



# Our Lady & St Michael's Catholic Primary School

URN: 401500

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Archbishop of Cardiff-Menevia

26–27 November 2025

## Summary of key findings

### Overall effectiveness

The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school

2

#### 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

2

#### 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

## Compliance statement

- The school is compliant in relation to the general norms for religious education laid down by the Bishop's Conference. For example, religious education is a core subject in the curriculum and is accorded the same academic rigour as other core subjects.
- The school has complied in relation to any additional requirements of the diocesan bishop.
- The expectations in relation to the previous inspection's recommendations are not applicable due to the time passed since it was conducted.

## What the school does well

- Leaders, governors, and staff have created a strong, inclusive, and welcoming Catholic community, rooted in a shared commitment to the mission of the Church and lived daily through the school's mission statement, 'We live, we love, we learn, we grow in Jesus'.
- Relationships across the school are exceptionally strong, with excellent pastoral care that places Christ at the centre of school life and supports all pupils, including the most vulnerable.
- Pupils actively live out the mission through caring for others locally and globally, and the flourishing partnership between the school and the parish further strengthens its Catholic life and identity.
- Pupils enjoy their learning in religious education (RE) and confidently discuss key concepts, with examples of creative, well-presented work and developing independent skills evident across the school.
- Pupil-led *Gweddiwn* is well established, with pupils confidently planning and leading meaningful acts of worship that contribute positively to the school's Catholic ethos.

## What the school needs to improve

- Refine and extend curriculum planning, implementation, and monitoring to ensure that the ambitious expectations of the *Religious Education Directory* are fully met, that the quality of teaching in RE is consistent across the school, and that assessment procedures improve progress and outcomes in RE for all pupils.
- Establish a robust monitoring, evaluation, and review system that encompasses all three inspection areas, engages all relevant stakeholders, and leads to the identification of clear priorities and actions, targeted professional development for staff, and regular review of impact and effectiveness.
- Strengthen the quality of whole-school or phase Celebration of the Word by providing high-quality professional development to enhance the role of pupils, foster awe and wonder, and ensure regular, meaningful opportunities for spiritual growth through, for example, quiet reflection and spontaneous prayer.

## 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

2

**Provision**

The quality of provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school

2

**Leadership**

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school

2

2

Our Lady and St Michael's is an inclusive, welcoming, and caring faith community where the mission statement, 'We live, we love, we learn, we grow in Jesus', is known and lived out. Pupils value the school's distinctive Catholic identity and understand that they are cared for as unique persons made in the image and likeness of God. The parish priest, a regular and highly supportive presence in the school, observed that "pupils are radiant with happiness." Pupils are proud to belong to this faith-filled community and demonstrate respect for others. They actively live out the school's mission by supporting those in need locally, nationally, and globally. They spoke passionately about completing the Cafod Lent Walk, contributing to the local food bank, taking part in the 'New to You' initiative and marking 'Odd Socks Day'. Pupils involved in the Mini Vinnies and eco pupil groups value their roles in serving others and caring for creation. For example, the Mini Vinnies recently launched a 'Christmas Wishes' initiative encouraging families to donate gifts to those in need, rather than to staff, while the Eco Council is raising awareness about reducing paper and paper-towel waste. To deepen this work, pupils would benefit from a greater understanding of Catholic social teaching, to recognise the theology underpinning their actions.

A strong sense of belonging permeates all connected to this school family, and the mission statement has a visible impact on the life of the school. Staff, led by the committed head teacher and assistant head teacher, understand their responsibility in developing Catholic life and are positive role models. One staff member stated that we 'live out our ethos together through a nurturing environment where each person is encouraged to be the best they can be.' The school environment is welcoming; a range of displays, artefacts, indoor prayer spaces, and outdoor spaces, such as the Peace Garden, celebrate the school's mission and identity.

Relationships in school are very strong, and staff work as a cohesive team leading to a strong sense of community, a culture of welcome, and the highest levels of pastoral care. Parental questionnaires praise the school for its Catholic ethos, close connections to the church, and how inclusive the school is. The virtues of the school's Pupil Profile are woven into all aspects of school life, promoting, for example, how to be learned and wise. The provision for relationships and sexuality education meets all statutory and diocesan requirements.

The Catholic ethos is central to the work of the school leadership team and governing body. The head teacher and assistant head teacher—who is also the newly appointed RE subject leader—are deeply committed to the Church's mission in education and ensure that Christ is at the centre of school life. Leaders and governors articulate a clear and ambitious vision for Catholic education, and this is evident in their decision-making. They have established a strong and flourishing partnership with the local parish, which is a significant strength of the school. Examples include school family Masses, class Masses, strong links with the parish St Vincent de Paul Society, and collaboration through the parish and governors' Catholicity Group. In addition, the assistant head teacher plays an active role in parish life by leading sacramental preparation and supporting children's liturgy. The school is developing effective strategies to engage parents and carers, and feedback from the parental questionnaire was unanimously supportive of the school's mission. However, a culture of regular monitoring, evaluating, and reviewing the Catholic life of the school—drawing on the perspectives of pupils, staff, and governors—is not yet well established. Professional development for staff, particularly in the theology underpinning Catholic social teaching, would strengthen their ability to shape and support the school's Catholic life and mission, moving forward.

## Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

### Religious education key judgement grade

**Pupil outcomes**

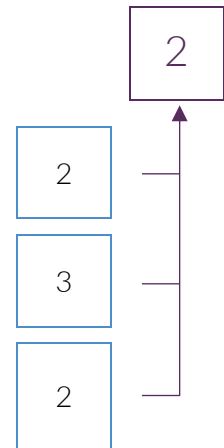
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

**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 enjoy their learning in RE and readily discuss new learning with talk partners. Pupils in some lessons successfully demonstrated their learning. For example, during the inspection pupils in Year 2 created a story board of The Annunciation from Mary’s viewpoint. Pupils with additional learning needs are extremely well cared for and the inclusive practice at Our Lady and St Michael’s is a strength of the school. By the time pupils leave the school, they are more aware of how their religious commitment impacts on everyday life. Pupils are able to speak confidently about key concepts. Strong practice of independent working was evident in Year 6. One pupil commented that he was inspired by women in the Old Testament who showed tremendous courage in their lives, and others were able to articulate individual prayer intentions for those people in countries experiencing conflict. Pupils’ work is well presented through a variety of creative activities in all year groups. Where learning is stronger, older pupils value opportunities given to deepen their learning independently. However, pupils are unsure of what they need to do to improve their work or explain how they have made progress.

Teachers continue to develop their subject knowledge. This is beginning to have a greater impact on the sequencing of learning within lessons and over time. Every teacher is fully committed to the teaching of RE, and confidence is growing to consistently deliver the *Religious Education Directory* across the school. However, planning needs to be precisely linked to pupils’ assessments to sequence learning and strengthen outcomes. Some teachers use questioning effectively to deepen pupils’ subject knowledge, but this is not yet consistent practice across the school. Opportunities are missed to correct misconceptions and improve learning. Most teachers successfully provide pupils with a variety of ways in which to share their learning. Strong practice in the Reception class enabled pupils to access a variety of independent

learning activities, maximising learning time within the lesson. Teachers are proud of pupils' achievements and exemplary work is shared with the head teacher. Feedback is given at the end of lessons, with pupils consistently responding to marking. Teachers are at the early stages of giving pupils space and time for reflection in lessons. With increased focus on the importance of RE on the moral and spiritual development of pupils, this will readily be addressed.

Leaders and governors are at the early stages of ensuring that the curriculum for RE is a faithful expression of the *Religious Education Directory*. The recently appointed subject leader has a clear vision for implementing next steps at Our Lady and St Michael's. Moving forwards, strong strategic leadership will promote a sequence of learning. This will ensure coverage and progression in all year groups, following consistent use of the chosen RE programme. Religious education has parity with other core curriculum subjects. Pupils are provided with enrichment activities to enhance learning. For example, learning about God's creation through Godly Play in the Reception class. However, leaders and governors should ensure that planned continuous professional development is delivered strategically to practitioners, enhancing subject knowledge and pedagogical development. Currently, processes are not robust enough to enhance provision and effectively secure coherence across key phases to improve teaching and learning. In addition, while leaders and governors carry out monitoring each term, this does not always result in clearly defined priorities for action, targeted professional development for staff, or consistent review of impact and effectiveness. Additional rigour and strategic action to prioritise tasks, assign deadlines, and monitor progress will strengthen outcomes.

## 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

Collective worship is central to school life at Our Lady and St Michael's, and pupils respond very positively to the opportunities provided, including the undertaking of ministries during class Masses. They behave reverently, listen attentively, participate well, and sing with enthusiasm. Christian meditation is a regular feature of the school's prayer life, and pupils are able to maintain a prayerful silence for extended periods. Acts of worship are age-appropriate and follow the cycle of the liturgical year. All observed worship had a clear purpose grounded in Catholic teaching and Gospel values. Pupils were able to reflect meaningfully on scripture and consider how the Word of God shapes the way they live. For example, after hearing the story of Zacchaeus in the lower phase and the parable of the Prodigal Son in the upper phase, pupils reflected on living like Jesus by saying 'sorry' and offering forgiveness. Pupil-led *Gweddiwn* is well established and highly valued, with all pupils supported to plan and lead worship using the gather, listen, respond, and go forth structure. During the inspection, Year 2 pupils confidently planned and led a Celebration of the Word on the story of the Lost Sheep, offering personal reflections on how God is always there for them. Pupils are proud to share their prayer experiences, and these opportunities make a strong contribution to the school's Catholic ethos.

Provision for prayer and liturgy at Our Lady and St Michael's is supported by well-established routines, including a daily pattern of prayer, adult-led and pupil-led worship, and regular opportunities to celebrate Mass at the parish church. These practices clearly reflect the Catholic character of the school. Worship is meaningful and age-appropriate, following the cycle of the liturgical year through experiences such as the Stations of the Cross, the Veneration of the Cross and the joint school-parish Advent service. Scripture is central, and themes are well chosen; the focus on reconciliation during the Season of Advent being one example. Parents and carers are invited to attend collective worship both at school and at the

parish church. The school environment is used to support prayer, with prayer foci and displays celebrating pupils' learning in most classrooms. Where these are most effective, they are interactive and include pupils' own prayers and reflections. In Year 6, for example, pupils shared intentions on a prayer chain, a Post-it note cross, and a virtue tree displaying their personal prayers of thanks to God. The parish church, located on the school grounds, is a valuable resource. All classes are named after saints, and pupils are well informed about their history and traditions. However, the Celebration of the Word observed did not foster awe and wonder or provide regular, meaningful opportunities for spiritual growth through, for example, quiet reflection or spontaneous prayer.

Leaders and governors have a thorough understanding of the Church's liturgical year, its seasons and feasts, and the necessary skills to develop meaningful themes. They have planned the school calendar and timetable to set aside opportunities to celebrate the Eucharist and the Sacrament of Reconciliation. The school's policy on prayer and liturgy is appropriate, though a detailed, planned progression of traditional prayer would ensure it has a purposeful impact on staff using it to develop provision. Leaders have ensured that the school environment effectively demonstrates the Catholic ethos and nature of the school, including reflective displays that celebrate pupils' work. Prominent examples include the mission statement, Pupil Profile virtues, and the celebration of the Jubilee Year of Hope. Leaders and governors show a very positive attitude towards the challenge of providing high-quality and genuinely Catholic prayer and worship within the context of having just 21% of pupils who are baptised Catholics. However, leaders' work in monitoring and evaluating the provision for collective worship is underdeveloped, and there is a clear need for high-quality professional development to enhance staff confidence and competence in delivering collective worship that fosters awe and wonder, spiritual growth and quiet reflection.

## Information about the school

Full name of school	Our Lady & St Michael's Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	401500
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	6793317
Full postal address of the school	14 Pen Y Pound Road, Abergavenny, Monmouthshire, NP7 5UD
School phone number	01873735080
Executive headteacher	N/A
Headteacher	Viv Evans
Chair of governors	Beverley Bannon
School Website	<a href="http://www.olsm.co.uk">www.olsm.co.uk</a>
Trusteeship	Benedictines
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	Not applicable
Date of last denominational inspection	15 – 18 September 2017
Previous denominational inspection grade	GG

## The inspection team

Laura Taylor  
Diana Pearce

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