

# St Bernadette's Roman Catholic Primary School, a Voluntary Academy

URN: 150560

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Bishop of Salford

10–11 December 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

1

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

2

## Compliance statement

- The school is fully compliant with the general norms for religious education laid down by the Bishops' Conference and meets the requirement of dedicating at least 10% of curriculum time to religious education across all year groups.
- There are currently no additional requirements from the diocesan bishop.
- Since the last inspection, St Bernadette's has responded robustly to all areas for improvement that remain relevant under this framework. Opportunities for pupils to prepare and lead acts of worship have been significantly extended through initiatives such as weekly pupil-led class celebrations of the word, Growing in Faith Together (GIFT) Team leadership of whole-school prayer, and the introduction of rosary club and prayer stations to promote contemplative prayer and stillness. Independence and creativity in

religious education have improved through reduced reliance on worksheets and the inclusion of art, drama, and open-ended tasks that allow pupils to explore their faith. Staff and pupils have also benefited from visits to other settings as part of peer-review triads and shared worship experiences. These actions have strengthened provision and enriched pupils' spiritual development, demonstrating the school's commitment to continuous improvement in Catholic life and religious education.

## What the school does well

- The school's mission statement, 'Together we learn. Together we achieve. Together we grow in God's love', is deeply embedded in daily life and lived out by pupils, staff, governors, and parents.
- Relationships across the community are harmonious, nurturing, and rooted in respect and love.
- Staff and pupils actively contribute to parish activities, including children's liturgy and sacramental preparation, strengthening the home-school-parish partnership.
- Leadership roles empower pupils to live out Gospel values through leading prayer and worship, charitable initiatives, and community service.
- Leaders and staff are embedding the principles of the new *Religious Education Directory* into curriculum planning and delivery.

## What the school needs to improve

- Embed strategies in lessons that encourage curiosity and critical thinking, enabling pupils to make connections between scripture, Catholic teaching, and their own lives.
- Develop consistent self-assessment approaches so pupils can reflect on their learning in religious education, identifying what they have achieved and what they need to improve.

## 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

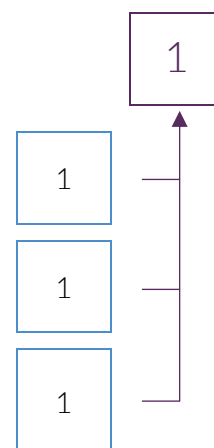
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

#### 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 at St Bernadette's make an exceptional contribution to the Catholic life and mission of the school and benefit greatly from it. The mission statement, 'Together we learn. Together we achieve. Together we grow in God's love,' is known, understood, and lived daily; pupils are regularly reminded of it and joyfully accompany it with actions that help them internalise its meaning. They demonstrate a profound sense of belonging and responsibility, seeking opportunities to serve others both within and beyond the school. Through the Growing in Faith Together (GIFT) team, Caritas Ambassadors, and Laudato Si' projects, pupils confidently lead worship, promote Catholic social teaching, and champion charitable causes. Their sustained commitment to social action - supporting Cafod's *Big Lent Walk*, fundraising for Bury Hospice, Maggie's Cancer Care, Make-A-Wish Foundation, and the Sunnywood Project, alongside food bank collections and Fairtrade campaigns - shows a mature alignment with the Gospel message to love one's neighbour and work for the common good. Environmental stewardship is tangible through enviro-Lent, bird feeders, harvest collections, and sustainable Christmas initiatives. Behaviour is exemplary, rooted in the virtues of respect, kindness, and justice. Pupils explain how faith shapes their choices; they embrace diversity and ensure all feel valued and loved. Prayer and liturgy are central and pupil-led, reverent, and creative. Pupils flourish spiritually, morally, and socially, becoming authentic witnesses to Christ in word and action.

The quality of provision for the Catholic life and mission at St Bernadette's is outstanding. Leaders and staff intentionally ensure that Gospel values permeate every aspect of school life, creating a culture where love, dignity, and service are the norm. Relationships across the community are warm, respectful, and inclusive; every child is known, valued, and safeguarded. Pastoral care is a strength, with proactive support for vulnerable pupils and families—so that

pupils feel safe to learn, reflect, and grow. The 'Gardeners and Seeds' initiative gives older pupils the opportunity to look after younger pupils in experiences where they learn and play together. Prayer and liturgy shape the rhythm of school life: there are rich and varied opportunities for class and whole-school worship that pupils help to plan and lead, drawing on Scripture, music, symbols, and silence to deepen their encounter with God. The physical environment celebrates Catholic identity through vibrant displays, accessible prayer stations, and a prayer garden that invites reflection and stillness. Curriculum, assemblies, and enrichment consistently embed Catholic social teaching, enabling pupils to connect faith with action. Strong, mutually enriching partnerships with parents and the parish further enhance provision: home, school, and church work in harmony. Parents speak with pride about their involvement and the school's outreach, frequently commenting that, 'this school is the hub of the community.' Staff witness to faith and service in daily interactions and model the virtues they teach. Their dedication ensures pupils' holistic flourishing within a joyful, hope-filled Catholic culture.

Leadership and governance at St Bernadette's promote, monitor, and evaluate the Catholic life and mission with clarity and rigour. The headteacher is a compassionate, reflective leader who listens, responds to feedback, and ensures Catholic life and mission remains a strategic priority. Governors and senior leaders make decisions that place the dignity of the child, service to others, and the common good at the centre. Monitoring is reflective and continuous: leaders and governors undertake learning walks, book scrutiny, pupil voice, and participate in worship to gather first-hand evidence of impact. Self-evaluation is robust and inclusive, engaging staff, pupils, and governors to drive improvement and sustain excellence. Partnerships with the diocese, the parish, and the St Teresa of Calcutta Catholic Academy Trust offer both support and healthy challenge, ensuring fidelity to the Church's educational mission and ongoing development. Governors demonstrate unwavering commitment through visible presence in school life and resource allocation that prioritises Catholic life and mission, including pastoral care, worship, and social action.

## Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

### Religious education key judgement grade

#### Pupil outcomes

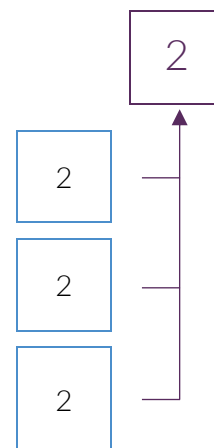
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

#### 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 make good progress in religious education and demonstrate secure knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith. They enjoy lessons and participate enthusiastically, showing sustained concentration when exploring scripture and Catholic teaching. Across all year groups, progress is consistent, and pupils can articulate how their learning influences their lives, linking faith to action. Evidence from books and pupil voice reflects creativity and pride in religious education work, with Catholic social teaching embedded throughout. Pupils enjoy talking with peers about their learning. However, while pupils respond well to teacher questioning, opportunities for them to ask incisive, higher-order questions that deepen understanding are not yet fully embedded. Developing strategies that encourage critical thinking and connections between faith and life will help move outcomes from good to outstanding. Similarly, strengthening self-assessment practices will enable pupils to reflect more meaningfully on their progress and identify next steps. Overall, pupils approach lessons with interest and commitment; further challenge and independence are being developed to ensure all pupils achieve their full potential.

Teaching in religious education at St Bernadette's is consistently good. Lessons are well planned, sequential, and rooted in scripture, with teachers demonstrating secure subject knowledge. Creative approaches, such as art, drama, and discussion, help pupils connect learning to Catholic life and mission. For example, during the inspection, pupils explored the Annunciation through artwork, freeze frames, and postcard writing, reflected on the joyful mysteries of the Rosary, and engaged with Advent themes. These active learning experiences fostered engagement and understanding. Assessment systems, including check-in and check-out tasks, support progress, and books show evidence of sustained learning. Teachers provide verbal feedback and celebrate effort, which motivates pupils. However, feedback does not always identify specific next steps to

deepen understanding, and opportunities for pupils to self-assess their work are still developing. Lessons consolidate prior learning through memory masterclass activities, and staff are using the *Religious Education Directory* to develop lessons that extend pupils' knowledge to ensure progression and challenge for all. Overall, teaching is effective and pupils enjoy religious education. Refining questioning strategies, feedback, and curriculum delivery are identified as next steps.

Leadership of religious education at St Bernadette's is good and ensures the subject is prioritised within the curriculum. Leaders and governors demonstrate strong commitment to Catholic education, allocate resources effectively, and provide regular, high-quality professional development for staff to develop subject knowledge and pedagogy. Monitoring systems, including book scrutiny, pupil voice, and learning walks, are well established and inform improvement planning. The religious education leader is committed and enthusiastic; she has a clear vision and works collaboratively with the staff to develop and share best practice. Governors receive informative reports and participate in evaluation activities, ensuring accountability and strategic oversight. Progress has been made in implementing the new *Religious Education Directory* linked curriculum, and leaders recognise that fully embedding and evaluating its impact remain key priorities. Leaders also identify the need to develop pupils' questioning skills, self-assessment, and feedback practices to deepen learning. Continued focus on these areas, alongside monitoring the effectiveness of curriculum changes, are next steps. Overall, leadership is proactive and ambitious, ensuring religious education continues to flourish within a culture of faith and service.

## 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

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

1

Pupils engage deeply and joyfully with prayer and liturgy, demonstrating an exceptional understanding of its central role in their spiritual life. Collective worship is embraced as a vital part of their day, and pupils participate with reverence, enthusiasm, and confidence. From the earliest years, children know and respond to liturgical greetings, such as the Gospel acclamation, showing that prayer is embedded from the start of their school journey. Pupils articulate the meaning of prayer and its impact on their lives, linking prayer and liturgy to Gospel values and Catholic social teaching. They confidently lead celebrations across the school, planning and delivering class and whole-school prayer with creativity and independence. The Growing in Faith Together team exemplifies outstanding pupil leadership, supporting peers and modelling excellence in worship preparation. Pupils select scripture, music, and symbols that reflect the liturgical calendar, ensuring worship is authentic and meaningful. Their heartfelt singing and spontaneous prayer create an atmosphere of joy and reverence, fostering a strong sense of community and mission. Evaluations of celebrations of the word are thoughtful and constructive, showing pupils' commitment to continuous improvement. This outstanding participation ensures pupils flourish spiritually, morally, and socially, living out Gospel values in their daily lives.

Prayer and liturgy at St Bernadette's is of consistently high quality and is at the heart of school life, shaping the rhythm of each day and every gathering. Prayer is carefully planned to reflect the liturgical year, Catholic traditions, and the needs of the school community. A rich variety of experiences, including whole-school celebrations, class prayer, parish Masses, and spontaneous prayer, ensures pupils encounter God in meaningful ways. Creative approaches such as music, art, drama, and meditation deepen engagement and allow pupils to express faith in diverse ways. For example, Year 5 and Year 6 pupils reflected on the parable of the Good Samaritan in



the prayer garden, linking scripture to their own lives through symbolic activities like 'pebbles on God's path.' Prayer spaces and stations throughout the school provide opportunities for reflection and stillness, while resources such as Wednesday Word, The Mark 10 Mission, and the Growing in Faith Together team's meditation sessions enrich provision further. Prayer is inclusive and accessible, inviting participation from all pupils and staff, and is strengthened by strong parish links and family involvement. Staff model reverence and confidence, supported by high-quality professional development. Provision fosters a culture where prayer and liturgy permeate every aspect of school life, inspiring pupils to live out their faith joyfully.

Leadership and governance place prayer and liturgy at the heart of the school's mission, ensuring it is central to policy, practice, and daily life. The headteacher, senior leaders, and the prayer and liturgy leader provide clear strategic direction and model practice. Robust policies and progression documents guide planning and delivery, ensuring consistency and quality. Monitoring is detailed and reflective, involving learning walks, evaluations, and pupil voice, which inform ongoing improvements. Governors demonstrate unwavering commitment, attending celebrations regularly and allocating resources to enhance provision. Strong partnerships with the parish and diocese enrich provision, with the parish priest actively involved in school prayer and sacramental preparation. Leaders encourage pupils to take ownership and develop leadership skills through planning and evaluating, fostering independence and responsibility. Self-evaluation processes are inclusive and ambitious, driving excellence across the school. This strong leadership ensures a vibrant, prayerful experience that nurtures the spiritual life of the whole community and reflects the school's unwavering commitment to the Church's mission in education.

## Information about the school

Full name of school	St Bernadette's Roman Catholic Primary School, a Voluntary Academy
School unique reference number (URN)	150560
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	3513341
Full postal address of the school	St Bernadette's Roman Catholic Primary School, a Voluntary Academy, Abingdon Avenue, Whitefield, Manchester, M45 8PT
School phone number	01617666098
Headteacher	David Proctor
Chair of local governing body	Peter Moore
School Website	<a href="http://www.stbernadetteswhitefield.stoccat.org.uk">www.stbernadetteswhitefield.stoccat.org.uk</a>
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	St Teresa Of Calcutta Catholic Academy Trust
Phase	Primary
Type of school	Academy
Admissions policy	Non-selective
Age-range of pupils	3-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	13 July 2018
Previous denominational inspection grade	Good

## The inspection team

Annemarie Bell  
Zoe Mabbott

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