

St Philip's Catholic Primary School

URN: 106126

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Bishop of Shrewsbury

21–22 May 2025

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 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

N/A

2

Compliance statement

- Ten percent of teaching time is dedicated to religious education. The school is implementing the *Vine and Branches* in Years 1,2,3 and 4 to deliver the new *Religious Education Directory*. Early Years Foundation and upper Key Stage 2 currently use *The Way the Truth and the Life*.
- The school fulfils diocesan requirements to teach relationships, sex and health education and uses the *Life to the Full* scheme. The personal, social, health and economic education is delivered through a Catholic lens and is regularly reviewed.
- Areas for improvement from previous inspection are not applicable.

What the school does well

- The committed senior leadership team, supported by governors and the parish priest, ensure that the mission 'Christ at the centre' is lived out by all.
- Pastoral care and inclusivity are given the highest priority; all members of the community are valued and nurtured with care and respect.
- Engagement with the parish, pupils and families is strong; they feel part of this thriving Catholic community and have many opportunities to celebrate Mass together.
- Pupils make good progress in RE, from their starting points, and this is in line with, or better than the other core subjects.
- The passionate subject leader has driven improvements in RE and demonstrates capacity to improve further.

What the school needs to improve

- Review the prayer and liturgy document to ensure there is a variety of prayer experiences appropriate to the age of pupils when celebrating prayer and liturgy in the classroom.
- Ensure that the analysis of monitoring and evaluation targets specific support and training for all staff so that religious education teaching and learning is consistently good or better.
- When implementing the Prayer and Liturgy Directory, ensure that pupils have opportunities to develop the skills needed to plan and lead prayer and liturgy confidently.

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

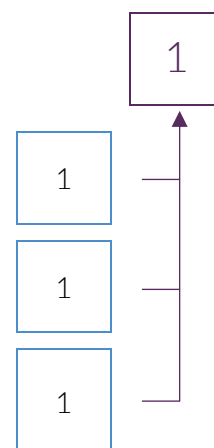
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

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 describe St Philip's as 'welcoming, amazing, and perfect'. Staff and parents speak of the school as a 'family community', where their mission statement, 'Christ at the centre', is lived out every day. Pupils know this means to 'Keep Christ in all you do' and 'Live your life the way Jesus wants you to'. Pupils feel teachers value them as individuals because teachers 'care and want you to do your best'. However, they understand that they are part of a bigger family and enthusiastically support many fundraising activities to support those in need. The active Mini Vinnies group demonstrate a determined commitment to this because they know that they 'can turn concern into action' and explain 'We have the power to help those in need'. For example, organising Easter raffles to support Cafod; Santa Dash for 'Once upon a smile'; and a donut sale to support The Wellspring charity for the homeless. Other activities include opportunities to engage with members of the parish and local community, including writing cards, and the 'cuppa and a chat' afternoons. Regular opportunities to learn in the forest school is promoting an understanding of why we all have a responsibility to look after our common home.

Staff feel proud to be part of St Philip's. They value the regular opportunities to review the mission statement, and because of this, it is natural for them to do their best for the pupils and keep 'Christ at the centre' of each day. One staff member feels we 'mirror Gospel values'. This results in a lived experience of high levels of care, respect and support for each other and for families. St Philip's has a strong culture of welcome and inclusivity. They are proactive in sourcing support from relevant outside agencies so that pupils and families of all cultures and faiths are respected. The ongoing work towards 'The School of Sanctuary' award is an example of their commitment to solidarity. Pastoral care and inclusivity are given the highest priority by staff, so

all members of the community are valued and nurtured with care and respect. The displays around the school are vibrant and reflect the distinctive Catholic nature of the school.

Governors are passionate and ambitious about their role to promote the mission of the school, as well as its links with the parish and local community. They recognise the challenges and work hard with senior leaders to overcome these so all pupils can flourish socially, emotionally and spiritually. Leaders and governors attend diocesan training and respond enthusiastically to diocesan initiatives. To support Catholic social teaching in school, they ensure training and resources are made available to develop this aspect of the school mission. For example, arranging a visit to the Laudato Si centre; allocating ample funding for quality artwork, and facilitating ongoing lessons in the forest school. Engagement with the parish and families is strong so they feel part of this thriving Catholic community. The parish priest works collaboratively with families and the leadership team to provide meaningful experiences of liturgies throughout the year, including Mass in school, weekly Mass in church for individual classes and a half termly Saturday evening Mass for families. Numbers attending these Masses have increased significantly and families feel supported in their faith. Informal monitoring takes place because governors are in school regularly and join the school for prayer and liturgies. The link governor meets with pupils to evaluate all aspects of the Catholic life of the school. 'Christ at the centre' means staff wellbeing is a priority for leaders and governors, therefore policies and structures in place reflect and support this.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

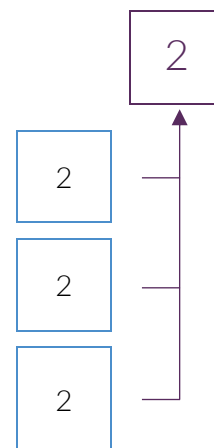
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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 display very positive attitudes towards their religious education, which helps them to develop the knowledge and understanding required in the *Religious Education Directory*. Pupils make good progress in these lessons, that is in line with, or better than, other core subjects. They articulate how learning helps them to 'treat others as they would like to be treated' and brings them 'closer to Jesus'. Pupils are encouraged to use key vocabulary to express their views and ask relevant questions. The youngest children know Jesus met his friends on the road to Emmaus and Key Stage 1 children talk about Jesus telling his friends: 'Don't be afraid because I am with you'. Pupils in Key Stage 2 reflect on paintings to explore passages from scripture such as the Kingdom of Heaven. This enables them to talk confidently about concepts such as the communion of saints. Pupils are proud of their work and enjoy religious education lessons because they have time to talk and use art and drama as ways of recording what they learn. Behaviour is good in all lessons; therefore, individuals' emotional and social needs are met with little or no disruption to the learning environment.

Teachers understand the value of religious education and work hard to ensure they continue to develop skills and knowledge needed to provide the best opportunities for pupils to learn and make progress in this subject. They have high expectations for all pupils and therefore planning is linked closely to the assessments made during lessons and at more formal times. Staff provide a variety of creative opportunities to engage pupils in religious education lessons. Learning is enhanced in the lessons where teachers use effective questioning, adapt explanations and correct misconceptions straight away. Although teachers highlight key vocabulary, it is not always used in written work. Adaptive teaching strategies are used successfully to ensure pupils can build on previous learning and is effective in most classes. Teaching and learning is good across all age groups and for pupils of all abilities. Quizzes and activities at the start of lessons

help pupils reinforce what they have learned previously. One pupil describes this as helping them to 'lock what we have learned into our head.' Staff make good use of visual literacy, artefacts, art and drama to help pupils understand scripture. For example, teachers use artistic impressions of the Ascension and Pentecost in Key Stage 2, and drama in Key Stage 1 to re-enact the Ascension.

As an important core subject, governors and leaders ensure all policies, resources and timetabling support the delivery of religious education. Enrichment opportunities are a strength of the school and leaders have prioritised budgets to ensure these are of high quality. The forest school provision is an example of this. The subject leader is passionate about developing the skills of the teachers and together with the senior leadership team she has made significant improvements over the past year. Staff speak highly of her expertise and support. She continues to drive improvements in religious education and demonstrates a capacity to improve further. Curriculum professional development is a strength of St Philip's school and includes regular staff meetings, diocesan training and spiritual days of reflection led by external speakers. Therefore, staff are well prepared to implement *The Vine and The Branches* scheme. Monitoring and moderation procedures demonstrate that good quality teaching strategies are used in lessons and good progress is evident in all key stages. Although this regular monitoring takes place, the analysis and self-challenge does not always lead to the most effective strategic action and targeted support.

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

2

2

Pupils respond well to the opportunities provided for prayer and liturgy. They pray enthusiastically through song and show respect when they are praying quietly in class. Pupils of all ages talk confidently about prayer being part of their everyday lives at St Philip's, and they know this is one reason that makes their school different from others. In some classes, there are levels of high participation and engagement from the pupils, and they can articulate clearly how prayer helps them in daily life. They are developing an understanding of the Church's liturgical year as prayer and liturgies are carefully planned to reflect this. They are learning about scripture and have time to reflect on what they hear, because teachers ensure readings are age appropriate and are read clearly. Each year group has a class prayer book, where they record their own prayers and promises. Pupils enjoy the ministries they undertake in Mass and celebrations. They help prepare and participate in class and parish Masses by writing bidding prayers and reading scripture. They also actively participate in the family Masses, which are held each half term at the weekend with the parish. Although pupils do undertake ministries during Mass, there are not many opportunities to develop skills of planning and leading prayer and liturgy in their own class or in whole school worship.

There is a carefully planned programme for the celebration of feast days and Mass. The community also comes together to celebrate times of joy, and support others in times of sadness. Staff ensure there are opportunities for pupils to gather for prayer during the day, which reminds the school community that 'Christ is at the centre'. Staff choose scripture passages that reflect the liturgical year and are often linked to religious lessons or the weekly Respect assembly. The outdoor prayer garden, which is part of the forest school provision offers a quiet and reflective space in nature and emphasises that 'we are all part of God's creation'. Staff also use these times to make connections to the principles of Catholic social teaching. St

Philip's follows the diocesan guidance for prayer and staff are now confident in planning and leading worship using the Emmaus model. However more varied experiences of how to pray are limited, for example using Visio Divina and spontaneous prayer, as a way of experiencing different ways of praying.

Prayer and liturgy is given a high priority by leaders at St Philip's, and therefore they are committed to providing training and quality experiences of prayer for staff. Because of this, staff have the confidence to plan and lead class based prayer and liturgy using the Emmaus model of prayer. Leaders understand that the next step is to provide guidance on how to develop age appropriate skills so pupils plan and lead prayer in class and whole school celebrations. The school calendar provides a framework for Mass, assemblies and liturgies that are linked to the liturgical year. Many feast days are celebrated in the parish church with pupils taking on a variety of ministries. This is a strength of St Philip's. The parish priest is generous with his time and is committed to offering many opportunities for pupils and their families to take part in Mass throughout the year. The Sacrament of Reconciliation is offered to pupils during Lent. Preparation for the sacraments of Reconciliation and Holy Communion is valued by parents and carers and is supported by the parish community. Leaders ensure staff have relevant and engaging resources to assist them in developing prayer life of pupils and staff.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Philip's Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	106126
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	3563519
Full postal address of the school	St Philip's Catholic Primary School, Half Moon Lane, Offerton, Stockport, SK2 5LB
School phone number	01614830977
Headteacher	Natalie Holland
Chair of governors	Elizabeth Donegan
School Website	www.stphilipsstockport.co.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	4-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	16 March 2018
Previous denominational inspection grade	1

The inspection team

Susan Lyonette
Robina Baird

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