CATHOLIC SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

THE NATIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE INSPECTION OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS, COLLEGES AND ACADEMIES

Christ the King Catholic Academy, Blackpool

URN: 141288

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Bishop of Lancaster

15–16 October 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

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 curriculum requirements laid down by the Bishops' Conference	Yes
The school is fully compliant with all requirements of the diocesan bishop	Yes
The school has responded to the areas for improvement from the last inspection	Fully

Compliance statement

- 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 laid down by the Bishop of Lancaster.
- The school has responded fully to the areas for improvement from the previous Catholic school inspection.

This Catholic Schools Inspectorate inspection was carried out under canons 804 & 806 of the code of canon law. For maintained schools and academies in England it fulfils the statutory requirements of s.48 of the Education Act 2005. For maintained schools and academies in Wales it fulfils the statutory requirements of s.50 of the Education Act 2005.

What the school does well

- Pupil behaviour and attitudes to learning in lessons and during times of prayer are very good.
- The school has thoughtfully planned how to engage parents, so that everyone feels welcomed.
- Staff go above and beyond to ensure the wellbeing of pupils, who know they are loved and cared for in school.
- The executive headteacher, who shares her faith with the school community, inspires staff and pupils alike.
- Governors are highly ambitious for the Catholic life and mission of the school.

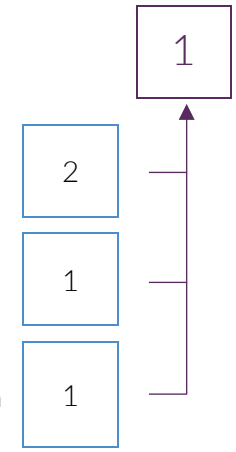
What the school needs to improve

- Leaders and staff need to support children to gain an understanding of the theology which underpins their faithful actions.
- Increase challenge for all pupils in curriculum religious education by providing more opportunities for pupils to express their learning in a wider variety of forms of expression and by ensuring there is greater consistency of practice across the whole school.
- Leaders should monitor the implementation of recently devised documents relating to prayer and liturgy, to enable pupils to confidently deliver experiences of prayer that are more creative and well-constructed.

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 have an understanding of the Catholic identity of the school and are beginning to understand how it shapes their daily experiences. They recognise that they are all valued and cared for, reflecting the school's commitment to the dignity of every individual. Pupils say they are happy in school, and this is reflected in their very good behaviour in lessons, at times of prayer and throughout the school day. Pupils can articulate the school motto *Believe, Belong, Become*, and have a developing understanding of what it means for them personally. Pupils have a good understanding of the need to care for our common home and pursue the common good, serving those in need. For example, they recognise the importance of caring for creation, supporting the vulnerable, and promoting peace. They can talk about supporting the local food bank for those less fortunate than themselves. They value the provision in school and are willing participants in all aspects of school life. However, leaders recognise that helping pupils understand the theology underpinning their actions will enable them to take a more proactive role in responding to local, national and global need. This will help pupils to connect their faith to real-world issues and develop a sense of moral responsibility.

The school demonstrates a vibrant and inclusive Catholic ethos, deeply embedded in its daily life and culture. Staff enthusiastically engage in activities that reflect and promote the mission of the school, serving as exemplary role models in their love, care, and commitment to pupils. This dedication is evident in the way the school consistently goes the extra mile for all pupils and their families, fostering a nurturing and welcoming environment. Particular attention is given to the most vulnerable, who are embraced with dignity and compassion. The school celebrates diversity, actively recognising and valuing pupils from other cultures and belief traditions. This inclusive approach enriches the community and reflects the Gospel values at

the heart of the school's mission. Pastoral care is of the highest standard, with staff, including the family support team, providing unwavering support that nurtures the emotional, spiritual, and academic development of every child. The physical environment of the school clearly witnesses its Catholic identity, with symbols, displays, and spaces that invite prayer and celebration. Provision for Human Relationships and Sex Education (HRSE) is robust, meeting all statutory and diocesan requirements. It is delivered through a holistic approach that integrates Catholic teaching on human dignity, relationships, and moral development.

Leaders are clear and united in their understanding of the school's Catholic mission, which is shared effectively with the whole school community. This vision is embedded in all policies and procedures, ensuring that the mission is not only articulated but lived out in practice. The school's founding role in the Blessed Edward Bamber Multi Academy Trust reflects its commitment to collaborative Catholic education and its recognition of the importance of working in partnership to sustain and develop Catholic life and learning. Governors are highly ambitious for the school and provide strong support and challenge. They are actively involved in shaping the school's direction and ensuring its mission remains central. Leadership at all levels is rooted in Catholic Social Teaching, which informs strategic decisions and daily practice. This is evident in the school's policies and procedures, the inclusive ethos, and the relationships throughout the school. The school's partnership with parents is a strength. For example, the work of the family support team ensures all pupils, including the most vulnerable, are supported in their education and faith journey. The school's self-evaluation is an accurate reflection of its work. The executive headteacher and governors have carefully planned the induction and continuing professional development of staff.

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

Most pupils demonstrate secure and developing knowledge in religious education making good progress across year groups. Lessons are generally well-structured, enabling pupils to recall prior learning and engage confidently in discussions. Pupils are beginning to use subject-specific vocabulary with increasing fluency, which reflects their growing understanding of theological concepts. They can work independently and collaboratively with focus and perseverance, and their written work is usually well presented. From low starting points, pupils make good progress in the early years so that they enter Key Stage 1 with a good foundation. They continue to make good progress so that, by the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' attainment is broadly in line with other core subjects. Behaviour in religious education lessons is consistently very good. Whilst many pupils are aware of how well they are doing in religious education, this is not consistent across the whole school, meaning some pupils are unaware of how to improve their work. Pupils are respectful, attentive, and enthusiastic about their learning. Most pupils report that they enjoy lessons and value the opportunity to explore scripture. This positive attitude contributes to a calm and purposeful learning environment across the whole school.

Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge in religious education, which contributes to the effective delivery of the curriculum. Planning matches the *Religious Education Directory,* is generally responsive to pupils' current assessment information and ensures that learning is well matched to their needs and abilities. Good teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage helps children develop a sense of awe and wonder. For example, inspired by a time-lapse film clip of a seed growing, pupils used the outdoor space to find ways of looking after God's creation. Across the school the retrieval elements of each lesson help pupils make good progress and build on prior learning effectively. There are examples of teachers using

questioning skilfully to probe understanding and encourage deeper thinking. Where this is less effective, opportunities to extend pupils' theological and philosophical reasoning are missed. Feedback is not always provided consistently across the school, so not all pupils are clear about how well they are learning and how they can improve. Pupil effort and achievement is celebrated in a whole school assembly in a golden book. Teachers should increase challenge for all pupils by providing opportunities for them to express their learning in a wider variety of ways.

Leaders and governors have ensured that the curriculum for religious education across all year groups reflects the *Religious Education Directory.* There is parity with other core subjects in terms of professional development, resourcing, timetabling and staffing. The recently appointed subject leader has a clear and ambitious vision for the subject, ensuring it holds a high status in the school through strategic resourcing and timetabling. She is committed to the training and development of all staff, identifying professional development opportunities which can contribute to improving practice. This means that teachers are increasingly well placed to implement and embed the new and challenging curriculum. Staff are supported in the development of planning for religious education through work with their peers in the sister school, St Cuthbert's Catholic Academy, as well as with other schools in the Trust and through diocesan support. Self-evaluation is accurate and informs clear action planning for continued improvement. Governors meet regularly with the executive headteacher to evaluate standards and identify priorities. Planned spending in religious education is in line with other core subjects. Parents value the work of the school and are informed about the curriculum. Parents told inspectors their children talk enthusiastically about their learning at home.

Collective worship

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

Collective worship key judgement grade

2

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

Pupils respond well to the different opportunities for prayer and liturgy provided by school. They recognise special times of prayer and participate and show respect through silence, communal prayer and enthusiastic singing. Pupils listen carefully to the Word of God and older pupils are able to think about going forth and the impact of the Gospel on their lives. Pupils participate in a variety of ways of prayer: class services, the rosary, Mass with classes and the parish. Pupils are keen to take part and spoke to inspectors about their liturgical ministries in Mass, both in school and in church. They are also involved in whole school services, assisting with liturgical responsibilities. Pupils are able to talk about the Church's seasons and have a good knowledge of the liturgical colours for each season. Pupils, including those who are members of the Spiritual Council, work with others, including teachers, to plan and deliver prayer and liturgy in class and in key stage assemblies. Leaders recognise they need to monitor the implementation of the recently devised school documents on Prayer and Liturgy to enable pupils to deliver experiences of prayer that are more creative and well-constructed.

The centrality of prayer and liturgy to the life of the school is clear. There is daily pattern of prayer which is well embedded in school and is known and valued by pupils and their families. During prayer and liturgy, the richness of the Catholic tradition is celebrated through symbol and gesture, for example, when making the sign of the cross and greeting the Gospel. Appropriate scripture passages are chosen, which reflect the liturgical season and are central to acts of prayer and liturgy. Examples of planning seen by inspectors show this is daily practice. Led by the example of the executive headteacher and benefitting from a clear plan for professional development, staff are models of good practice to pupils in prayer and liturgy. They prepare children for times of prayer by encouraging them to calm their breathing and 'be calm, be still and ready to talk to God'. The school makes imaginative and creative use of

space. In classrooms and in communal spaces there are beautiful areas which enhance the Catholicity of the school. Creative use of the school layout is used to effect, for example for a journey of prayer stations in the corridor for Holy Week. Parents are involved in the prayer life of Christ the King and participate fully, through prayer and singing.

Leaders have worked hard with staff to develop policies and procedure documents which ensure the high profile of prayer and liturgy in school. For example, the newly devised policy is well formulated and is fit for purpose. Most staff are aware of the policy and use it. There is a clear strategy for building up the skills and levels of participation in prayer and liturgy across the school. The school benefits from having the church attached to the school building and leaders use this opportunity to maintain very good parish links. The parish priest, who is very new to the parish, has already begun to work with the executive headteacher and governors to ensure the prayer life of the school remains a high priority. Staff training days, all meetings, staff briefings and the start of the day begin with prayer. A school calendar identifies opportunities to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation and to attend Mass as individual classes, the whole school community and with parishioners. The introduction of key pupil groups in school, including the Mini Vinnies, the Spiritual Council and the Eco Group, will enable leaders to continue to monitor the impact of prayer and liturgy on the lives of the pupils.

Information about the school

Full name of school	Christ the King Catholic Academy
School unique reference number (URN)	141288
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	8903631
Full postal address of the school	Rodwell Walk, Grange Park, Blackpool, FY3 7FG
School phone number	01253395985
Executive Headteacher	Sarah Smith
Chair of Local Governing Body	Julie McLeod
School Website	ctkacademy.co.uk
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	The Blessed Edward Bamber Catholic Multi Academy Trust
Phase	Primary
Type of school	Academy
Admissions policy	N/A
Age-range of pupils	3-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	June 2019
Previous denominational inspection grade	1 Outstanding

The inspection team

Jacqueline Hampson	Lead
Alan Parry	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