



Catholic Schools Inspectorate inspection report for St Clare's Catholic Primary School, Preston

URN: 149313

Carried out on behalf of the Right Rev. Paul Swarbrick, Bishop of Lancaster on:

Date: 27 - 28 April 2023

Overall effectiveness

The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school.....

1

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.....

1

Collective worship (p.8)

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

1

The school is fully compliant with the curriculum requirements laid down by the Bishops' Conference



The school is fully compliant with all requirements of the diocesan bishop



The school has responded to the areas for improvement from the last inspection

Fully

Summary of key findings

What the school does well

- The Catholic Life and mission of St Clare's is reflected in every encounter, ensuring a real sense of belonging and community which is valued by all and shows the school's priority to put Christ at the heart of everything.
- Strong leadership including governors, ensures all staff are highly aspirational for the pupils in their care.
- The religious education curriculum is well planned and delivered with a creative approach, meeting the needs of all learners.
- Pupils have a strong sense of belonging and pride in their school. They value and respect their peers and the adults who work with them.
- Parents are rightly proud of their school and value the work of staff.

This Catholic Schools Inspectorate inspection was carried out under canons 804 & 806 of the code of canon law. For maintained schools and academies in England it fulfils the statutory requirements of s.48 of the Education Act 2005. For maintained schools and academies in Wales it fulfils the statutory requirements of s.50 of the Education Act 2005.

What the school needs to improve:

- The consistency of marking to enable pupils to develop further their understanding and knowledge.
- Review the curriculum and policies in line with the changes planned to national, diocesan and Mater Ecclesiae Catholic Multi Academy Trust guidelines.

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:.....

1

Pupil outcomes

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

1

Provision

The quality of provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school

1

Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school

1

Pupils understand the distinctive Catholic identity, charism and mission of the school. They value their school and what it stands for and this was evident in conversations with pupils, as all were proud of St Clare's and clearly understand the part they play in living out the mission statement. The strong outward signs of the Catholic faith are demonstrated daily throughout school. Pupils value the provision and opportunities afforded to them and engage well. For example, prayer leaders' meetings to help and guide each other in planning prayer and liturgy, the 'Bible and Biscuit' group and the Eco Club.

The behaviour of pupils is exemplary and they show a deep respect for their own personal dignity and that of others, showing understanding of religious and cultural differences. One pupil said that 'children behave because we love one another - that comes from God.' Relationships are excellent, the strong outward sign of faith is shown through the welcome given to everyone in school. St Clare's offers exceptional care for the children and families in their school community. This was evidenced in the parental survey responses and from speaking to parents during inspection. One parent commented 'Staff embody Catholic values as a caring, school. They live the faith every day.' Parents are encouraged to share their own faith journeys with pupils and some visit classes to share the similarities between their faiths and Christianity in a way that is accessible to all. Staff spoke with genuine passion about life at St Clare's and working in a supportive, joyful and prayerful, hard working school.

Leaders live the faith and mission of the school as seen in all areas of school life and in every interaction witnessed during inspection. Leaders are deeply committed to their faith and to the Catholic life and mission of the school and its community and lead by example. Staff are

excellent role models, with some choosing to sleep outside for the night in Preston in support of the homeless in the Foxton Centre.

Pupil leadership is excellent through the active student council, eco group and prayer leaders. Clear policies and structures are in place, which reflect the shared vision for the school and the aspirations for those in its care. These now need to be shared and developed with members of the Mater Ecclesiae Catholic Multi Academy Trust which the school has joined. The school engages well with parents who are very supportive of and contribute to its mission. The school and the parish work extremely well together and support each other equally to benefit everyone in the school and parish community. A former parish priest and religious education governor spoken to on the day of inspection stated that 'St Clare's has a culture of promoting faith throughout the school and across the whole curriculum, there are visible signs of faith embedded in every part of the school'. Pupils take an active interest in the Catholic life and mission of the school and are always keen to join the parish for liturgical celebrations including Mass, May procession, Corpus Christi procession, as well as Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament before school and Benediction during Lent. The school and parish together raised a significant amount to build a church in India with the charity Aid to the Church in Need. They are aware of the needs of the vulnerable and marginalised and seek to help in many ways. Furthermore, pupils can identify and explain why they are raising money to help others in need and they support many charities throughout the year. There are ambitious enrichment opportunities for every class throughout the year to deepen their knowledge and understanding of Catholic life and mission. These include visits to St Clare's Church, Ladyewell, Lancaster Cathedral to see relics of St Bernadette and to Castlerigg for days of spiritual enrichment. The weekly mission shared on the newsletter, is a reflection on the Sunday gospel used throughout school and sent to share with families in their homes.

The provision for *Relationship Health and Sex Education* is carefully planned to ensure that as well as meeting all the statutory requirements, it also fully meets the diocesan requirements, is firmly rooted in the teaching of the Catholic Church and celebrates a holistic vision of the human person. Pupils were proud of the work in the floor books and were keen to share the impact of these lessons.

Governors have a very good grasp of the school's strengths and areas for development. They know the school well and are effective in holding leaders to account whilst supporting its mission, especially during the transition to becoming an academy, as the school is a founding member of the Mater Ecclesiae Catholic Multi Academy Trust in Preston, acting swiftly on the Bishop's vision for education in the diocese.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade:.....

1

Pupil outcomes

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education.....

1

Provision

The quality of teaching, learning, and assessment in religious education.....

1

Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor, and evaluate the provision for religious education.....

1

Pupils are developing excellent knowledge, understanding and skills in religious education. They are rightly proud of the work they produce and this work is of the same high standard as that seen in their English books. They discuss their learning and are confident in sharing what they have learnt. Work in books is always well presented and shows a creative and individual approach to learning. Pupils have shared their learning journey with governors. All pupils across the phases in school make consistently good progress in religious education. They can speak fluently and confidently about what they have learned in religious education, using key concepts and subject-specific vocabulary. For example, a pupil in Year 3 asked: 'Is wisdom one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit?' Another pupil in Year 4 worked out what day the road to Emmaus story took place from knowing about Jesus' death and Resurrection. As a consequence, they ask incisive questions of adults and peers, which indicate an innate curiosity and a desire to deepen learning.

Behaviour is excellent in religious education lessons, pupils are actively engaged, they are reflective and appreciate the 'fix it' comments in their books to help improve their learning. They enjoy their learning and approach lessons with great interest and enthusiasm. In Year 6 during a lesson to help understand how we live in communion with Jesus, pupils researched scripture passages from clues given and then discussed which one was right and why. Some pupils in Year 2 stated that they 'love RE because it's really interesting and we have fun in lessons.'

All pupils spoken to responded positively about religious education lessons and the impact learning has outside of the lessons. The 'Bible and Biscuit' lunchtime group, run by the prayer leaders for key stage two pupils, makes a valuable contribution to the religious education and wider Catholic life at St Clare's. Pupils share scripture, lead meditations and they are able to link

biblical passages to every day life. A pupil in Year 3, when asked during inspection about how they knew a particular piece of scripture, said she'd heard it earlier at 'Bible and Biscuits' at lunchtime.

The quality of teaching and learning in religious education, as evidenced through pupils' books, discussions with pupils and the teaching observed during inspection, is of an excellent standard. Teachers use questioning skilfully during lessons to identify precisely where pupils are in their understanding. As a result, they adapt explanations and tasks, thus increasing engagement and maximising learning for all pupils. The Big Questions are a focus in every class and were prompted by the recent pandemic to help deepen knowledge understanding in religious education. The impact of this practice has been significant. In all the lessons observed, teachers demonstrated a high level of confidence based on authentic subject knowledge and teaching expertise, which contributed to the good progress made by all groups of learners in lessons. The use of high-quality resources including music, art and vocabulary and routine access to Bibles, are a real strength. Learning is tailored to meet the needs of all learners, with pupils responding well to marking and feedback. The consistency of this good practice needs further adjusting to ensure the excellent progress of every pupil in school.

The ambitious and courageous religious education curriculum design captures the pupils' love of practical learning as seen in the variety of tasks in their books and witnessed during inspection. In Y1/2 lesson a drama freeze-frame of Jesus fishing with Peter and Andrew when he told them they had to be the 'fishers of men' was enacted. Pupils are given the opportunity to respond in a range of creative ways such as responding to meditations, diary entries, writing from a specific point of view, creating cartoon strips and writing a biography. There are a wide variety of religious displays around the school of a very high quality and pupils respond well to them.

Leaders and governors ensure that the school curriculum for religious education is a faithful expression of the Religious Education Curriculum Directory. Other resources are used imaginatively and creatively to enhance delivery in line with diocesan guidelines. Religious education has full parity with other core curriculum subjects which included professional development, resourcing, timetabling and reporting to parents.

The religious education subject leader's passion and drive for the subject underpin his outstanding support for all staff that is highly appreciated by all. This enables teachers to deliver lessons with confidence and enthusiasm and ensure that standards in religious education are high. His expert knowledge and experience gives him the confidence and skill to adapt the curriculum to continually seek improvement and when individual class structures change, ensuring an age appropriate and thorough education for all pupils. The quality of subject leadership is recognised beyond the school and the head teacher and subject leader willingly share their expertise to the benefit of other diocesan schools. Excellent links are forged with other appropriate agencies and the wider community to provide a wide range of enrichment activities to

promote pupils' learning and engagement with religious education, these include: a visit to a synagogue on the Fylde Coast as well as visitors (including parents) to school during One World Week and Celebrating RE Week, both taking place in the Spring term.

Leaders and governors have a good understanding of the strengths of St Clare's and what is needed to improve, through rigorous monitoring, analysis and self-challenge. Governors are immensely proud and supportive of their school.

Collective worship

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

Collective worship key judgement grade:.....

1

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



Prayer and liturgy are central to the life of St Clare's, it is a strength of the school and valued by all. Prayer is a regular part of the daily experience for all pupils and staff. From a young age, pupils are reverent and respectful during times of prayer. This was evident in every class where the atmosphere was very calm and prayerful silence was naturally in place. They respond well during the celebration of prayer and liturgy and sing with enthusiasm. This was evident when the whole school, shared a prayerful assembly during the inspection.

Pupils work collaboratively alongside staff and prayer leaders to prepare and create well-constructed experiences of prayer and liturgy using an agreed format where necessary. Due to the school's provision of liturgical formation for its pupils, they can undertake liturgical ministries with confidence, understanding and skill. Classes are paired up, with the older pupils sharing planned liturgies with their own peers and evaluating them. They then share them with their paired classes. The prayer leaders are excited to promote prayer and liturgy to larger groups throughout school. This practice is well established and appreciated by pupils spoken to during inspection.

Pupils demonstrate confidence in articulating the ways in which prayer and liturgy both influence and are influenced by the curriculum and the wider life of the school. During discussions, they shared their many experiences of supporting charities, including CAFOD and the Foxton Mission, amongst others. Practice is liturgically accurate, with regular use of the Sunday Gospel and other seasonally appropriate resources used as a focus, both within class and whole school liturgies. Prayer spaces in classes are central, well resourced and a focus for prayer and liturgy. A wide range of high-quality music and other art forms are,

when appropriate, integrated into prayer and liturgy in a way that significantly enhances the experience and reflects the riches of the Catholic Church. This was witnessed during a whole school assembly when pupils sang the Magnificat in preparation for Marian devotion in May.

The school works hard to maintain a thriving partnership with the parish to help pupils participate more fully in the liturgy. Parents look forward to celebrating special events including the annual May procession, the harvest, Corpus Christi procession and the recent Year 3 Easter assembly. The school uses the church and clergy as a rich resource and pupils enjoy visiting St Clare's church at every opportunity. For example, they pray in front of the crib at Christmas and say the rosary in October.

Leaders, including governors have a clear prayer and liturgy policy and strategy for building on skills of participation as pupils progress through the school. The effectiveness of this plan is evidenced by the increasing ease with which pupils are able to participate in prayer and liturgy as they mature and the way older pupils and staff are great role models for younger pupils. All Holy days of Obligation and other significant days are prioritised in the school's calendar to celebrate the Eucharist with the parish. The Sacrament of Reconciliation is offered at key times of the liturgical year – in Advent and Lent.

Professional development of all staff focuses on liturgical formation and the planning of prayer and liturgy is a priority with leaders and governors. They have a thorough understanding of a broad range of ways of praying that are part of the Catholic tradition and are highly effective in facilitating others to plan and lead experiences of prayer and liturgy that are engaging, meaningful and relevant for the whole community.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Clare's Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	149313
Full postal address of the school	Sharoe Green Lane North, Fulwood, Preston, PR2 9HH
School phone number	01772 787037
Name of head teacher or principal	Mrs Anne Charnley
Chair of governing board	Miss Janet Metcalf
School Website	www.st-clares.lancs.sch.uk
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	Mater Ecclesiae Catholic Multi-Academy Trust
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy
Age-range of pupils	3 to 11
Trustees	Lancaster Roman Catholic Diocesan Trustees
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	June 2016
Previous denominational inspection grade	1- Outstanding

The inspection team

Frances Wygladala

Lead inspector

Alan Parry

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