

St Finbar's Catholic Primary School

URN: 104640

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Archbishop of Liverpool

18–19 June 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

Religious education (p.5)

The quality of curriculum religious education

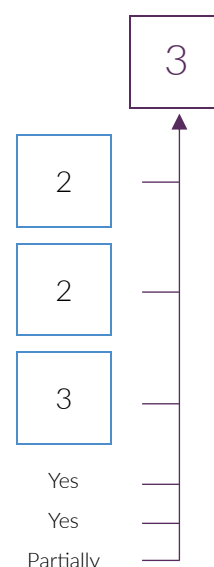
Collective worship (p.7)

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

The school is fully compliant with the curriculum requirements laid down by the Bishops' Conference

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

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



Compliance statement

The school is compliant with the requirements of the Bishops' Conference for Catholic life and mission, religious education, and collective worship.

The school is also compliant with any additional requirements of the Archdiocese of Liverpool.

The school has responded in part to areas identified for improvement in the last inspection.

What the school does well

- Catholic life and mission is a strength of the school that is clearly understood and celebrated, and there is a pride in belonging to St Finbar's Family.
- The commitment, care and support of the headteacher towards her school family is a model of how the mission statement is lived out.
- Relationships are a key strength at St Finbar's, with everyone being treated with respect and love.
- Pupils enjoy religious education and their behaviour in lessons and around school is exemplary.
- The religious education leader has a clear vision for how to drive the school forward and is supported by other leaders in her commitment to this task.

What the school needs to improve

- Formal and regular monitoring and evaluation in religious education, and prayer and liturgy require appropriate review of impact.
- Provide planned and systematic assessment for learning in religious education.
- Establish a consistent, inclusive and rigorous programme for the training of staff and pupils in the planning, leadership and delivery of 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

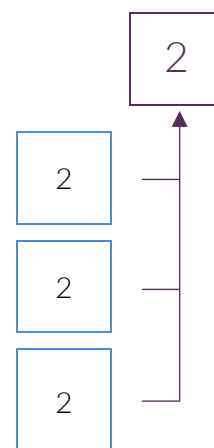
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

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 at St Finbar's are happy, kind and caring young people. They understand the St Finbar's mission that states, 'In God's love we learn and grow together'. They know how to live the school values of friendship, independence, nobility, bravery, aspiration, respect and service which all underpin the mission. Pupils speak about their school with pride, explaining that they care about each other and demonstrate this through their actions which include helping around school and supporting each other during play times. One pupil told inspectors that they were 'proud of their school because of the way they offer to help lots of people' through their charitable work. Pupils are actively engaged in supporting those in need and there are many opportunities for the school to come together to support others. These include CAFOD, NSPCC and a local foodbank. The pupils have a really strong sense of belonging and know their teachers are proud of them. The school values pupils' individual talents, celebrating these during Friday assemblies. This is much appreciated by the pupils.

The mission statement inspires the community. One parent commented, 'They really learn and grow in God's love'. All staff embrace the mission and are deeply committed to it, and the school, and the families they serve. Staff willingly go the extra mile to support members of the school family. The mutual respect between children and adults has enriched relationships ensuring each person is valued as a child of God. The school's welcome is warm and sincere, and commented upon by visitors and guests. The school celebrates the rich presence of cultures and beliefs which ensures all are enabled to pray. Another parent commented, 'I appreciate the school's commitment to fostering a respectful and inclusive environment for all students regardless of their faith.' The senior leaders have purposely planned links to enhance the Catholic provision and welcome visits and visitors from the local community including the local refuge, foodbanks and charitable organisations. The pastoral care for pupils is good because its

provision is shared by the whole staff. The school environment reflects its mission and identity and is an oasis of calm for the pupils. Further work is planned to provide both staff, parents and children with outside reflection spaces. Provision for relationships, sex and health education meets both archdiocesan and statutory requirements. The content is carefully planned to meet the needs of pupils.

Leaders and governors are enthusiastic and effective in promoting Catholic life and mission. They speak with pride about how well pupils engage with the mission by upholding school values. They display a clear vision which is at the heart of all they do. The commitment of governors makes a significant contribution to school life. They support and challenge appropriately and have clearly identified areas for improvement. The parish priest is available to come into school. Although he is a visible member of the local community, he wishes to be in school more frequently to get to know the pupils. Staff wellbeing is a high priority at St Finbar's which is much appreciated. They all feel part of the St Finbar Family and support each other accordingly. This closeness has been inspired and led by the headteacher who is held in the highest regard. The school benefits from the wider interaction with local schools and from archdiocesan support. The school takes every opportunity to engage in professional development to further strengthen its skills, knowledge and commitment to Catholic life and mission.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

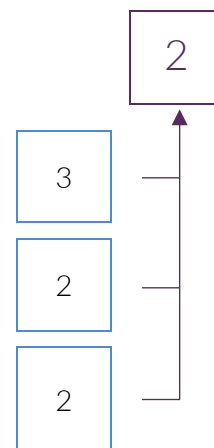
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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 their knowledge and making progress in religious education. They are well behaved in lessons, respect staff and want to do their best. Pupils are proud of their well-presented workbooks. As pupils progress through the school, they are beginning to know and remember more. Where outcomes are stronger, pupils are given daily opportunities to recall prior learning at the start of their lessons and can show how they have improved their work. Overall, this is inconsistent and there is little evidence of formative assessment or progression from one lesson to the next. During observation members of one group could explain scripture in detail and its relevance to their everyday lives. However, this recall and linkage with prior learning does not happen as the norm in all lessons and across all key stages. Progress for disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and disabilities is evident in books and from their starting points. They are becoming religiously literate using vocabulary appropriate to their age and stage. Pupils are encouraged to present their work using a variety of creative strategies including art and drama. They confidently use a variety of technology especially in Key Stage 2.

Teachers have a good understanding of how pupils learn. Their commitment to religious education is enriched with enthusiasm. Planning is aligned to the Religious Education Directory and to the Come and See programme. In some lessons, teachers use questioning and discussion to enable pupils to develop their ideas collaboratively. Through this effective questioning some can then identify any misconceptions and gaps in their learning. Support is adaptive to ensure all pupils take part in lessons, including those with additional needs. There is provision for those of other faiths, some of whom have a tailored curriculum whilst still hearing the message of God. Teaching assistants know the pupils well and provide effective support. Pupils' efforts are celebrated which motivates and enthuses them. The school is equipped with a wide variety of resources that are used strategically. Attainment is in line with other core subjects. Most

teachers provide pupils with in-the-moment feedback in line with the school policy. This should be developed to enable pupils to respond to this feedback and therefore maximise progress. Some work-books show adaptations for pupils with special needs however this is not evident in planning. There is good use of technology and pupils in Year 6 were confidently using their Chrome books to research and present information on St Bernadette.

Leaders and governors ensure the curriculum is faithful to the Religious Education Directory and meets archdiocesan requirements. Religious education is comparable with other core subjects with regards to staffing, resourcing and work in books. Whole school policies are applied in line with support from the archdiocese and in most cases, these are adapted to meet the needs of the staff and school. Continued professional development is also provided by the archdiocese to enrich subject knowledge especially through the new curriculum that is faithful to the Directory, and this is appreciated by staff. Where practice is strong, leaders should share this through internal training and by use of paired observations and coaching. Governors are regular visitors to the school, examining standards and evaluating current practice. They are presented with accurate data by the headteacher and have a good understanding of the new Directory and its implications for the school. The subject leader for religious education has a clear vision and good levels of expertise to continually improve teaching and learning. Its impact should be shared and then monitored by leaders and governors both formally and informally to check overall standards and consistency.

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

3

Leadership

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

3

3

Pupils enjoy and respond well to the prayer and liturgy provided by the school. They engage with respect and when given the opportunity, can reflect and join in responses confidently. Most pupils sing with joy. Appropriate scripture linked to the themes enables pupils to take time to reflect. Most pupils are knowledgeable of the liturgical year. They can describe how seasons, feasts and saints are celebrated and explain the symbolism of the liturgical year including the colours of vestments. In Year 1 this was taught as part of the lesson then used to enhance continuous progress. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 spoke enthusiastically about how teachers guide them in planning daily worships. This includes the choice of music and prayers. Some pupils are given experience in delivering aspects of these planned worships. This now needs to be developed throughout the school to give pupils confidence in full leadership. Pupils of all faiths are invited to participate in worship in a respectful and inclusive way. This is appreciated by parents. However, parents would also like the opportunity to attend school to engage in prayer with their children and so enhance home, school and parish links.

There is a daily pattern of prayer for pupils and staff which has a positive impact on the school's sense of community. Pupils could tell us that they knew the Our Father but were unsure of other traditional prayers. Most acts of worship are age-appropriate and centred on themes and messages that are accessible to pupils. Senior leaders have provided detailed and supportive plans, including suggested scripture, for the staff to utilise. These need to be used consistently throughout the school, supported by archdiocesan continued professional development and through observing good practice in other schools. Themes chosen for worship reflect a good understanding of the liturgical year and its underpinning of the Catholic life and mission of the school. Professional development for staff should maximise consistently good quality provision in daily prayer and worship experiences that enable the pupils to develop spiritually as they progress through the school. As many pupils as possible should be trained in the planning and

leadership of prayer and liturgy. This should be supported by staff in an age-appropriate way and monitored by leaders. There are dedicated spaces in classrooms for worship, but the school campus lends itself to the development of other spaces for quiet reflection and prayer.

Staff have opportunities to develop their skills through training offered by the archdiocese, which they feel is beneficial. However, the impact of this training is inconsistent, and staff lack confidence in delivery and in some cases need a script. The prayer and liturgy policy provides only basic guidance about structure and delivery. Staff would appreciate and benefit from further training so that they understand the wide variety and richness of prayer and liturgy and all it has to offer, and can use it strategically. Training should focus on enabling their monitoring and evaluation of prayer, liturgy and worship in a way that leads to effective identification of relevant training needs for staff and pupils, together with the promotion of progress and celebration of impact. Early Years staff are more confident in their delivery and provide an atmosphere of reverence for the children and staff to experience quality prayerful moments. The headteacher provides skilful prayer and liturgy focused on the word of God, however this is not part of the weekly practice. Leaders and governors do not yet monitor and evaluate the provision for prayer and liturgy effectively to know what they need to do in supporting the school to improve.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Finbar's Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	104640
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	3413527
Full postal address of the school	St Finbar's Catholic Primary School, South Hill Road, Liverpool, L8 9RY
School phone number	0151 727 3963
Headteacher	Janet Conley
Chair of Governors	Angela Williams
School Website	http://www.st-finbars.co.uk
Trusteeship	Diocesan
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	3-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	6 th November 2018
Previous denominational inspection grade	Outstanding

The inspection team

Janice Taberner
Clare Dwerryhouse

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