

ST MALACHY'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

URN: 141480

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Bishop of Leeds

20 May 2026 – 21 May 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

2

2

2

2

Yes

Yes

Fully

What the school does well

- St Malachy's has a strong sense of identity and belonging, every pupil is given the opportunity to 'Live in the light of the Lord,' which is the school's mission statement.
- The personal development and care for pupils is a high priority and is authentically inclusive, including for the most vulnerable, so that every child is valued and loved.
- The vision of the leaders has led to significant improvements as they have prioritised the Catholic life of the school which is quite rightly described by many as a haven for the community it serves.
- Leaders provide high-quality professional development that strengthens both subject expertise and teaching impact in religious education.
- Behaviour for learning across all age groups, along with appropriate and reverent engagement in worship, is excellent.

What the school needs to improve

- Further develop pupils' articulation and deeper understanding of Catholic social teaching and the impact this has locally, nationally and globally.
- Ensure the full implementation of the Religious Education Directory by reviewing the pedagogical approach to teaching and learning so that it is enhanced by effective questioning and challenge.
- Extend and develop opportunities in the variety of creative prayer that pupils experience across the school.

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

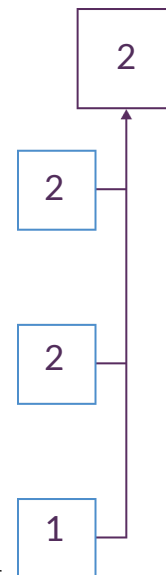
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

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



Pupil outcomes in Catholic life and mission are good. The mission statement to 'Live in the light of the Lord,' is well known and lived out by all the pupils. There is a strong sense of identity at the school and the commitment to develop a valued and cared for school community is paramount. Children show excellent respect for each other and staff. As a result, pupils actively seek opportunities to grow in virtue. They recognise their responsibility to serve others and actively participate in charitable outreach, social justice initiatives and acts of compassion. Pupils show a willingness to care for others and for the environment. Examples of this include visits to local care homes and fundraising for charitable initiatives. Children are proud to belong to St Malachy's as they recognise that *'people make St Malachy's special'*. Pupils know that everyone is unique and special and created equally; this is clearly evidenced in the relationships across the whole school community. One pupil commented that *'Jesus loves everybody, so we should all be kind,'*. Pupils appreciate that they have responsibilities not just to their own community but to the global community. However, there remains an opportunity to strengthen understanding of how acts of service are rooted in faith and Catholic identity, enabling pupils to recognise the spiritual foundation of their actions.

The quality of provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school is good. Christ is at the heart of the school, and this is exemplified in the supportive, loving, family environment where each member is valued and cared for. The school has prioritised pastoral care and support for pupils and its provision in this area is excellent. Staff play a crucial role in modelling the Catholic life and mission of the school through compassionate relationships and high-quality pastoral care, demonstrating a tangible commitment to supporting the

wellbeing of pupils, especially those most in need. Staff are deeply committed to the children of the school and are wonderful role models. Staff are proud to work at the school and feel well supported. Relationships are very positive, ensuring a supportive and welcoming atmosphere. The school environment strongly reflects its Catholic identity through high-quality displays, prayer spaces, scripture references and celebration of the liturgical year. These features contribute significantly to the spiritual development of pupils. Children know that they can speak to any adult if they are concerned and the personal development of each child is enriched and enhanced by an excellent relationship, sex and health education offer which meets diocesan requirements. As one parent commented, 'Every child is known at St Malachy's'.

Leaders are outstanding in how they promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life and mission at St. Malachy's. They have had a significant impact on the Catholic life and mission of the school. The headteacher is inspirational and enthusiastic in his approach to improve the opportunities of every person involved with the school, particularly the children. Policies and procedures reflect the priority given to the Catholic identity of the school. Parish links are strong and governors have a secure understanding of the position of the school. Staff formation is prioritised effectively. Ongoing professional development ensures that all staff understand and contribute confidently to the Catholic life and mission of the school regardless of their individual faith background. Staff commented on how they are treated with respect and dignity and value the support that leaders give them across the school. Through stable leadership, the school has rapidly strengthened the Catholic culture, with its mission firmly at its heart.

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

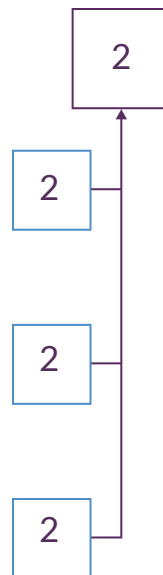
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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



Pupil outcomes in religious education are good, with attainment being in line with or better than other core subjects within school. Pupils are developing a secure knowledge and understanding of their learning, and this is enhanced through consistent recall and retrieval of taught learning. Pupils enjoy lessons and engage well in their learning. They benefit from a deep respect for each other, which is rooted in their positive attitude towards work. They are keen to develop skills in religious education and they make expected progress. Therefore, behaviour in lessons is excellent as pupils interact well in their learning across the school. Pupils' religious literacy is good, showing an awareness of key concepts, and using their knowledge, understanding and skills to think ethically and reflect spiritually. In younger classes, pupils were able to celebrate the feast of Pentecost by describing the key symbols with accuracy and what they thought the Holy Spirit was. Pupils have a broad understanding of how well they are doing in religious education and more confident pupils can articulate what they have learned and how they have improved. The school is aware of the need to have a more robust procedure for tracking pupil progress in religious education in line with other core areas so that it is evaluative and impacts on future pupil outcomes.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in religious education is good. Teachers' subject knowledge is strong and is underpinned by leadership support, a range of resources and training from both the diocese and in school. Teachers value religious education and they communicate this effectively to the pupils. Religious education is valued as being at the core of the curriculum and planning is linked accurately to current attainment. Pupil effort is

celebrated, which helps them to be confident learners and motivates them to work hard. As a result, many pupils speak enthusiastically about their learning. Clear links are made between the content of religious education and the wider Catholic life of the school. Good quality resources are used to support learning. Teachers' use of questioning is searching in most lessons and pupils respond appropriately. However, some questions lack sufficient challenge and opportunities are occasionally missed to deepen the pupils' knowledge and understanding, limiting opportunities for greater depth responses. Leaders are prioritising embedding a consistent teaching and learning pedagogy based around the 'LIGHT' acronym with a focus on retrieval practice, effective questioning and adaptive tasks.

The leadership of religious education is good. Leaders and governors ensure that the school curriculum for religious education is a faithful expression of the *Religious Education Directory*. Religious education is prioritised by the school, and it has core parity with other core subjects in the school. They support the strategies currently in place to ensure high standards in religious education. Leaders have accurately identified the necessary continuous professional development opportunities to help both new teachers and those new to Catholic schools. This is very well received by staff. The religious education leader has a clear vision for the subject and can utilise her expertise to develop the subject further. Recent monitoring is informing improvements in the teaching and learning of religious education. Leaders are aware that monitoring and evaluation processes need to become embedded practice within the school and would benefit from greater precision and analytical depth to ensure the curriculum consistently meets the needs of all pupils. Governors are supportive of religious education and understand its importance. They provide some appropriate challenge and support to leaders in continuing to develop the subject.

Collective worship

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

Collective worship key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

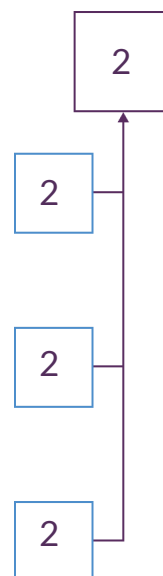
How well pupils participate in and respond to the school's collective worship

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



Pupil outcomes in collective worship are good. Pupils engage with prayer and liturgy in a reverent and respectful manner. Pupils value opportunities to gather together in prayer, and speak positively about the calm and reflective atmosphere created during worship. Pupils can articulate why prayer is important to them and the ways in which they pray, particularly when talking about traditional prayers linked to their Catholic heritage. One pupil commented on the fact that 'it helps them become closer to God, developing their faith and knowing that they can help themselves and others.' Behaviour during liturgy is respectful and attentive. With the support of teachers, pupils can take an age-appropriate leading role in prayer and liturgy within the school. They carry out this ministry willingly and there are lots of examples of children evaluating the quality of prayer across the school. Pupils recognise and understand the Church's liturgical year and can explain important feasts and celebrations, including Advent, Lent and the school's Stations of the Cross prayers in the outside area.

The quality of prayer and liturgy provided by the school is good. There is a daily pattern of prayer within the school and scripture is central to prayer and liturgy and is well planned. There has been careful consideration for the effective use of space in class and around the school building. However, there are limited opportunities provided for pupils to experience prayer in the outdoor area. Pupils are beginning to think about how to make a space ready for prayer and, with the support of adults, leave their classroom before re-entering in a prayerful and respectful manner. Music, scripture and moments of reflection are used effectively to enhance worship. Staff know their pupils well and this gives them the opportunity to nurture and skilfully integrate their gifts and talents into the prayer and liturgical life of the school.

Pupils are increasingly confident in contributing to readings, prayers and liturgical leadership. There is limited evidence of more creative prayer across the school, and this is an area that leaders are ready to prioritise now that some consistent approaches are embedded across the school.

The leadership of prayer and liturgy is good. Leaders have prioritised continuous professional development of prayer and liturgy and some training has also been accessed by governors. The school's policy on prayer and liturgy is accessible to all and is reviewed regularly by senior leaders. Governors are committed and enthusiastic about the development of prayer and liturgy and are aware of the opportunities afforded to the pupils by the school. Professional development is well planned and well received by staff. The centrality of prayer at the school is valued by all with staff commenting positively on the impact it has had on their own faith. The school's leaders and governors ensure that opportunities to celebrate the Eucharist, holy days of obligation and other significant days, such as the feast day of St Malachy, are prioritised. This results in a programme of prayer and liturgy that is matched to pupils' ages and experiences, enabling pupils to participate. Links with the parish community enrich the prayer life of the school and provide pupils with opportunities to participate in the wider life of the Church. The school works hard to engage with parents and one commented that, 'Prayer and worship are an important part of school life, and families are encouraged to feel involved and welcomed when they hold school Masses'.

Information about the school

Full name of school	ST MALACHY'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL
School unique reference number (URN)	141480
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	3813306
Full postal address of the school	St Malachy's School, Furness Place, Halifax, HX2 8JY
School phone number	01422 244628
Headteacher or Head of School	Mr Oliver Harper
Chair of Governors	Mrs Jo Woodhead
School Website	www.stmalachysprimary.org.uk
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	Blessed Peter Snow Catholic Academy Trust
Phase	Primary
Type of school	Academy
Admissions policy	Non Selective
Age-range of pupils	3 - 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	23 November 2018
Previous denominational inspection grade	Outstanding

The Inspection Team

Simon Geaves

Lead

Jonathan Gibbons

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