



Holy Souls Roman Catholic Primary School

URN: 119517

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Bishop of Salford

08 July 2026 – 09 July 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

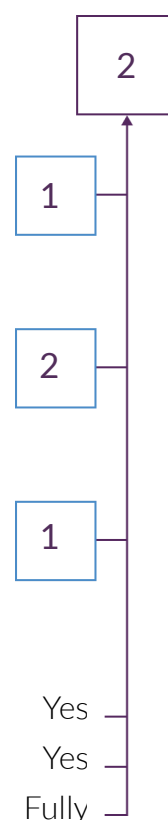
Collective worship (p.7)

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



Yes

Yes

Fully

What the school does well

- Inspired by Christ's example, Holy Souls is a welcoming and inclusive Catholic community where every person is valued, respected and enabled to participate fully in the Catholic life and mission of the school.
- Care and nurture are at the heart of this Catholic school. Leaders, including governors, ensure that children and families receive the pastoral support they need. The most vulnerable are known, heard, cherished and supported.
- Christ is at the heart of school life. The mission is lived authentically by staff and pupils and is evident in the school's relationships, decision-making and daily witness.
- Leaders and governors are faithful guardians of the Catholic mission of the Church. Through effective strategic leadership they have developed a culture founded on respect for the dignity of every person made in the image and likeness of God.
- The school's commitment to working for the common good and caring for our common home is exemplary and is reflected in the actions of the whole school community.

What the school needs to improve

- Embed the implementation of the new religious education curriculum so that teaching is consistently ambitious and enables all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those capable of attaining highly, to achieve their full potential.
- Further develop pupils' understanding of Catholic social teaching so that they can confidently explain the principles and apply them in their lives.

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

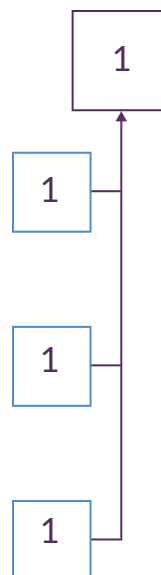
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

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 school's mission statement, 'To love one another as I have loved you,' is known, understood and lived by pupils. It inspires them to put their faith into action through practical acts of service at local, national and international level, helping to build God's Kingdom on earth. For example, pupils worked with a local charity to organise donations of warm winter coats for people experiencing homelessness. Pupils at Holy Souls are happy, confident and articulate young people. They know that, as individuals made in the image and likeness of God, they are loved, respected and listened to. Inspired by the Gospel, they have developed a strong moral conscience and readily translate their faith into action through the care and compassion they show towards others. Pupils spoke confidently about looking after one another, particularly those who may be hurt, anxious or upset. Their behaviour is exemplary, reflecting their deep respect for the dignity of every person. They demonstrate a mature understanding of, and respect for, people of other faiths and none, contributing to the school's welcoming and inclusive community. Pupils willingly embrace opportunities to exercise leadership and responsibility, including leading charitable initiatives and fundraising activities in response to the needs of others.

The Headteacher leads the school with integrity and authenticity, firmly rooted in the Catholic tradition of the Church. She is well supported by a dedicated, knowledgeable and committed governing body that shares her vision for the Catholic life and mission of the school. The impact of this leadership is evident in the high-quality relationships throughout the school community, where mutual respect, compassion and care for others are consistently demonstrated. Staff, including those who are not Catholic, fully embrace the mission of the

school and are exemplary role models, bearing witness to Gospel values through their words and actions. Pastoral care is a significant strength of the school. Leaders and staff know their families exceptionally well and provide highly effective support for those who are most vulnerable, including pupils with SEND, complex medical needs, families experiencing disadvantage or difficult circumstances, and those newly arrived in the country. Parents speak warmly of the care they receive. As one parent commented, 'We are heard and our opinions are valued.' The school celebrates the dignity of every person and is deeply committed to being a welcoming and inclusive community. Pupils and families of other faiths are respected and supported in living out their own faith traditions. For example, Reception pupils of Muslim heritage proudly shared and explained the significance of their prayer mats with classmates, fostering mutual understanding and respect. A wide range of opportunities enables pupils to live out the school's mission through service, leadership and care for others. Relationships, Sex and Health Education is carefully planned, meets all statutory requirements and is firmly rooted in the teaching of the Church, promoting a holistic understanding of the human person.

Senior leaders, including governors, have a clear and ambitious vision for the future of the school, rooted firmly in its Catholic mission. The Headteacher demonstrates highly effective leadership, combining high expectations with an unwavering commitment to improving the lives of pupils and families. Leaders work collaboratively with schools, the Diocese and other partners, actively supporting the Bishop's vision for Catholic education. They continue to strengthen links with the local parish and recognise parents as the first educators of their children, establishing highly effective partnerships that make a significant contribution to the school's educational mission. Staff formation and wellbeing are prioritised. Staff feel valued, supported and respected, recognising leaders' commitment to their professional development and physical and mental wellbeing. Leaders and governors evaluate the school's effectiveness with honesty and accuracy, using self-evaluation to identify priorities that continue to strengthen the Catholic life and mission of the school. Robust systems are firmly established, ensuring that the school is well placed to sustain its ongoing development and continue to flourish.

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

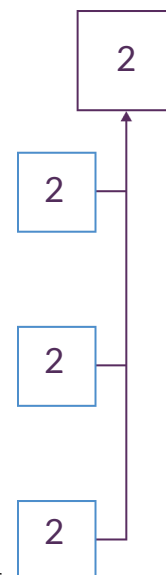
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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



The quality of curriculum religious education at Holy Souls is good. The school fully complies with the requirements of the diocesan Bishop, dedicating at least 10% of curriculum time to religious education. Lessons observed were consistently good, with pupils enjoying learning about their Catholic faith and other faith traditions. They participate enthusiastically, work hard and demonstrate positive attitudes to learning. At times, teachers could provide greater challenge to enable all pupils, particularly those capable of attaining highly, to achieve their full potential. Pupils are developing age-appropriate religious literacy. They confidently use religious vocabulary and explain key concepts and events, including Pentecost and the Resurrection. This reflects teaching that is well planned, builds effectively on prior learning and develops pupils' understanding progressively over time. Teachers explain new learning clearly and use skilful questioning to deepen understanding. For example, older pupils thoughtfully discussed their learning about Judaism, including the significance of the many names of God within the Jewish tradition. Pupils have a growing understanding of how well they are achieving in religious education and what they need to do to improve further. Attainment in religious education is in line with that of other core subjects, reflecting the value the school places on the subject within its wider curriculum.

Teachers demonstrate secure subject knowledge and confidently explain religious education content. They introduce new learning clearly, making effective links to previous lessons so that pupils build their knowledge progressively through a well-sequenced curriculum. Teachers have high expectations and prioritise learning in religious education. Pupils respond

positively, engaging eagerly and showing genuine enthusiasm for their learning. In the strongest lessons observed, teachers used skilful questioning to assess pupils' understanding, identify misconceptions and address these before introducing new learning. This enabled pupils to deepen their understanding and make good progress. Regular feedback supports pupils in recognising their achievements while identifying clear next steps for improvement. Teachers recognise the important contribution religious education makes to pupils' moral and spiritual development. Consequently, lessons routinely provide opportunities for reflection, enabling pupils to consider how their learning influences their beliefs, values and actions. Work in pupils' books and class Big Books demonstrates good coverage of the curriculum and shows that pupils record their learning in a variety of ways, including extended written responses from older pupils. Presentation is of a good standard, and pupils take pride in their work, reflecting the value placed on religious education throughout the school.

Leaders, including governors, are deeply committed to religious education and ensure that it is a faithful expression of the *Religious Education Directory*. Religious education is prioritised through the allocation of curriculum time, high-quality resources and sustained professional development for staff. Teacher and support staff training has been carefully planned and implemented over several years, ensuring that staff are well equipped to deliver the curriculum effectively. The time and financial investment in religious education is at least equal to that given to other core subjects. In the absence of a subject leader, the Headteacher has assumed direct responsibility for religious education. She has established a clear vision for the subject and communicated this effectively to staff. Leaders have successfully introduced a new religious education programme that enables pupils to build knowledge and understanding through a coherent and progressive curriculum. Appropriate support has been provided to ensure learning is accessible to all pupils, while engaging lessons and enrichment opportunities further enhance the curriculum. Governors take an active interest in religious education. They receive regular reports, discuss the subject at governing body meetings, visit lessons and scrutinise pupils' work. Through effective monitoring and evaluation alongside school leaders, governors have an accurate understanding of the strengths of religious education and the priorities for its continued development.

Collective worship

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

Collective worship key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

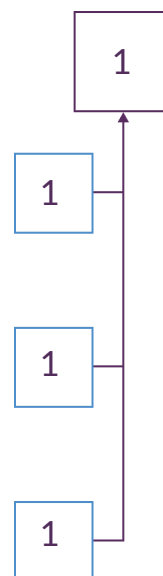
How well pupils participate in and respond to the school's collective worship

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



At Holy Souls, pupils enjoy and actively participate in prayer and liturgy with reverence, confidence and respect. They work collaboratively to plan and lead class and whole-school Celebrations of the Word, thoughtfully incorporating scripture, music, prayer and opportunities for reflection. Pupils respond maturely to scripture and understand how prayer shapes both the life of the school and their own daily lives. There is a clear progression in pupils' leadership of prayer and liturgy across the school. In the Early Years, children confidently prepare class focal points and prayer tables, while by Year 6 pupils independently select appropriate scripture to support the theme of a Celebration of the Word. Prayer and liturgy reflect the liturgical year, with pupils increasingly involved in planning, leading and evaluating these experiences. High-quality class worship Big Books provide strong evidence of pupils' engagement and progression. A deeply inclusive approach ensures that every pupil is able to participate fully. Inspectors observed children being encouraged to pray in ways that respected their own faith journey, enabling pupils of all faiths to participate confidently, reverently and with a genuine sense of belonging. This inclusive practice reflects the school's commitment to respecting the dignity of every person and creating a welcoming community for all.

The centrality of prayer and liturgy is evident throughout Holy Souls and permeates the daily life of the school. A well-established pattern of daily prayer is embedded across the school and embraced by pupils and staff. During the inspection, moments of stillness, reflection and spontaneous prayer were observed alongside opportunities for pupils to share their own intentions and responses during Celebrations of the Word. Scripture is at the heart of prayer

and liturgy. For example, prayer leaders selected Matthew's Gospel to help pupils reflect on Jesus' invitation to find rest in Him when they feel burdened. Scripture is chosen carefully to ensure it is accessible, meaningful and relevant to pupils of all faiths and abilities. Staff lead prayer and liturgy with authenticity and are exemplary role models. They skilfully support pupils in planning and leading worship, enabling them to grow in confidence and deepen their spiritual development. Indoor and outdoor spaces, including the well-developed prayer garden, are used effectively throughout the year to enrich opportunities for prayer and reflection. Families are fully involved in the prayer life of the school, and leaders continue to strengthen partnerships with the parish to further enhance pupils' experiences of prayer and liturgy.

The policy for prayer and liturgy at Holy Souls is relevant, well understood and fully reflected in the daily life of the school. Leaders have established a comprehensive strategy that enables pupils to develop progressively in their knowledge, confidence and participation in prayer and liturgy. This progression was evident across all phases of the school. Holy Days of Obligation and significant feast days are celebrated with reverence, enriching the spiritual life of the community. Leaders have prioritised the formation of all staff, including those who are not Catholic, ensuring they are well equipped to support and encourage pupils in prayer and liturgy. Celebrations observed during the inspection included a creative balance of traditional and contemporary forms of prayer, carefully adapted to the context and needs of the Holy Souls community. These were joyful, reflective experiences that incorporated moments of genuine awe and wonder, alongside opportunities for spontaneous prayer and silent reflection. Leaders monitor the quality of prayer and liturgy effectively, while older pupils evaluate the Celebrations of the Word they have planned and led, helping to strengthen future practice. Leaders, including governors, have prioritised investment in high-quality resources and well-developed prayer spaces, ensuring that prayer and liturgy remain central to the life and mission of the school.

Information about the school

Full name of school	Holy Souls Roman Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	119517
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	8893514
Full postal address of the school	Wilworth Crescent, Blackburn, Lancashire, BB1 8QN
School phone number	01254 249892
Headteacher or Head of School	Mrs Danielle Ellison
Chair of Governors	Mr Luke Devine
School Website	www.holysouls.co.uk
Trusteeship	Diocesan
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	23 April 2018
Previous denominational inspection grade	Good

The Inspection Team

David Deane OBE

Lead

David Proctor

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