



St Joseph's RC Primary School

URN: 119667

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Bishop of Salford

06–07 November 2024

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

Fully

Compliance statement

- The school meets the 10% requirement of teaching religious education, as laid down by the Bishop's Conference.
- The school is fully compliant with any additional requirements of the Diocesan bishop.
- The school has fully responded to the areas for improvement from the last inspection. The requirements for professional development have been addressed and staff have undertaken training with reference to religious education. The Come and See programme is embedded across the school. Moderation of teaching and learning in religious education have been undertaken by senior leaders in their strive to achieve outstanding in the teaching of religious education.

What the school does well

- The mission statement is lived out by all in the school community. Staff bear witness to the Catholic life and mission of the school.
- The senior leaders' commitment to the church's mission in education and placing Christ at the heart of the school is exemplary.
- The behaviour of pupils in religious education lessons and around school is excellent
- The inclusion and support of all pupils including those with special educational needs and /or disabilities is a strength of the school.
- Children's ability to pray spontaneously , with reverence and respect, during prayer and liturgy services is commendable.

What the school needs to improve

- Continue to work with all pupils to develop their understanding of improving and caring for God's home, working for the common good and the theology that underpins this.
- Provide further opportunities for pupils to engage in presenting their religious education work in a variety of forms and so ensure greater challenge for the more able pupils.
- For pupils to work collaboratively with teachers and other pupils to prepare and lead creative prayer and liturgy experiences.

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

1

Leadership

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

2

2

Pupils understand their school of St Joseph's, and its community, are committed to following the teachings of Jesus in their everyday practice, and through relationships with each other. They are polite and courteous to all they meet. Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around school is excellent. Pupils are happy and confident and know they are valued and cared for. A group of pupils described the school as, 'respectful, safe, welcoming, happy and superb'. Pupils are eager to take on roles and responsibilities and fulfil this through a variety of activities. These include being members of the chaplaincy team, faith team, eco club and the school council. Pupils from across the school are involved with a number of charities and they are proud of their work with local food banks, Nightsafe, Caritas, and Cafod. St Joseph's should continue to work with all pupils to develop their understanding of their personal responsibility for improving and caring for God's home, working for the common good and so understand why we are called to serve in doing this. The Year 6 chaplains are excited in their new role as pupil chaplains and leading other younger pupils in the faith team. They are very eager to plan and lead prayer and liturgy and so impact on the spiritual life of all pupils.

The mission statement is known, lived, and witnessed by all in the school community. Leaders, which include governors, the headteacher and deputy headteacher have ensured that the pastoral care and well-being of all is at the forefront of their work, including supporting those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. This is a real strength of the school. All are welcomed to St Joseph's, including the most vulnerable, as staff recognise that Christ is at the heart of all their work. Parents are complimentary of the support they receive. A high number of questionnaires returned by parents were overwhelmingly positive about the school. The parish priest is a very welcome visitor to the school and works closely with the leadership team.

As a parent remarked, 'the school and St Joseph's church go hand in hand, supporting our children in the Catholic faith'. The school environment effectively bears witness to the Catholic mission in education and is a welcoming and attractive space. Staff are highly complementary about the support they receive and especially for their own spiritual development. One staff member remarked, 'coming to school is heart-warming because of the prayer and care in school'. The relationships, sex and health education (RSHE) curriculum is delivered from Reception through to Year 6. It is fully rooted in the teachings of the Church and meets all statutory requirements.

Leaders and governors recognise their duty as guardians of the Catholic life and mission of the school. Governors are regular visitors to the school and work in close partnership with the leadership team. The headteacher is inspirational in her vision, practice and faith. She puts Catholic life and mission at the fore front of her school's work which results in high care, commitment and support from every member of the school community in developing the faith life of the pupils, staff and the community. Staff serve as positive role models for pupils. They treat all pupils with respect and provide them with the dignity they deserve. Parents are very complimentary of the support their children receive. Leaders and governors see parents as partners and value the close relationship that exists. Leaders have ensured that pupils participate in a variety of activities that support local projects and international charities. Professional development of staff is seen as important, and all staff are encouraged to attend training to further develop their knowledge and skills. Self-evaluation by school leaders is accurate, and next steps for improvement have been correctly identified. Further opportunities need to be developed for pupils, so they too, can be become involved in evaluating the Catholic life and mission of the school.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

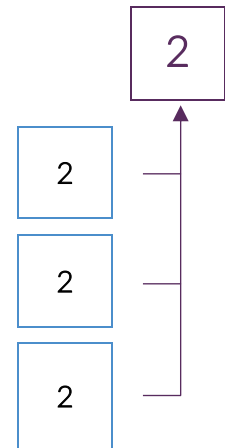
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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



Inspectors agree with the leadership team that pupils are developing secure knowledge, understanding and skills which reflect the requirements of the *Religious Education Curriculum Directory*. The *Come and See* programme is followed by all classes, with further support for religious education from the reflections that take place in all classes after Monday assemblies. These are based on Sunday's gospel reading and have ensured pupils knowledge is developed further. Pupils can speak with confidence about what they have learnt, for example, a group of Key Stage 2 pupils could share and discuss a variety of their favourite gospel stories. Pupils enjoy their religious education, approaching lessons with enthusiasm and interest. Lessons observed had a positive effect on the moral and spiritual development of pupils. Pupils would benefit from opportunities in lessons to develop their own questions to enhance and deepen their learning further. Pupils produce good work, which is neat and well-presented. They achieve attainment in line with other core subjects. However religious education books show an over-reliance on writing frames, activity sheets and other printed documents, which does not always allow for pupils' own individuality and creativity. This can limit their responses and hinder the progress of the higher ability pupils.

Teachers are confident in their subject knowledge, appropriate to the phase in which they are teaching. Feedback and recall of previous learning is used effectively with the use of questioning at the start of lessons. This process is consistent across the school. All staff create a positive climate for learning, with pupils being encouraged to support and help each other. Support staff, and the use of adaptive teaching, are both utilised extremely well and ensure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are fully included in all aspects of religious education lessons. There is a focus on vocabulary development, with key words linked to the current unit of study displayed on religious education boards. This is consistent across the school. Check in and check out templates are used to identify pupils pre and post learning of a unit, with assessment of work taking place during and after each unit taught. At the time of

inspection pupils across the school were on the world religions unit and studying the Islamic faith. This was well planned out, with each year group studying a different aspect of this faith, supported by quality resources. Further opportunities for pupils to engage in presenting their religious education work, in a variety of forms, will ensure greater challenge for the more able pupils.

Leaders and governors have ensured that religious education is comparable with other core subjects in terms of resourcing, staffing and timetabling. Religious education is given the 10% required time. Previous thorough monitoring, and analysis of religious education systems and data, in the last academic year has resulted in good outcomes across the school. Governors are conscientious in their work and recognise the improvements that have taken place in religious education. The newly appointed leader for religious education has a clear vision for the teaching and learning of this subject, a high level of expertise and his leadership has had a positive impact in the short time he has been in post. The leadership team, through their own monitoring, are aware of the strengths of religious education in the school and have correctly identified the next steps in its development. Self-evaluation is honest and accurate. The parish priest, as the religious education link governor, is a regular visitor to the school and as a result has knowledge of the children's faith development and progress. In order to become outstanding, school should implement the next steps they have identified, and leaders and governors rigorously monitor this implementation to ensure its success.

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

Pupils enjoy their experiences of class prayer and liturgy and other collective worship services at St Joseph's school. They are given the opportunity to undertake a variety of liturgical ministries including participation in the school Masses that take place throughout the year. They show respect and reverence at all times. They contribute through joyful singing, quiet reflection and are enthusiastic for the opportunity to undertake spontaneous prayer, which is a strength of these services. This was evident in a Year 3 class celebration of the word where all pupils sang hymns with great enthusiasm, and listened carefully to each other's spontaneous prayers which were recited with great confidence and faith. Pupils are able to recognise and articulate ways in which prayer influences them, for example, a session observed with a theme on 'being called' led to several children being able to explain how their calling enables them to help others. Pupils understand there are a variety of ways of praying and can talk about the use of scripture, silence, meditation and hymn singing for speaking to, and praising God. All pupils are now ready to take on leadership roles in class and whole school prayer and liturgy gatherings. They need opportunities to work collaboratively with teachers and other pupils to prepare and lead creative prayer and liturgy experiences.

Prayer life is appropriately planned at St Joseph's with a daily pattern of prayer and worship taking place. A programme of themes is planned for class prayer and liturgy and whole school services across the liturgical year. The school is excellent in providing quality spaces for prayer and worship. Leadership have ensured that children have access to permanently dedicated spaces both internal and external to school. These include the use of the hall for whole school gatherings, a prayer room, an outdoor prayer space in addition to attractive focus areas in many parts of the school. Staff have been supported by senior leaders with training for class prayer and liturgy and are now confident in leading these services with their pupils. As models of good

practice, they need further support to become highly skilled in supporting pupils in their next stage of planning and leading these services. Scripture holds a central place in prayer and liturgy sessions, and the reading of scripture is delivered effectively, even by the youngest of pupils. To encourage the faith development and prayer life of all the community, governors and families are actively included and welcomed to all Masses and services and school have recently commenced “stay and pray” services for all classes.

Leaders and governors recognise the importance of collective worship for the faith development of the whole school community. The school calendar is planned to include key stage assemblies, class prayer and liturgy services, and whole school Masses which celebrate key feasts across the liturgical year. School leaders, with the parish priest, have strived to ensure the Sacraments of the Eucharist and Reconciliation are available at appropriate times in the liturgical year. The school has a policy on prayer and worship, but it would benefit from including a strategy for developing the skills of participation, as pupils’ progress through the school. Leaders are aware of the strengths of the school collective worship and recognise the next step for their pupils is to develop their skills in leading class and whole school prayer and liturgy. Governors have ensured that whole school collective worship is appropriately resourced. As part of the monitoring cycle, both governors and leaders need to continue to review the quality and impact of prayer and liturgy. The views of pupils need to be included as part of their own reflection and evaluation of the services they prepare.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Joseph's Roman Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	119667
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	8893779
Full postal address of the school	St Joseph's Roman Catholic Primary School, Limes Avenue, Darwen. BB3 2SG
School phone number	01254 706264
Headteacher	Leanne Brown
Choose an item.	(David) Alistair Ray
School Website	www.stjosephsrcp.co.uk/
Trusteeship	Diocesan
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	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	March 2017
Previous denominational inspection grade	Good

The inspection team

Fiona Robinson
James Graves

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