



Carleton House Preparatory School

URN: 104723

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Archbishop of Liverpool

10 June 2026 – 11 June 2026

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 RE

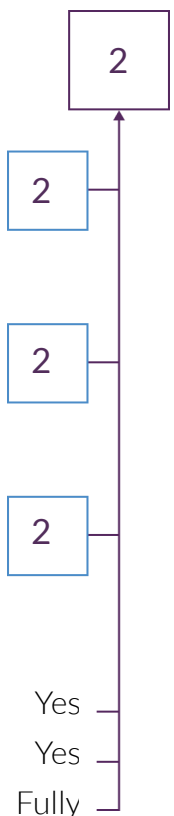
Collective worship (p.7)

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



What the school does well

- The mission statement is deeply understood and actively lived by pupils, staff and governors, shaping the daily life of this extraordinary school family.
- A profound sense of welcome is evident from the moment you enter, and every person, regardless of background or belief, is valued and embraced.
- Leaders and governors are proudly dedicated to providing pupils with the very best opportunities so they can grow into the people God created them to be.
- The religious education leader is an inspiring role model who drives improvement with enthusiasm, deep subject knowledge and a clear love for her subject.
- Pupils are confident, religiously literate young people who know they are loved and actively seek opportunities to give, serve and share with others.

What the school needs to improve

- Increase staff and pupil understanding of Catholic social teaching and its links to their decisions regarding the living of their mission and actions for the needs of others.
- Provide a wider range of teaching strategies in religious education to ensure consistently high levels of active participation and engagement throughout lessons.
- The annual plan for prayer and liturgy is to be fully implemented, regularly monitored and used to evaluate the quality and impact of provision.

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

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Pupils confidently recite the mission statement, expressed as a prayer, and refer to it naturally throughout the school day. This demonstrates that the mission is known, understood and lived. Their repeated description of the school as 'one big, happy family' reflects a deeply embedded sense of belonging, echoed consistently by staff, parents and governors. As one governor affirmed, 'Staff see the vision of Christ in all children and parents.' Parents speak highly of the 'very nurturing environment' and confirm that their children feel safe and happy at school. Pupils behave well because expectations are clear and consistently reinforced with gentle guidance. They recognise their responsibility to improve the lives of others and articulate a strong sense of justice, stating that, 'everyone should be treated equally... no one should go without.' Their charitable work, including support for a range of charities and the personal presentation of funds they have raised, helps them understand the impact of their actions. Whilst pupils respond positively to Catholic social teaching, they need to be helped to deepen their understanding so they can more clearly link these principles to their decisions and actions. They show deep respect for one another, including those of different faiths and backgrounds, and say that, 'all are welcome here.'

The mission statement has a tangible and joyful impact on daily school life. Staff offer a warm welcome to pupils each morning, modelling the school's ethos through their relationships and actions. This welcome is extended to visitors who enter the school, beginning with the welcome and help received from the front office. The refrain of the 'Carleton House family' is known and embraced by the school community. Christ is clearly at the centre of the school, and staff go above and beyond to ensure pupils experience joy and encouragement as they

grow into the people God created them to be. Staff commitment to Catholic life is effective; they lead enrichment activities, support pupils in serving their community, and provide compassionate pastoral care, particularly during times of loss or difficulty. The physical environment strongly reflects the school's Catholic identity. Examples of this can be seen in the many displays celebrating the mission statement, Catholic social teaching and the liturgical year. These examples are further enriched by thoughtfully created and well-used prayer gardens. These provide spaces that support private or shared prayer, reflection and spiritual growth. Relationships, sex and health education meets diocesan requirements and is a faithful expression of Church teaching.

Leaders and governors are faithful in exercising their duties as committed guardians of the mission. They are determined in their focus that Christ should always remain at the heart of this school. Carleton House has a unique charism which stems from its original strong foundation by the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur. The school is thoroughly engaged in diocesan training and events. Carleton House also nurtures strong links with other local schools especially for moderation and the sharing of best practice in Catholic life and mission, together with its underpinned life of prayer. Parish links are strong and the parish priest is positive and supportive of the work of the school, which includes his involvement in sacramental preparation. The headteacher has a clear vision for all working together in partnership including parents as the first educators of their children. This was supported during inspection by discussion with staff who know also that their headteacher encourages them in all they do and in all they may need in the living of Catholic life and mission. They commented that 'her door is always open.' Governors are well informed through robust monitoring and are actively involved in self-evaluation, offering both support and appropriate challenge.

Religious education

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 key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

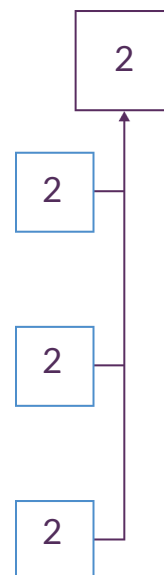
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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 and demonstrate positive attitudes to learning. They are developing age-appropriate knowledge, understanding and skills because their teachers plan lessons which build carefully on prior learning and ongoing formative assessment. Attainment is carefully assessed and recorded each term with a rigorous system in place which includes both internal and external moderation with local schools. As a result, pupils make secure and sustained progress over time. Through discussion with pupil groups, it was clear that they are articulate and religiously literate young people. They respond thoughtfully to questioning, demonstrating developing knowledge. They enjoy opportunities to work collaboratively with their peers. This was seen in Year 5 where pupils were challenged to link the beatitudes to modern day life. Pupils' work is of a good standard and reflects an appropriate coverage of the curriculum. Most pupils engage well in lessons because their teachers use creative strategies. This was seen in a Year 1 lesson, where the pupils role-played the story of the tax collector, Zacchaeus, which they undertook with energy. These strategies should be further developed by utilising a range of strategies to ensure that more pupils are more actively engaged in learning throughout the lesson.

Teachers are fully committed to the teaching of religious education and know its status as the core subject in this Catholic school. This in turn is instilled in their pupils especially the religious education ambassadors who enjoy leading this element of school life for their peers. In observed lessons, most teachers demonstrated secure and confident subject knowledge. Expectations are clear. It was evident that teachers plan well according to their pupils' needs

and current attainment. The consistent strategy of recalling prior learning means that pupils continue to build secure understanding. Questioning is used well to elicit knowledge from their pupils who are enthusiastic in sharing their learning. Their answers are always valued but asking further questions could probe more and so allow for deeper thinking and understanding. Feedback in the lesson is supportive and allows pupils to reflect on their learning. Religious education is well resourced and recent investment is evident in the widespread use of the 'Golden Box' in lessons, which supports pupils in their understanding of scripture. Pupils spoke about the influence their religious education lessons have on their lives, for example one pupil reflected that, 'Learning about other religions helps us to be kinder to others and show respect.'

Leaders ensure that the teaching of religious education is a faithful expression of the *Religious Education Directory*. It is recognised as the core of the curriculum. Religious education has parity with other core subjects which is evident in timetabling, resourcing and especially in the provision of training. There has been significant investment in professional development and collaboration with local schools and clusters to ensure that standards and expectations are appropriate. Many members of staff have attended training provided by the diocese and other providers. The subject leader is passionate about religious education and drives its development using clear vision and committed support from the headteacher, leaders and governors. The staff regard her as an inspiration. Through an effective monitoring calendar which informs self-evaluation, the subject leader and the leadership team have ensured that teaching is of a consistently good standard. Useful links have been made with local and national organisations, as well as charities to support the learning in religious education. For example partnerships with the diocesan youth service, the Carmelite Monastery and a local care home, have been encouraged so as to enrich the knowledge and understanding of a lived faith.

Collective worship

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

Collective worship key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

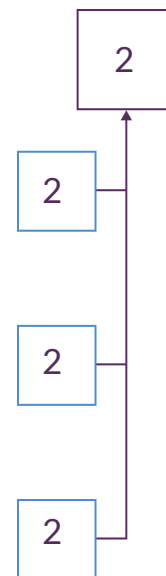
How well pupils participate in and respond to the school's collective worship

Provision

The quality of collective worship provided by the school

Leadership

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



Pupils respond reverently and with clear engagement to opportunities for prayer and reflection. They demonstrate an increasing ability to participate in a variety of forms of prayer, including sacred silence, traditional and spontaneous prayer, and joyful singing. Pupils show growing confidence and competence in engaging with the Church's prayer life. For example, they spoke enthusiastically about recent liturgical experiences, including the May procession in honour of Our Lady and Lenten observances such as a visit to church, indicating a developing understanding of Catholic tradition and the liturgical year. Pupils are actively involved in planning and leading celebrations of the word, reflecting a developing sense of ownership and confidence. This was evident in a Key Stage 1 celebration, where pupils were supported effectively to proclaim scripture and offer prayer, and in Year 4, where pupils, with appropriate guidance, planned and led a celebration of the word with increased independence. Leadership opportunities are further enhanced through initiatives such as the Key Stage 2 prayer buddies, who support younger pupils in Reception to engage meaningfully with scripture and prayer. Increasingly, pupils are beginning to articulate how their experiences of prayer and liturgy inspire them towards meaningful action within the school and wider community, although this is not yet fully embedded.

Prayer is central to the daily life of the school, within a well-established and consistent pattern that includes the regular use of traditional prayers such as grace before meals. Teachers and other staff lead worship with confidence and reverence, ensuring that a reflective atmosphere is created and an appropriate structure for prayer is followed. This was evident in the reception class; on hearing the gathering hymn pupils quickly and quietly moved into a circle

ready to begin prayer, demonstrating that even at a young age, they understood and were prepared to respond to worship. Scripture is central to all celebrations of the word, which are carefully planned to reflect the liturgical calendar. The development of the liturgical year is made clear through the celebrations of its seasons, feasts and memorials. Staff work collaboratively to share their practice with each other and use this to develop their skills. These are growing and developing over time and of particular note is the school's recent focus on supporting pupils in planning and leading prayer, liturgy and worship. Pupils sing with skill and enthusiasm and this enriches the experience of prayer for all. This fact was reinforced by one teacher who reminded the pupils that, 'when we sing we pray twice'.

Leaders prioritise the development of prayer and liturgy, as reflected in the school's self-evaluation and planning for improvement. Governors are kept fully informed by regular reports from the prayer and liturgy leader. They are supportive and take every opportunity to visit and observe practice. A clear and effective policy underpins provision, and appropriate resources have been allocated, including the development of prayer gardens, the use of a published programme, and access to professional development. Staff have engaged with diocesan training on the *Prayer and Liturgy Directory* and seek ongoing support from diocesan officers to strengthen practice, particularly in developing spontaneous prayer. Prayer spaces have been established in each classroom to support this. A structured progression for the quality of prayer is planned across the school, incorporating themes, traditional prayers and responses used during Mass. However, this progression is not yet fully embedded in daily practice. Families are regularly invited to school to participate in prayer, liturgy and worship. Carleton House works in partnership with the parish to provide opportunities for participation in Mass and key liturgical celebrations. Consequently, overall leadership of prayer and liturgy is effective. The subject leader drives development, with support from the headteacher, senior leaders, governors and staff.

Information about the school

Full name of school	Carleton House Preparatory School
School unique reference number (URN)	104723
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	3416004
Full postal address of the school	145 Menlove Avenue, Liverpool, L18 3EE
School phone number	0151 722 0756
Headteacher or Head of School	Mrs Sandy Coleman
Chair of Governors	Mr John Burns
School Website	www.carletonhouse.co.uk
Trusteeship	Independent Carleton House Preparatory School Ltd
Phase	Primary
Type of school	Catholic Independent School
Admissions policy	
Age-range of pupils	3 - 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	14 June 2023
Previous denominational inspection grade	Requires Improvement

The Inspection Team

Marie Louise Byrne Lead

Clare Louise Dwerryhouse

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