



Our Lady and St Swithin's Catholic Primary School

URN: 104632

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Archbishop of Liverpool

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

1

2

2

Yes

Yes

Fully

What the school does well

- Staff and pupils faithfully live out the school's Catholic mission daily through exceptional care, deep compassion, and a shared commitment to serving others.
- The specialist educational provision serves as a nurturing safe haven where pupils feel deeply valued, secure, and loved.
- School staff demonstrate resilience, perseverance, and unwavering dedication when supporting the needs of all pupils.
- Parents and carers value and appreciate the personal support given directly to them by the school.
- Dedicated support assistants are deployed effectively which successfully accelerates learning, confidence, and pupil engagement within their religious education lessons.

What the school needs to improve

- Review the Catholic self-evaluation document to ensure sharper evaluative analysis, clearer evidence of impact, and robust governor oversight.
- Incorporate driver words within learning objectives and minimise scaffolding, where appropriate, to cultivate deeper independent thinking.
- Strengthen monitoring processes for prayer and liturgy, shifting the focus to evaluating direct spiritual impact.

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

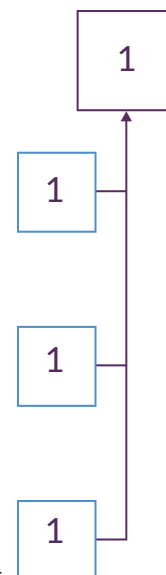
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

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



Our Lady and St Swithin's Catholic Primary School is a vibrant community where Gospel values and Catholic social teaching explicitly drive the school's identity and culture. The Catholic life and mission is outstanding, ensuring pupils benefit significantly from deeply embedded community links. Pupils contribute to and benefit from this mission to an exceptional degree. They articulate with absolute clarity how it is lived daily through their deeply respectful relationships. Pupils demonstrate an excellent understanding of their unique role in society, proudly viewing themselves as active missionary disciples. This profound commitment to Catholic social teaching is powerfully put into practice through highly effective pupil leadership roles, including the Mini Vinnies and the school council. Pupils enthusiastically explain that the purpose of the Mini Vinnies is explicitly to make the world a better place. Furthermore, the school supports an extensive range of charities, enabling pupils to clearly understand, articulate, and embrace their personal responsibility to care for our common home. Consequently, pupils take full ownership of their faith, transforming it into meaningful action that shapes the school's daily expression, fostering an inclusive, deeply compassionate environment where every individual is highly valued and nurtured.

The quality of provision for the Catholic life and mission at Our Lady and St Swithin's is outstanding. Inclusion is an exemplary, deeply embedded quality that contributes enormously to this provision, powerfully demonstrated within the specialist educational provision. Here, dedicated staff are fiercely determined to ensure all pupils are fully integrated into the school

family. Staff explicitly embody the school's mission; they are inspiring role models, deeply passionate, and genuinely caring. Viewing the entire community as a 'family', staff consistently go the extra mile to provide highly effective, tailored pastoral care for the most vulnerable. The school environment is profoundly calm and prayerful, featuring thoughtfully adapted spaces alongside high-quality religious displays and artefacts that effectively stimulate reflection. The central mission statement fundamentally shapes pupils' positive attitudes and learning; as one pupil beautifully stated, "We live our mission statement through showing love to others." This fosters a tangible, deeply lived sense of community across all key stages. Furthermore, the required curriculum for relationships, sex, and health education is fully in place and is routinely taught to all pupils. Consequently, the school provides an exceptionally supportive, Christ-centred environment where pastoral care is a beautifully lived reality, ensuring that every individual child flourishes.

Leaders and governors are highly ambitious, deeply dedicated guardians of the school's mission who ensure all pupils receive equal opportunities while staff receive excellent guidance and continuous support. The headteacher's profound passion and determination for the children shines brilliantly throughout the entire school community. Alongside senior leaders, she remains resolutely determined that the distinctive Catholic life and mission is seamlessly threaded across all aspects of daily school life. Leaders and governors meticulously ensure all diocesan policies and initiatives are fully embraced, and every policy explicitly reflects their rich Catholic identity. Parents are incredibly passionate and extremely proud of this school, confidently viewing it as the ideal pathway to prepare their children both spiritually and morally for the future. Highlighting this unique and inclusive culture, one parent beautifully shared, "If one parent feels down, we gather round to support, it is a massive family, it's us as a community, there is no judgement here." Consequently, leaders and governors carefully ensure that every single strategic decision made is fundamentally in the absolute best interests of all vulnerable pupils and their wider families. This deeply collaborative partnership ensures that Christ-centred leadership consistently inspires the entire school community to flourish together harmoniously and purposefully.

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

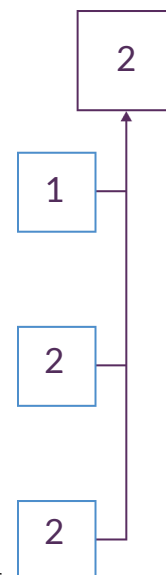
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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 demonstrate an exceptionally deep enjoyment for learning in religious education, making outstanding progress that closely aligns with other core curriculum subjects. They consistently recap previous knowledge, making highly sophisticated, meaningful links between prior learning and new theological concepts. Pupils speak with great enthusiasm about their lessons, routinely producing thought-provoking, beautifully presented work. Highly effective, targeted support from additional adults ensures pupils achieve their absolute full potential. Seamless classroom adaptations consistently empower pupils with special educational needs and disabilities to achieve the same excellent outcomes as their peers. Pupils articulate their learning with absolute clarity and confidently explain their next steps. Exemplary behaviour throughout the school establishes an optimal learning environment where pupils thrive. Teachers demonstrate total confidence in pupils' abilities, resulting in high levels of engagement. For example, in one lesson observed, pupils confidently recapped their knowledge of Pentecost and the fruits of the Spirit. They thoroughly enjoyed applying these deep theological concepts to their own lives, working collaboratively in groups to suggest practical ways to embody virtues like kindness and patience in the school playground. Consequently, pupils are religiously literate, highly reflective, and fully active, enthusiastic participants in their own spiritual and academic development.

Teachers are confident and demonstrate good subject knowledge of the religious education curriculum. They have a secure understanding of how pupils learn, and skilful questioning is

used effectively to challenge thinking and encourage explanations of ideas in greater depth, thereby deepening understanding. This effective use of questioning also maintains a good pace in lessons and successfully sustains pupils' active engagement and interest. Most teachers provide good opportunities for meaningful reflection within lessons, enabling pupils to consider their responses carefully before confidently sharing their ideas. Teaching assistants are deployed effectively and make a valuable contribution to religious education. Tasks are appropriately differentiated to meet pupils' specific needs and abilities. They engage well in lessons due to teachers' clear explanations and effective modelling. However, the absence of consistent use of driver words can limit the level of challenge in independent work. Knowledge organisers and scaffolds are used effectively to support retrieval practice, strengthen long-term retention of knowledge and provide a scaffold that is gradually withdrawn as pupils become increasingly confident and independent learners. Providing further opportunities for pupils to apply their learning independently, as this support is progressively reduced where appropriate, would deepen thinking and strengthen independent writing across all key stages.

Leaders and school governors ensure that resources for religious education are used effectively to support pupils' learning and development. They consistently prioritise purposeful professional development opportunities so that teaching staff are fully equipped to deliver the curriculum with total confidence and consistency. Staff speak highly of the support they receive, both formally and informally, and greatly value the guidance provided by school leaders. The school faithfully follows the Religious Education Directory and has successfully established a clear, formalised, and centralised approach to its content, which ensures consistency of provision, expectations, and outcomes across the school. The subject leader successfully secures daily operational consistency across the subject area, collaborates proactively with the local cluster, and ensures the governing body is regularly updated on curriculum developments. However, the overall leadership would be further enhanced by focusing more intentionally on the direct results of their actions. While classroom observations and regular monitoring activities are routinely conducted, leaders must focus on evaluating the specific outcomes of these internal exercises. Ensuring that evidence gathered from monitoring is used systematically to demonstrate impact will ensure it directly improves the quality of classroom teaching, daily learning, and final pupil outcomes across the entire school community.

Collective worship

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

Collective worship key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

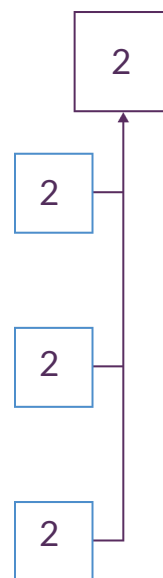
How well pupils participate in and respond to the school's collective worship

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 well to the experiences of prayer and liturgy provided by the school. From a young age, pupils consistently learn to be deeply reverent and respectful. Most pupils willingly join in with community prayer and shared reflection. These core aspects are developing well to ensure most pupils routinely engage as active participants in school prayer and liturgy. They are knowledgeable of and confident when describing the liturgical year, accurately articulating how it influences the daily prayer life of the school. They can clearly describe how seasons, special feasts, and holy saints are celebrated in the school, especially the feast of St Swithin. The Mini Vinnies are confident when explaining how personal prayer can impact directly on their own daily lives. Furthermore, the recent development of an inspirational outdoor prayer garden plays a pivotal part in how pupils participate in prayer with reverence and care. Pupils speak confidently about how they can spend quiet time in the dedicated prayer room to reflect, think about their friends, and pray. Consequently, the school provides good opportunities for spiritual development, helping pupils to grow in faith and develop a secure, meaningful understanding of traditional prayer within a supportive, vibrant Christian school community.

There is a consistent daily pattern of prayer for pupils and staff, which has a very positive impact on the school's sense of community. Many acts of worship are age-appropriate, and centred on themes and messages which are accessible to pupils. However, to deepen this impact, these experiences need to more regularly reflect the specific themes in the

whole-school plan for prayer and liturgy so they are entirely consistent throughout the school. Well-maintained prayer spaces around the school are used appropriately and are genuinely conducive to quiet prayer. Teaching staff work well to involve parents in the spiritual life of the school through various acts of celebrations and special events planned by the school. Furthermore, the parish priest and the deacon work closely and effectively with the school to strengthen and develop meaningful links with the wider parish community. They have recently supported the successful introduction of younger children leading prayer and liturgy in the church, which has further enriched the quality of collective worship across the school. Consequently, the school provides solid provision for worship, ensuring families feel connected and that pupils experience a structured, spiritually supportive environment deeply rooted in community.

Leaders and school governors recognise the clear importance of prayer and liturgy in supporting the positive faith development of the whole school community. The weekly newsletter successfully provides structured information about relevant feast days and includes open invitations for families and the wider parish community to actively participate in the vibrant prayer life of the school. A formal policy for prayer and liturgy is in place and remains securely embedded across all key stages. Appropriate resources and religious artefacts have been carefully purchased and are used effectively to enhance these experiences of daily prayer and liturgy. School leaders have also ensured that teaching staff have regular access to targeted professional development opportunities, which staff deeply value and appreciate. However, the existing processes for monitoring and evaluating prayer and liturgy should now be strengthened further. This refinement is necessary to ensure that all staff consistently provide engaging, deeply meaningful, and high-quality experiences for pupils. Focusing more intentionally on the direct impact of these leadership actions will support teachers in maintaining a unified standard. Consequently, leaders successfully guide the spiritual identity of the school, remaining committed to community engagement while actively refining their internal review methods to secure excellent and consistent future practice.

Information about the school

Full name of school	Our Lady and St Swithin's Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	104632
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	3413511
Full postal address of the school	Parkstile Lane, Liverpool, L11 0BQ
School phone number	0151 5463868
Headteacher or Head of School	Mrs Emma Hartley
Chair of Governors	
School Website	www.ourladyandstswithins.co.uk
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Phase	Primary
Type of school	Voluntary Aided School
Admissions policy	
Age-range of pupils	3 - 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	26 March 2019
Previous denominational inspection grade	Outstanding

The Inspection Team

Karl Landrum Lead

Anne Marie Webb

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