

# St Catherine of Siena Catholic Primary School

URN: 106507

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Archbishop of Liverpool

07–08 December 2023

## 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

1

#### 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 curriculum requirements laid down by the Bishops' Conference

Yes

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

Yes

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

Fully

2

## What the school does well

- The staff at St Catherine's provide a loving caring environment where every pupil has the chance to thrive and develop their own unique talents.
- The headteacher and subject leader for religious education are aspirational in their vision for religious education, leading by example, ably supported by the governing body and wider school community.
- The school has worked hard to ensure that pupils have a strong understanding of scripture and its links to their everyday lives.
- The pupils are articulate, religiously literate and highly supportive of each other.
- Pupils show respect during times of worship, show reverence and respect in the way in which they gather and respond.

## What the school needs to improve

- Maximise the use of outdoor space to enhance the Catholic life of the school.
- Support all pupils to clearly understand and articulate what they need to do to make further progress in religious education.
- Enrich prayer and liturgy by providing pupils with knowledge, understanding and use of traditional prayer.

## 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 pupils of St Catherine's know the mission 'Be who God meant you to be and together we will achieve'. The pupils that inspectors spoke to, could talk confidently about St Catherine and how her story impacts on the way they live this out particularly through the mission of the school. The pupils are a pleasure to be with because they are happy in this school and are very fond of their teachers and support staff. They articulate well, which is a particular strength in older pupils. The pupils know that they are precious and made in the image and likeness of God. Pupils are well behaved, and extremely respectful of adults, each other, and their diverse backgrounds. They can demonstrate their faith in action by referring to initiatives that they have set up to serve others. A group of pupils talked warmly about raising money for the British Legion. The Aspire and Cafod groups are integral in responding to the demands of Catholic social teaching. They listen to their peers and plan relevant opportunities to support and raise awareness of others in need. The children benefit from excellent relationships with the parish priest. They enjoy his regular visits to school, including the opportunity to receive the sacrament of reconciliation throughout the year. They talk with enthusiasm about the opportunities that they get to visit the local church.

The mission is clear, it is lived out and understood by all stakeholders. It is reviewed annually and, therefore, refreshed. There is a real sense of belonging within the school that stems from the centrality of the mission. The mission is visually prominent throughout the school, on documentation and on the website. Staff care deeply about the pupils, families and each other due to their commitment to the mission. The school donates regularly to the parish foodbank which provides necessary resources for those in need. Often the foodbank is also of service to school for families in need. Relationships are a strength, and it is evident that all are welcome at

St Catherine's. Staff offer additional support to anyone experiencing vulnerability at any point and they do this willingly and without question. Over time, the community has changed and is more diverse. The school has ensured that the curriculum has been adapted to ensure that children learn more about and are tolerant and understanding of the differences of others, particularly those of other faiths. Staff are committed to making the school a great place to be and do with love and care. Provision for relationships, sex and health education meets statutory and diocesan requirements.

Leaders and governors live the mission, and they exemplify this through their words and actions. Policies and procedures reflect the charism and unique identity of St Catherine's. Leaders and governors' relationships with the parish flourish because they prioritise and work hard to maintain this rewarding relationship. It is a nurturing partnership, which enables their work to have a positive impact. In one example pupils spoke with delight about the opportunities they have to spend time with elderly parishioners. As a result, both parties benefit greatly from these opportunities to live out the mission. Staff work hard to maintain strong relationships with parents and carers and, in turn, they appreciate the support offered. The school communicates effectively. Parents and carers are quick to praise the good work and are highly appreciative of staff who address concerns as and when they arise. The Headteacher is dedicated to meeting the needs of all staff and they highly value her support. All pupils are included in the evaluation process and review the mission annually. The Aspire, Cafod and School Council groups work hard to represent the views of their peers as they plan for further opportunities across the school. Appropriate training is provided for all staff as and when required and in-house training provided by the subject lead is highly valued and appreciated by all.

## Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

### Religious education key judgement grade

#### Pupil outcomes

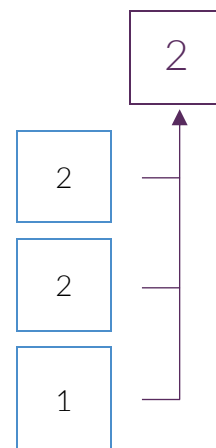
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

#### 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



St Catherine's produces pupils who are curious and interested learners. Pupils are developing secure knowledge in line with the *Religious Education Directory*. All groups of pupils make good progress. Plans are in place to support pupils requiring more help. In the best lessons, pupils regularly access scripture. It is made relevant so that they are given the best possible chances to achieve well. In all key stages pupils are literate and engage. Those pupils who met with inspectors spoke with confidence about their learning over time. They use some specific vocabulary. In the best examples of work, excellent presentation is demonstrated. However, there is an inconsistency in the quality of work across classes and year groups. Pupils engage well during lessons and want to do well. Their behaviour for learning is good; they are polite, supportive of each other and well mannered. In the best lessons observed, they are given the opportunity to orally rehearse their answers before responding to targeted questions and all are encouraged to participate. 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. They would benefit from specific next steps for learning linked to skill words within a topic. Attainment in religious education is comparable to other subjects.

Teachers confidently deliver the curriculum; they are deeply committed to religious education. They have a strong subject knowledge and are supported well and seek guidance from the subject leader. Planning is linked to pupils' assessment so that pupils learn well. There are good examples of pupil knowledge being challenged and extended across key stage two with reference to the use of scripture and its relevance to their lives. When teachers use questioning skilfully, pupils thrive, and their learning is maximised within lessons and across units of work. Effort and achievement are celebrated, and staff clearly communicate the high priority place on religious education. The emphasis on spiritual and moral development is strong. There are

regular opportunities for planned reflection. As a result, pupils share their thoughts and opinions verbally and in written form and by the end of key stage 2, do so with skill. Pupils are given the opportunity to use various forms to present their work. Support staff, when used effectively, have a positive impact on the outcomes for pupils as they are supported and challenged well.

Leaders and governors ensure that the curriculum, meets the needs of pupils at St Catherine's and religious education is resourced equally as well as other core subjects. Continuing professional development is provided regularly and the subject lead shares knowledge and expertise to support the staff team. This is provided holistically and in line with needs. Staff are currently working toward the introduction of the new *Religious Education Directory*. The subject lead has a clear vision for religious education and provides strong support for her colleagues. She is dedicated to improving the work of the school and enhances her own knowledge and expertise by attending a cluster group with colleagues from the local area. In turn, she cascades this information back to colleagues within school. She strives to ensure all staff have the confidence to provide the best possible outcomes. For example, she works hard with teachers to moderate samples of work using external verification as a standard. Leaders have worked hard to ensure that the links to scripture are made explicit within year groups and across topics. A strong emphasis has been placed on developing pupil ability to make sense of abstract concepts. Leaders and governors have evaluated their work in religious education and they have prioritised key areas to move the school forward.

## 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

2

#### 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

1

2

Pupils at St Catherine's are a joy, responding well to the opportunities of prayer and liturgy offered by the school. They are respectful in and around the school. When gathering at times of prayer they are reverent and reflect in prayerful silence. Older pupils enjoy the opportunity to lead worship. When given the opportunity to do so, they enjoy the experience. When pupils evaluate the provision for prayer and liturgy, they say what it is they enjoyed and what they would like to do more of. Pupils told inspectors that they enjoy time to sit quietly and reflect, it makes them feel peaceful. The Cafod and Aspire groups spoke confidently about the links that prayer and liturgy have to their curriculum and how this is influenced. They can talk about how prayer and liturgy influence the wider life of the school. For example, they talked about making links to the class World War Two topic through British Legion remembrance reflections. They also discussed the links between the creation story achieving an Eco award. Older pupils spoke about enjoying the opportunity to share confession with the parish priest during Advent and Lent.

Prayer is central to the school life at St Catherine's. Prayer takes place daily and at significant moments. Its structure is embedded and regarded as crucial in upholding the Catholic life. Seasonally appropriate scripture is mapped across the liturgical year and opportunities to enhance home prayer life are facilitated. Children who spoke to inspectors shared the school prayer with vigour and were proud of this. They were less able to share a range of traditional prayers. The use of scripture to support prayer is a strength and is at the heart of the provision within the school. Staff are models of good practice. Relevant staff help pupils to develop opportunities for others and as a result lead prayer and liturgy with enthusiasm. Inspectors have seen historical evidence of music and singing being used to enhance the experiences and quiet and appropriate music was used as the children gathered during the inspection. The library is

currently used as an appropriate quiet space for prayer and liturgy. The grounds are extensive, and leaders have plans in place to develop these spaces further. The Lenten/Advent trails are already a wonderful example of how outdoor space can be used to enhance prayer and reflection. School and parish links are strong and key members work hard to ensure that relationships are fostered, and the children benefit from opportunities to participate in the liturgy. The sacraments are celebrated at opportunities throughout the school year.

There is a clear policy for prayer and liturgy and staff use this effectively. Planned prayer is linked to the liturgical year. Leaders and governors know that pupils develop skills over time and the subject lead has worked hard to ensure that expectations are clear for all staff and pupils. Priority is placed on ensuring that the school's prayer calendar is relevant and fit for purpose. It is explicitly linked to the liturgical year and opportunities to participate are welcomed by pupils, staff parents and families. Professional development for staff is prioritised and leaders and governors ensure that staff have access to this. Leaders and governors are exemplary role models. They provide relevant support to ensure that staff develop confidence to lead acts of worship across the school. Leaders evaluate the impact of prayer and liturgy across the school, which includes listening to the voice of pupils.



## Information about the school

Full name of school	St Catherine of Siena Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	106507
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	3593412
Full postal address of the school	St Catherine of Siena Catholic Primary School, Cranham Avenue, Lowton, Warrington, WA3 2PQ
School phone number	01942 671528
Headteacher	Susan Leck
Chair of Governors	Christine Henshall
School Website	<a href="http://www.lowtonstcatherines.co.uk/">www.lowtonstcatherines.co.uk/</a>
Trusteeship	Archdiocese of Liverpool
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	N/A
Phase	Primary
Type of school	Voluntary Aided School
Admissions policy	N/A
Age-range of pupils	4-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	May 2016
Previous denominational inspection grade	Good

## The inspection team

Jude Ryan  
Rachael Tyler

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