



St Francis of Assisi Catholic Primary School

URN: 134598

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Archbishop of Liverpool

12–13 March 2025

Summary of key findings

Overall effectiveness

The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school

2

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

2

Religious education (p.5)

The quality of curriculum religious education

2

Collective worship (p.7)

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

2

The school is fully compliant with the general norms for religious education laid down by the Bishops' Conference

Yes

The school is fully compliant with any additional requirements of the diocesan bishop

Yes

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

Fully

Compliance statement

- The school is fully compliant with each of the general norms for religious education laid down by the Bishops' Conference.
- The school is fully compliant in its application of the above norms that fulfil the requirements of the Archbishop of Liverpool.
- The school has addressed all areas for improvement identified in the last inspection.

What the school does well

- Relationships at all levels are nurtured and valued, and all members of the school community feel safe, loved and respected.
- Pastoral care for pupils and support for those who are vulnerable is given very high priority, so that all thrive in this Christ centred school.
- The school has a strong network of governors who ensure that Catholic life and links with the local parish are given high priority.
- Pupils develop their spirituality and moral values, because they are inspired through opportunities for awe and wonder and time for reflection in religious education.
- Beautiful sacred spaces, focus tables and displays around the school environment, celebrate the distinctive Catholic life of St Francis of Assisi Catholic Primary School.

What the school needs to improve

- Review the mission statement, involving all pupils in its ongoing evaluation, so that they fully understand it, can articulate the content, and as a result are inspired into action.
- Implement Religious Education Directory, through the development of planning and assessment that is compliant with archdiocesan requirements.
- Provide opportunities for pupils to plan, lead and evaluate prayer and liturgy.

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

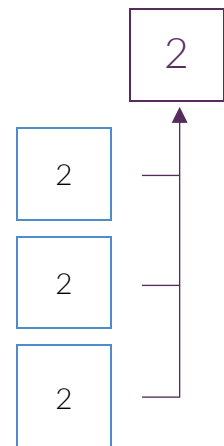
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

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



Pupils understand the distinctive Catholic identity of St Francis of Assisi Catholic Primary School. They know that they are safe, valued and cared for. They follow the examples given to them by Jesus, saying, "We grow in Christ and follow in Jesus' footsteps, by sharing love and games with each other." Pupils are inquisitive, polite, and well-mannered. Their behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. They demonstrate respect for themselves and others, welcoming those who are from other faiths and cultures. Pupils in the school council explained that "Christians believe in God and Jesus, some people believe in a different God, but everyone is welcome here." Pupils, such as the Mini Vinnies group, actively engage with the opportunities provided by the school. They raise funds to help people in need and support charities, for example: the Cafod Big Lent Walk and Nugent Care. However, all pupils need to develop their understanding of Catholic social teaching so they can explain how Gospel values inspire their actions. Pupils would benefit from revisiting the school mission statement, deepening their understanding and becoming actively involved in evaluating its effectiveness.

The mission statement, *'We love and grow in Christ. We live and learn in partnership. We build and share together'*, is a clear expression of the educational mission of the Church. The content is known and regularly reviewed. It is lived out by staff, throughout all aspects of school life, resulting in a strong, close community. There are positive relationships at all levels, demonstrating that Christ is at the centre of this school. One staff member stated, "Gospel values underpin everything we think, say and do in our school. We encourage everyone to live out these values in their relationships and actions, fully emphasising the call to serve others." Staff are role models for pupils, who encourage pupils to achieve the mission star award in assembly. Leaders now need to provide planned opportunities for all pupils to explore and discuss Catholic social

teaching to deepen their understanding. High levels of pastoral care and support are provided, especially for those pupils and families who are most vulnerable. The mission statement is reflected throughout the whole school environment and communicates that St Francis of Assisi is a proud Catholic school. Visitors to the school, enhance learning about charitable giving through Cafod and the chaplain from the local high school leads Jubilee celebrations for *Pilgrims of Hope*. The content of relationships, sex and health education meets the requirements laid down by the archdiocese and is well mapped out and effective.

Leaders and governors clearly articulate and demonstrate their responsibilities as guardians of the Catholic life and mission. Professional development is given high priority. This is evidenced by a recent training day, where staff and governors renewed their personal commitment to the mission of the school. Leaders must now provide opportunities for pupils to review and evaluate the mission statement, so they too can develop its impact further. There are well-established links with the local parish church. The school and church engage parents in supporting their children as the first educators in learning and in sacramental preparation. Leaders and governors ensure that the whole curriculum is developed by an emphasis on Catholic values, with religious education at its core. Governors confirm that resources are used effectively to support those in greatest need. They explain how they invest in strong pastoral support, particularly for those who are vulnerable. One governor said, "We see the dignity in every family." Governors are regular visitors to the school. They talk to pupils about the school values of love, forgiveness and hope. They observe the school's mission in action. They are committed to continued development and to the achievement of the Cafod Live Simply Award.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

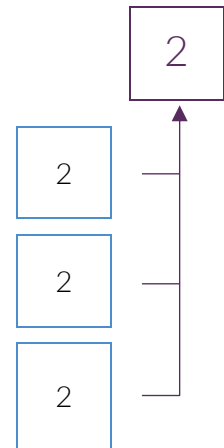
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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 are developing secure, knowledge, understanding and skills that reflect the learning required by the Religious Education Directory. Their work demonstrates good progress over time, although they are not always able to articulate how they can make improvements. Some pupils ask good questions which takes their learning further. However, not all pupils have this opportunity. Pupils enjoy learning in religious education and behaviour is good. Pupils work well independently and in collaboration with a partner. They like to present their work in creative ways through story boards, cards and paintings. They particularly enjoy drama and role play. Children in early years show awe and wonder at the world around them. The youngest pupils remember their autumn ‘welly walk’ and can explain the changes springtime brings. Older pupils recall scripture about Jesus’ mission, making links to the personal demands of people in service today. Pupils can reflect spiritually, and most are aware of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life. Standards of attainment in religious education are in-line with other core subjects.

Teachers are confident in their subject knowledge, as they currently teach from the recommended archdiocesan programme for religious education. They are committed to the value of religious education and communicate this effectively to their pupils. Planning is linked to pupils’ abilities. Adaptations are made to ensure pupils with special educational needs learn effectively. Previous knowledge is consistently recapped at the start of all lessons. This enables some pupils to make links in their learning. Teachers and supporting adults praise and encourage pupils to do their best. However, pupils would benefit from more consistent feedback about their next steps in learning. Space and time is given in lessons for quiet reflection, as pupils consider their feelings and ideas. Older pupils deal with challenging subject matter as they sensitively talk about loss and bereavement. Teachers and supporting adults provide creative

and imaginative ways for pupils to express their ideas. Younger pupils pretend to be seedlings beginning to grow, responding to life giving water and the warmth of the sun. High quality resources are carefully prepared, for example, using baby photographs to explore uniqueness and growth. Information technology is used well to inspire awe and wonder through beautiful time lapse photography of growing plants. One parent stated, "The school is very involved in religious activities and the children love getting involved, as I do too."

Monitoring and evaluation by leaders and governors ensure that religious education is given full parity with other core curriculum areas. Leaders have a clear vision for the development of the subject, with the planned introduction of the Religious Education Directory. Leaders and governors ensure that the curriculum is well-planned and resourced. They have invested financially in staff development. Archdiocesan training has been attended in preparation for the implementation of the revised Directory in the summer term. Staff would benefit from further training, to ensure that all pupils have opportunities to ask questions and receive quality feedback about their next steps in learning. Leaders ensure that religious education is enriched through visitors to the school. A visitor brought artefacts and spoke about her faith, which enhanced learning about Islam during Ramadan. The school liaises with other Catholic schools to moderate standards of work and to share ideas and learn from best practice. The knowledgeable subject leader and committed link governor monitor standards and the quality of teaching and learning. They carry out scrutiny of pupils' work and check timetables. They provide developmental feedback, which leads to positive outcomes in religious education.

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

3

Provision

The quality of collective worship provided by the school

2

Leadership

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

2

2

Pupils respond well to the experiences of prayer and liturgy provided at St Francis of Assisi. They take part respectfully and engage well. They reflect in silence, make the sign of the cross and join in with some traditional prayers. Pupils enjoy this special time. Praying together at key times is part of their daily routine. One pupil explained that when they go out from prayer and liturgy they “Make a promise to do better this week.” However, pupils would benefit from widening their experience of different ways of praying. A focus on spontaneous and personal prayer, enhanced by liturgical music would enable a deeper and more meaningful experience. Pupils know that the Church’s year is represented through different colours. However, understanding of the liturgical seasons requires further development. Pupils have started to contribute to prayer and liturgy in the special role of *Doves*. As pupils gather, *Doves* make a focus table, using the Bible, candles and a cross. Children in early years are happy to lead a song to show they are ready for prayers before making the sign of the cross. Older pupils share personal prayers that they have written themselves. They read from scripture. However, all pupils need to increase their responsibilities in planning, leading and evaluating prayer and liturgy.

There is a daily pattern of prayer and appropriately planned prayer and liturgy at St. Francis’. Scripture is carefully chosen to reflect the season and is central to the worship. Staff are models of good practice, although more could be gained by supporting pupils in planning, leading and evaluating their own prayer and liturgy. The school makes good use of the environment to provide special places for reflection, for example, the corridor space which celebrates and remembers special people. Here there is a beautiful statue of St Francis, with photographs, a cross and uplifting liturgical music. Outside there is a beautiful prayer garden, with a large cross, a willow garden and a seating area, which is a sacred space for all to enjoy. The school invites

parents to actively participate in the prayer life of St Francis school community, for example, the Mass for Year Six leavers and recently introduced *Stay and Pray* sessions.

Leaders at all levels value prayer and liturgy highly. The subject leader's policy and progression map for prayer and liturgy is well-formulated and leaders have a good understanding of how pupils can increasingly use their skills. However, practice is inconsistent. All staff, including those new to St Francis', have received archdiocesan training in prayer and liturgy. Leaders need to ensure that staff develop their practice further, through learning from the best examples in the school. There is a well-planned annual cycle of key events in the liturgical year, which includes times for Masses, receiving the sacraments and celebrating the feast of St. Francis of Assisi. Ashes were distributed by a representative from the church to mark the start of Lent. There is a lovely altar table, carved with the school mission statement and a beautiful stained-glass window of St Francis. These are used during assemblies and Mass, which are celebrated in the school hall. There has been investment in good quality resources, which are arranged on focus tables in classrooms and around the school environment. These enhance the prayer life of the school. Leaders and Governors regularly monitor and evaluate prayer and liturgy and seek the views of pupils. They now need to ensure that pupils are given more responsibility to develop their skills in ministry.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Francis of Assisi Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	134598
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	8883998
Full postal address of the school	St Francis of Assisi Catholic Primary School, Blakehall, Skelmersdale, WN8 9AZ
School phone number	01695 558560
Headteacher	Ann Naylor
Chair of governors	Clare Dagnall
School Website	www.sfoa.lancs.sch.uk/
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	N/A
Phase	Primary
Type of school	Voluntary Aided School
Admissions policy	Non-selective
Age-range of pupils	2-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	9 th May 2018
Previous denominational inspection grade	1

The inspection team

Chris Mason
Sharon Orwin

Lead
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