory* is being implemented in a planned and cohesive manner. Policies, timetabling and resources reflect their commitment. The considerable time given to staff development and training for teaching religious education is a strength of the school. Along with the headteacher, the subject leader has an inspiring vision for religious education. Both time and expertise are given to support staff in planning and delivering *The Vine and the Branches*. Before staff attend training in the new scheme of work, the skilled religious education leader provides pre-learning. This increases staff confidence and provides the knowledge they need to gain maximum benefit from the training. The enthusiastic and passionate vision of school leaders supports staff in delivering lessons that are at least good, with some that are outstanding. Leaders and governors are rigorous in their evaluation of religious education, using feedback from parents and pupils to plan improvements. Regular monitoring, learning walks, and meetings with the link governor help leaders and governors identify areas of good practice and to make strategic decisions about areas for improvement. The commitment by senior leaders to regular enrichment activities increases pupils' understanding and knowledge in 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

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

Pupils engage well in the wide range of experiences of prayer and liturgy offered to them, joining in traditional and school prayers and responses with confidence. They recall different forms of liturgies and prayers for various times of the liturgical year. For example, pupils talk about the Passion they perform in church during Lent, the crowning of Mary in May, and in lessons when they reflect on scripture passages related to their learning. A pupil comments 'I like when we go to church and pray at the statue of Mary'. They sing with confidence. Pupils say that prayer times and liturgies help them in following the word of God. One pupil explains 'We live out what we have been learning in assembly and in lessons'. In class prayer time a pupil reminds his peers that in the Eucharist, 'it is transubstantiation, Jesus is really with us'. Pupils say the work of the Faith in Action Team is 'inspirational', commenting 'We pray for things that are important to us'. The FIAT is instrumental in providing meaningful and engaging prayer throughout the school. Other pupils learn from this and now need to develop their skills by evaluating what they have planned in their prayer times.

Prayer and liturgy are integral to the daily life of this school. Teachers, the FIAT, or pupils lead well-established and thoughtful, whole school and in-class prayer times. Staff meetings and gatherings always begin with prayer. Scripture is well-chosen and celebrated. However, whenever possible, scripture readings should be from a lectionary or the Bible to signify the importance of the word of God. Each class attends a weekly parish Mass, in turn. Families are invited to celebrate significant feasts or anniversaries in church or school. The Sacrament of Reconciliation is celebrated during Advent and Lent. St Christopher's school has a deep commitment to working with parents and the parish. Many creative opportunities for spiritual growth in the school community take place during the year. Pupils, families, and parishioners take part in the 'Evening of Light' remembrance celebration each November, appreciating the

opportunity for reflection and prayer. Within classrooms and around the school, well-resourced and striking displays and prayer spaces enrich the environment for prayer and reflection. Staff appreciate senior leaders' exemplary leadership and are keen to increase their knowledge and skills in leading age-appropriate prayer. They willingly undertake school and diocesan training to support this.

Staff find the school's comprehensive prayer and liturgy policy and annual plan of provision useful and informative when they are preparing and leading prayer and liturgy. However, the progression in liturgy and prayer guidance needs to be used consistently across the school so that pupils develop ways of praying that are meaningful and age appropriate. Leaders are committed to planning engaging opportunities through the year for the celebration of Mass and for prayer, both in school and in church. The FIAT is a considerable strength of the school and benefits from the active involvement of skilled clergy, parishioners, staff, and pupils. Leaders and governors regularly evaluate the quality of the school's prayer and liturgy; they consider the views of all stakeholders in its impact and actively search for ways in which they can support and drive improvements. Leaders and governors are determined in ensuring that staff receive relevant and inspiring training. This supports staff in planning, leading, and evaluating prayer and liturgy and in turn, enables staff to support pupils in this. Staff view high quality, engaging and relevant prayer and liturgy as integral to this school and say how important it is for their own spiritual growth.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Christopher's Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	106117
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	3563510
Full postal address of the school	St Christopher's Catholic Primary School, Warwick Road, Romiley, Stockport, SK6 3AX
School phone number	01614304473
Headteacher	Maria Waters
Chair of governors	Matthew Standing and Susan Carr
School Website	http://www.st-christophers.stockport.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	4-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	9/07/2018
Previous denominational inspection grade	1

The inspection team

Carol Morgan
Jean O'Keeffe

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