



St Martin's Catholic Primary School

URN: 111380

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Bishop of Shrewsbury

11 February 2026 – 12 February 2026

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 RE

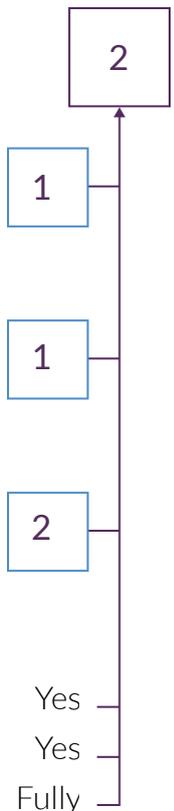
Collective worship (p.7)

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

The school is fully compliant with the general norms for religious education laid down by the Bishops' Conference

The school is fully compliant with any additional requirements of the diocesan bishop

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



What the school does well

- Pupils' behaviour is exemplary and fosters a safe, happy atmosphere in which the pupils 'love to learn and learn to love'.
- Pastoral care for pupils and their families is prioritised by all staff who are supported by a passionate pastoral care team.
- Celebrations of prayer and liturgy throughout the year provide a wide range of opportunities for the school and wider community to pray together.
- Pupil progress in religious education is good because of the dedication of staff and the expertise of the subject leaders.
- Leaders and governors are committed to nurturing a welcoming environment which has Christ at the centre of daily life at St Martin's.

What the school needs to improve

- Develop a prayer and liturgy policy with all stakeholders, which is comprehensive and provides a useful resource for staff.
- Develop a rigorous monitoring and evaluation policy that clearly analyses the impact of planned action in religious education, Catholic life and mission and 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

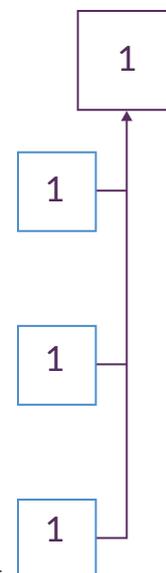
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

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 Martin's enjoy learning in an environment where gospel values guide their mission statement of 'Love to learn and learn to love'. They know that the school's values of being 'kind, respectful and responsible' help them to live as Jesus did. Lower Key Stage 2 pupils explain that being made in the image and likeness of God means 'not as his body, but with the same heart'. Therefore they do their best to show kindness to all, which results in pupils who are happy, confident and feel safe at all times during the school day. Pupils from an early age learn they can make a difference and feel a responsibility to care for God's world 'because I'm picking up litter'. They enthusiastically contribute to raising funds to help those in need, supporting charities such as MacMillan, Halton Haven, local food banks and Cafod. Pupils speak readily about the importance of forgiveness when things go wrong and relate this to scripture passages they know. They show respect to each other and recognise they all have different skills and needs. Because of this, all pupils flourish within a nurturing environment created by pupils and staff. They enjoy participating and undertaking ministries in Masses celebrated by the parish priest.

All staff are deeply committed to the mission of St Martin's and therefore embrace the gospel values that guide their relationships and underpin their contributions to the service they provide to the school and wider community. It is a school where faith in action means pupils understand that 'because we are a Catholic school we learn to follow Jesus'. Staff, parents and governors refer to St Martin's as 'a big family', where 'strong family connections endure through the years'. Staff are exemplary role models, and this fosters strong relationships for themselves and pupils. Relationships of respect and kindness based on the scripture, 'love

one another as I have loved you' John 13: 34-35 are nurtured as soon as children join the pre-school. Explicit commitment to those in need means that the well established pastoral team, supported by leaders and staff, provide a wide range of practical and emotional support for pupils and their families. The parish priest is enthusiastic in his support for the school community. Therefore many opportunities are planned for pupils, staff and families to come together to celebrate and deepen their spiritual development.

Leaders and governors have a joyful and steadfast commitment to the Catholic life and mission of St Martin's. Because of this all their policies and procedures are rooted in Gospel values and lived out daily by staff and pupils. Governors are well informed about diocesan initiatives which they embrace with enthusiasm. They ensure that these are regularly discussed at board meetings and relevant staff are able to attend diocesan training. The school is represented on the diocesan working party for the new Early Years' curriculum for religious education. Governors are fully involved in the life of the parish, which helps to create strong and positive links between the school community and the parish. Parents enjoy the invitations to attend the variety of celebrations, activities and Masses during the year. Leaders and governors ensure the emotional wellbeing of pupils and staff is considered at board meetings and this is appreciated by staff and parents. 'If staff are happy, pupils are happy'. Governors' commitment to keep Christ at the heart of the school is demonstrated by ensuring all teachers undertake studies to deepen their personal understanding of this. For example, all teachers attend Christ at the centre or Catholic certificate of religious studies courses.

Religious education

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 key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

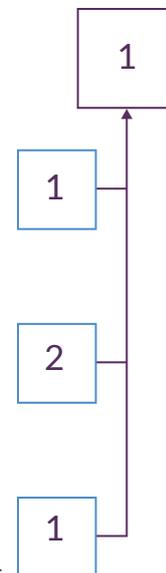
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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 demonstrate a high level of understanding related to the expectations in the *Religious Education Directory (RED)*. This is expressed by their responses in lessons, in their written work and in discussions with pupils. As a result pupils of all abilities make good progress from their starting points. They have opportunities to reflect on their learning and they understand how it influences their daily lives. Pupils in most classes speak with confidence and fluency using appropriate vocabulary to explain what they know from previous topics studied. Pupils in Key Stage 1 know that a parable is 'a mini story told by Jesus to help people understand things' and the sheep in the parable of the lost sheep 'are us'. In Key Stage 2 they confidently talk about the holy Trinity, John the Baptist and the Messiah. They understand a 'covenant is a special promise' and name Noah, Abraham, Moses and David as people whom God made covenants with. They describe God's kingdom as 'a mustard seed but now it's grown into a massive world'. Pupils enjoy their religious education lessons and approach them with enthusiasm. They are fully focused on tasks set, which results in outstanding behaviour in all age groups. Pupils know their teachers will help them to improve their work during lessons and sometimes with written feedback.

Teachers work hard to ensure their subject knowledge enables them to teach the content of the *RED*. They understand the value of these lessons, therefore they have high expectations of themselves and their pupils. This is reflected in lessons, which are at least good with some outstanding practice. Teachers know the needs of pupils and therefore plan lessons that build on previous learning. Adaptive teaching strategies, including adult support, help pupils of all

abilities to achieve and enjoy their lessons. Teachers provide creative and engaging activities for pupils to respond including, news reports, picture boards and diaries. Lessons are also enriched by drama activities planned by a drama specialist. Teachers use effective questioning to guide learning and in the best lessons teachers confidently address misconceptions and give feedback to deepen understanding. Written feedback in some year groups also corrects misconceptions and offers pupils opportunities to reflect, however this is not consistent across all age groups. Teachers make links between what pupils learn and how it can guide their choices. In some classes pupils have time to reflect on this and consider their views about what they learn.

Leaders and governors consider religious education to be the foundation of daily life at St Martin's. This is evident in terms of the professional development governors expect staff to undertake, the attention to timetabling and reports given to governors on a regular basis. Governors and leaders allocate resources for specialist training to develop creativity in religious education as well as enabling staff to attend all relevant diocesan training. The positive impact of this commitment results in teachers developing their confidence and deepening their understanding of the curriculum, which leads to pupils making good progress as they move through the school. The subject leader, and senior leadership team willingly share their expertise and knowledge of outstanding teaching in religious education. Teachers appreciate this as they develop their own understanding of the new curriculum. The school monitoring and assessment booklet is a useful resource for class teachers to record pupils' ongoing progress or misconceptions. Leaders and governors undertake regular monitoring and analysis that helps them to plan effective actions to improve teaching and learning in religious education. However, the individual needs of some teachers are not always targeted with ongoing support.

Collective worship

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

Collective worship key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

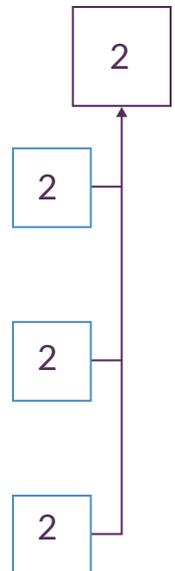
How well pupils participate in and respond to the school's collective worship

Provision

The quality of collective worship provided by the school

Leadership

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



Pupils participate well during celebrations of the word, reflecting in silence, praying in song and willingly sharing their thoughts. Scripture is central to all times of prayer and reflection and pupils experience a wide variety of prayer and liturgy throughout the liturgical year. From an early age they recognise symbols and as they get older begin to understand their significance. All pupils confidently join in the Gospel acclamation in song and Key Stage 1 pupils are able to join in other responses during the weekly Mass with parishioners. This experience of prayer begins in pre-school where children start each session praying together and learning the sign of the cross. These opportunities become an integral part of every school day for pupils at St Martin's. All pupils know that the green cloth indicates ordinary time, but they do not yet understand the cycle of the liturgical year. Teachers help pupils to plan meaningful celebrations of the word and pupils do take on ministries, such as reading scripture and prayers in Mass. Pupils in Key Stage 1 talk about how prayer times help them to be 'Jesus' disciples' by being 'kind and forgiving like Jesus'.

Prayer and liturgy is central to the life of St Martin's and the weekly Mass offers a rich experience of celebrating with families and parishioners. Teachers provide many opportunities for pupils to reflect on how they can live out their mission of 'learn to love', and the daily pattern of prayer engenders a calm atmosphere during the school day. The scripture chosen by teachers is appropriate, which helps pupils of all ages and abilities to participate in celebrations of the word in their classrooms. All staff use a structured format to plan these prayer times and because of this confidence is increasing. They choose music to create a peaceful atmosphere and in every classroom a prayer focus is created by the pupils

for the celebration. However creative and varied ways of praying in class is limited, which means pupils in all age groups encounter similar experiences. Staff prepare a space in classrooms so that pupils can gather around the prayer focus, and this helps to differentiate the celebration of the word from lesson times. The church, which is attached to the school, is a precious resource which could be visited more frequently to enhance pupils' experiences of prayer. Teachers invite parents to stay and pray and actively seek other ways to engage with families and the parish.

The prayer and liturgy policy is an area highlighted by leaders for review. They understand the need to include strategies for deepening the staff's own experiences of prayer so that they can help provide a wider variety of ways of praying for pupils. The preparation for pupils receiving the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Holy Communion for the first time is well planned and families are also supported by parish catechists. An annual plan of provision agreed with the parish priest includes the Catholic traditions that are celebrated during the liturgical year. This means feast days and special times of the year, such as Advent, Lent, Easter time and Marian devotions, are celebrated with families and parishioners. The excellent knowledge leaders and governors have of their school family is a strength, so they are able to provide experiences that encourage participation of the pupils and families with parishioners. However, the prayer and liturgy policy does not give clear guidance to teachers for the progression of prayer or a plan for the formation of pupils who undertake ministries.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Martin's Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	111380
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	8763637
Full postal address of the school	St Martin's Lane, Runcorn, WA7 6HZ
School phone number	01928 711207
Headteacher or Head of School	Mrs Catherine Ming
Chair of Governors	Mrs Sandra Cassidy
School Website	www.st-martins.halton.sch.uk
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Phase	Primary
Type of school	Voluntary Aided School
Admissions policy	Non Selective
Age-range of pupils	2 - 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	12 June 2019
Previous denominational inspection grade	Outstanding

The Inspection Team

Susan Lyonette

Lead

Michael Glynn

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