



Catholic Schools Inspectorate inspection report for St Maria Goretti Catholic Primary School, Preston

URN: 119608

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

Date: 29th - 30th June 2023

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The school is fully compliant with the curriculum requirements laid down by the Bishops' Conference	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
The school is fully compliant with all requirements of the diocesan bishop	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
The school has responded to the areas for improvement from the last inspection	Fully

Summary of key findings

What the school does well

- This is a highly inclusive school which offers an outstanding level of care to vulnerable pupils and families including those with special educational needs, this being a central feature to the strong sense of family and community.
- The pupils' attitudes to learning and their behaviour is a strength of the school, deserving recognition and credit.
- The head teacher, governors and whole staff team are excellent role models who share a strong sense of purpose, ministry and devotion to the school.
- St Maria Goretti provides a very positive learning environment, resulting in high quality relationships between staff and pupils and the school's emphasis on being a stimulating, attractive and distinctively Catholic place to learn.

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.

- Parents are rightly proud of their school and value the support given to them.

What the school needs to improve:

- To further encourage parents' participation in class and school Masses and liturgies.
- To develop the role that pupils take in leading, designing, delivering and evaluating prayer and liturgy throughout the school in line with the new guidance.
- To implement the new religious education curriculum, enabling pupils to develop individualism and creativity in line with the new *Religious Education Directory*.

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



St Maria Goretti's school is situated in an area of Preston where there is a high level of deprivation, and it serves a large number of vulnerable families. The school is a beacon of love, joy, calmness, and hope. It is very strong in the pastoral care of its community and is lead well by a dedicated head teacher who is supported by governors and a staff team who all share in the Church's mission for education. The pupils are happy, confident and feel secure in school. They are also extremely well behaved, understanding the school rules and the consistency of the consequences, with forgiveness at the core. Pupils can clearly express that they are valued and cared for as unique persons, and they are able to show a deep respect for their own dignity and that of others. Everyone is welcomed in a spirit of generous hospitality, especially those new to the area and the vulnerable. The children put their faith in action through their enthusiasm by fundraising for charities, both locally and globally, including the local foodbank, CAFOD, Fairtrade and partnering with a school in Fiji.

Catholic life and mission provision is outstanding because there is a lived sense of community in the quality of the relationships observed both in school and on the playground. The Mission statement and school motto '*shining with God's love, pride and success*' is lived out in classrooms, in the playground and through daily interactions with each other. During inspection the netball team returned from a tournament and reflected on it with joy. Staff enthusiastically participate in, and contribute to, all activities which reflect the life and mission of the school and the service it offers the community. They spoke with sincerity about how everyone was welcome. The calm, safe school environment effectively bears witness to the Catholic mission in education both within the school and externally with the Papal encyclical 'Laudato Si' and stewardship of creation being taught through the Forest School, allotment and orchard. Pastoral care is exemplary, and staff

provide the highest levels of pastoral care for pupils and their families through nurture and support. This was challenging during the recent pandemic, but staff continue to respond well to the changing needs of families in terms of mental health and wellbeing, as well as helping with the current cost of living crisis. 'My Happy Mind' was introduced across the school to provide support for parents with mental health problems, healthy eating being a focus. The excellent work of the family support worker and learning mentor is appreciated by staff and parents and the whole school community. The chaplaincy provision is outstanding and is a central and celebrated aspect of the life and mission of the school. It witnesses to the school's commitment to the flourishing of every member of the school community, to the education of the whole person and to helping each discern their own unique vocation. The chaplain provides many extensive creative opportunities for the spiritual and moral development of pupils and staff. The provision is carefully planned to ensure that as well as meeting all statutory requirements, it also fully meets diocesan requirements and is firmly rooted in the teaching of the Church. As a consequence, pupils are able to articulate what they have learned in these lessons.

Leadership of the Catholic life and mission of the school is outstanding because the head teacher and governors exercise their duty as guardians of Catholic life and mission of the school extremely well, ensuring that Christ is always at the heart of everything they do. They are energised, joyful and determined in the pursuit of this mission and are a source of inspiration for the whole community. Monthly gospel values are introduced during a whole school assembly, as witnessed during inspection, with peace and tolerance being the focus for July. These values are lived and celebrated throughout the month. The chaplain effectively communicates with the parish to strengthen links and prepare children for sacramental programmes. The leaders and governors of the school truly embrace parents as first educators of their children and fully support and empower them in meeting the demands of this vocation. St Maria Goretti's has highly successful strategies for engaging with parents and carers to the benefit of pupils. The school website reflects the many aspects of the Catholic life of the school and is a good source of information for parents. Parents appreciate the work of the school, and many responded positively to the parent questionnaires and interviews, one stating that *'the school nurtures and guides the children through their Catholic journey and my children love being part of that journey.'* Leaders and governors embrace and actively promote the bishop's vision for the diocese and attend the annual Education Mass, and they have recently accompanied the pilgrimage to St Bernadette's relics at Lancaster Cathedral. All leaders, including governors, are deeply committed to the Church's mission in education, making St Maria Goretti's school a place for evangelization. Support from governors is strong, with regular visits to school to both challenge and support, all have completed the Catholic Education Service formation training. Leaders and governors are inspirational witnesses to the gospel and to Catholic Social Teaching in their direction of the school at every level. They embody the Church's preferential option for the poor by ensuring that resources are effectively targeted towards those in greatest need.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade:.....

2

Pupil outcomes

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

2

Provision

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

2

Leadership

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

2



The school has met the areas for development from the last inspection under the framework that they were set. Religious education provision is good. Pupils are developing secure knowledge, understanding and skills, they make good progress from very low starting points on entry to school. Pupils, including disadvantaged, English as additional language and pupils with special educational needs and disabilities achieve well in all year groups. They are religiously literate and engaged young people who are able to reflect spiritually and are aware of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life. Pupils can speak with confidence about what they have learned in religious education, using good religious vocabulary from early years and are able to ask good questions of adults and peers which enhance learning. Pupils enjoy their learning and approach their lessons with interest and enthusiasm, for example one pupil said, *'Before I came to this school, I didn't know what religious education was, I love learning about Jesus.'* In Key Stage 1 the children said that they *"enjoyed learning about God and Jesus"* and they loved *"talking to God"*. One child also said that they had enjoyed *"learning about other religions"* and was keen to show the work that he had completed. Behaviour in lessons is excellent because they enjoy religious education and engage well with staff.

Teachers are confident in their subject knowledge and have a good understanding of how pupils learn, they use questioning effectively during lessons to adapt explanations and tasks to improve outcomes for pupils. Religious education outcomes are good because assessment data, recently moderated, children's books and the school's self-evaluation show that religious education attainment is in line with other core subjects. The presentation in the books shows that children take great care when working in religious education lessons. Pupil effort is often celebrated, leading to good levels of motivation from pupils. Lessons observed in every class and interviews

with children and staff show there are systems in place to check children's knowledge at the start of the unit and again at the end with progress celebrated. Staff often refer to prior learning in lessons and make necessary connections. Teachers provide pupils with feedback and give them time to respond in order to deepen their knowledge and understanding, for example in Year 4 a pupil had responded by stating that '*we should always be kinder to one another because we are brothers and sisters in God's family. God is the leader, we follow, and we are all special.*' Good quality resources, including the skilled staff are used effectively to optimise learning for most pupils. Due to the current over reliance on a published scheme, learning is not always creative and matched to the pupils' needs. Talking partners were observed to be appropriate in lessons and to support teaching and discussions regarding new vocabulary were effective in many lessons.

Leadership in religious education is highly effective because leaders and governors ensure that professional development, resourcing, timetabling and staffing in religious education is a priority. All staff are well supported with their continued professional development by leaders and the school chaplain in both subject knowledge and pedagogical development. The subject leader has a clear vision for teaching and learning and a great level of expertise in securing this vision, working with staff the religious education governor and chaplain. Pupils are provided with engaging enrichment activities that enhance pupil learning in religious education, for example experts in other faiths sharing their knowledge with pupils, or the *faith in focus* group for upper key stage two pupils. Leaders' and governors' self-evaluation of religious education is informed by thorough monitoring, analysis and self-challenge, this results in better outcomes for pupils. Governors are immensely proud and supportive of their school.

To improve further the school needs to implement the new religious education curriculum, enabling pupils to develop individualism and creativity in line with the new *Religious Education Directory*.

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



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 with the Big Lent Walk and raising money for families in war-torn Ukraine, 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 collective worship. Even the youngest pupils knew why candles are lit during worship time, *'Jesus is the light of the world.'* The prayer garden outside is a focus for praying and celebrating, for example the life of Queen Elizabeth II and a parent donated a rose to remember the late Queen and her faith and selfless service to our country. It was recently used to release some butterflies when they emerged from their chrysalises and children asked to sing *'If I were a butterfly'* to give thanks to God for the many animals he's created. Time and attention are regularly given over to ensure that prayer spaces are used appropriately, are well cared for and conducive to prayer.

Prayer and liturgy are central to the life of St Maria Goretti'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. Staff, including senior leaders, are inspiring models of exemplary practice to other staff and pupils as participants in and leaders of prayer and liturgy. From a young age, pupils are reverent and respectful during times of prayer. This was evident in every class observed where the atmosphere was very calm and prayerful silence was naturally in place. Even the youngest children in nursery were able to make the sign of the cross and sing a morning prayer. They respond well during the celebration of prayer and liturgy and sing with enthusiasm. This was observed during a whole school Mass for

the feast of St Peter and St Paul and the celebration assembly, during the inspection. Pupils have a detailed understanding, appropriate to their age and capacity, of the wide variety of ways of praying that are part of the Catholic tradition. This includes the use of scripture, silence, reflection and liturgical music as observed during inspection. They demonstrate an excellent understanding of the shape and meaning of the Church's liturgical year and how it informs the prayer life of the school. Displays around school, particularly in the entrance hall reflect this good practice. Some pupils in Years 5 and 6 have been trained as prayer leaders and now this practice needs to be developed to promote and support prayer and liturgy to larger groups throughout school.

The development of prayer and liturgy has been included on the School Improvement Plan and the impact is clear to see with all prayer and liturgy following the agreed format of *gather, listen, reflect* and *send*. Leaders, including governors, understand the different levels and skills of participation that are reflective of the age and capacity of pupils. They need to develop the skills for pupils to lead liturgies throughout the school, being supported by prayer leaders and the school chaplain. 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, for example in Advent and Lent and pupils recently visited Church for Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, spending time in silent prayer. Year 6 are currently planning a pilgrimage to the local Marian shrine at Ladyewell. Professional development of all staff recently focused on the planning of prayer and liturgy. They have a thorough understanding of a broad range of ways of praying that are part of the Catholic tradition and are becoming more effective in aiding each other to plan and lead experiences of prayer and liturgy that are engaging, meaningful and relevant for the whole community. Leaders, including the chaplain have a thorough understanding of the importance of prayer and liturgy and its place in the Catholic tradition. They understand the relationship between participation and ministry and can draw on the Church's liturgical sources which they bring to their planning.

Areas for further development are to invite parents' participation in class and school Masses and liturgies and to develop the role that pupils take in leading, designing, delivering and evaluating prayer and liturgy throughout the school in line with the new guidance.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Maria Goretti Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	119608
Full postal address of the school	Gamull Lane, Ribbleton, Preston, PR2 6SJ
School phone number	01772 700052
Name of head teacher or principal	Mrs Amanda Rich
Chair of governing board	Mrs Christine Wilson
School Website	https://www.smgprimary.co.uk
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	N/A
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age-range of pupils	2 to 11
Trustees	Lancaster Roman Catholic Diocesan Trustees Registered
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	June 2017
Previous denominational inspection grade	2 - Good

The inspection team

Frances Wygladala	Lead inspector
Jane Barnes	Team inspector

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