



St Antony's Roman Catholic Primary School

URN: 119516

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Bishop of Salford

07–08 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

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

1

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

- St Antony's RC Primary 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 fully responded to the areas for improvement from the last inspection.

What the school does well

- St. Antony's goes the extra mile and provides an exceptionally supportive community, valuing all without exception.
- A strong culture of inclusivity and dignity exists, created by the devoted head teacher and supported by a cohesive team.
- Joyful relationships are visible at all levels, built upon the foundation of mutual respect, nurture and love.
- Exemplary behaviour throughout the school allows learning and school life to flourish.
- The care and attention given to the quality of the school environment demonstrates the highest expectations and aspirations for the school community as a whole.

What the school needs to improve

- Provide opportunity for children to articulate how scripture and prayer have inspired them to action.
- Promote deeper questioning in religious education lessons to further develop children's critical thinking and promote curious, active learning.
- Provide further opportunities for children to show what they have learned in original and creative ways, allowing them a greater independence.

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

1

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

1

1

St. Antony's is more than just a school; it is a vibrant Catholic community where faith is intertwined with every aspect of school life. Guided by the mission statement, 'Jesus Christ is our inspiration as we raise standards and aspirations for all of our children', children, staff, governors, and parents together strive to live out this commitment each day. Children talk about how, 'we are trying to bring Heaven to earth by walking in the footsteps of Jesus'. From their earliest years, children are encouraged to be active participants in their faith journey. They learn to confidently articulate the school's mission, readily participate in leadership roles like chaplaincy, eco team, and Caritas ambassadors, and show genuine respect for everyone in the community. This active faith is not confined to the classroom; children at St. Antony's are passionate about putting their faith into action by serving others. They engage in a variety of charitable endeavours, including fundraising for organisations like Cafod, Caritas, and the Blackburn foodbank; and demonstrate compassion through their visits and interactions with residents at Linden House. One pupil said, 'We are giving people a chance at life, we give them the resources to help themselves'.

At St. Antony's, providing a nurturing environment where every child feels a sense of belonging is paramount. Staff go above and beyond to support both children and families, demonstrating a genuine care that extends beyond academic concerns and is rooted in love. This commitment to holistic care is evidenced through initiatives like sourcing food hampers for families, facilitating food bank referrals, and providing access to holiday programmes. The school champions inclusivity, ensuring that all children, regardless of their background, feel welcomed and valued. This emphasis on inclusivity is reflected in the school's active promotion of interfaith understanding through events like world faith weeks, where children are exposed to different beliefs and encouraged to develop respect for others. The school's commitment to its Catholic identity is visible throughout the care and attention given to creating its beautiful learning environment. Dedicated prayer spaces and awe-inspiring nurture rooms reflect the

dignity of the children, staff and parents and contribute to the formation of each person. The recently renovated school chapel provides children, staff and governors with opportunities to connect with their faith in a deep and meaningful way.

The headteacher is fastidious in exercising her duty to be the guardian of this school family. She is supported extremely well by the leadership team, comprised of the dedicated deputy headteacher, subject leaders, governors, pastoral team, and the parish priest who share a deep commitment to ensuring that the Catholic faith permeates every facet of school life. Parents talk positively about the support they receive from the passionate pastoral team saying they, 'go above and beyond' and 'we are like a little family'. Staff actively participate in professional development offered by the Diocese of Salford and local school improvement group and embrace diocesan initiatives, demonstrating a commitment to staying connected to the wider Catholic community. Governors play a vital role in evaluating the school's Catholic life, ensuring accountability and providing a crucial link to the parish. This shared responsibility for upholding the school's mission is crucial in fostering a dynamic and thriving Catholic community at St. Antony's. Moving forward, children would benefit from making further links with the newly introduced 'St Antony's Five Wells University' and Catholic social teaching themes to gain a full and comprehensive understanding of the impact their work has.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

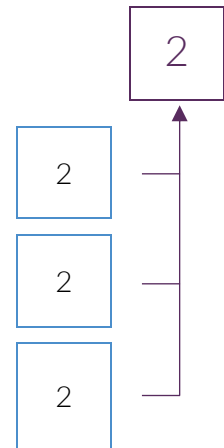
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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



Right from their start in Nursery, children achieve and progress well in religious education, developing secure knowledge for the next stage of learning. Children at St. Antony's demonstrate a solid understanding of religious concepts, effectively communicating their learning and linking it to previous knowledge. Progress is evident through the assessment system of check in and check out. They can discuss their faith, explain its significance in their lives, and link scripture to moral lessons. The school encourages them to be independent thinkers, providing time for quiet reflection and offering support through adaptable teaching strategies to ensure all children can achieve. Work in exercise books show that children take pride in their work, producing quality outputs that showcase their understanding. They actively participate in lessons, ask questions, and engage in thoughtful discussions. They enjoy religious education, often citing it as a favourite subject, and excellent behaviour for learning shows that they approach their learning with enthusiasm and a sense of curiosity. Children's achievement in religious education is in line with other subjects and national data. To further develop, leaders should plan for greater opportunities for children to show what they have learned in original and creative ways allowing for a greater independence.

St. Antony's prioritises a well-rounded and engaging Religious Education curriculum that utilises diverse teaching methods to cater to different learning styles and needs. The school has been developing opportunities for creative learning experiences, such as drama, art and music, to enhance understanding and engagement. Teachers use questioning in their lessons to identify understanding and move children's learning on. Where learning is celebrated, this leads to high levels of motivation and feedback has begun to help deepen children's thinking. Personalised learning is emphasised, ensuring that every pupil, regardless of ability, background, or faith, can access the curriculum and progress. The school also provides a wide

range of enrichment activities, including outdoor learning and visits, to further support and challenge children. These activities often involve the wider community, such as visits from the parish priest, paralympic athletes, and representatives of other faiths, enhancing the learning experience and broadening children's perspectives. To further improve, focus now needs to be on developing the planning of thought-provoking questions that stimulate critical thinking and foster deeper learning, as this would maximise learning for all.

Leaders at all levels, play a crucial role at St. Antony's, in ensuring the quality and effectiveness of religious education. Subject leaders carefully plan professional development opportunities to stay updated on current trends and best practices. They share this knowledge with staff, providing guidance and support for planning and delivering religion lessons. The religion curriculum is aligned with the *Religious Education Directory*, ensuring it is appropriately challenging and sequential across key stages. Leaders and governors prioritise high-quality professional development for both new and experienced staff, fostering ongoing growth and improvement in teaching practices. The school implements a robust monitoring system, which includes regular book scrutiny, data analysis, and instructional coaching sessions, to ensure standards are maintained and areas for development are identified. A staff member voiced how this monitoring and support has, 'made my faith journey grow so much'; with another stating, 'St. Antony's has allowed me to grow spiritually'.

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

1

Provision

The quality of collective worship provided by the school

1

Leadership

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

1

1

There is a full and active participation in prayer at St Antony's. Children are aware of the Church's liturgical year and importance of preparation for significant events throughout the year. From the very youngest children in Nursery, children appreciate the value that prayer offers and the opportunities to pray with open hearts. Children in Nursery sang joyfully, reflected on the message of the Gospel, with the skilled teacher modelling the story with props allowing children to reflect on how they could share the gift of love that day. Children enjoy working together collaboratively to prepare worship, as well as with staff to offer creative experiences of prayer for all. Prayers are, 'sent to heaven' at the end of worship so children understand they have a purpose and meaning. Children in Year 5 planned and delivered a beautiful Mass on the theme of 'listening', where spiritual growth was clearly evident. Throughout experiences provided by pupils and staff, children can use prayer areas to stop and reflect when navigating through the beautifully created environment e.g. a book of condolences for the month of November. The impact of this is well-rounded individuals who have a genuine care and compassion for the world.

St Antony's is deeply rooted in prayer and liturgy where all staff are inspiring role models of exemplary practice to children. This permeates across the whole community. Staff are skilled in providing opportunities for daily worship and offer well-constructed celebration of the word which gives children a solid grounding to take Scripture further. All stakeholders are highly committed in bringing the Kingdom of Heaven into St Antony's during worship. Children love singing and use this gift in all forms of prayer, for example, during Mass in their beautifully designed chapel. Furthermore, the imaginative use of prayer space outside in the woodland demonstrates how areas for prayer are well-cared for and instrumental to this being central to St Antony's. As the relationships between staff and children are so strong, all children share

their spontaneous prayers in the knowledge they are deeply respected and valued as unique humans. Carefully crafted worship using a variety of creative forms enhances these experiences for all children whatever their background. There is a naturally embedded pattern of prayer where children can always refer to their 'prayers for life' throughout worship.

At St Antony's there is a clear and precise policy for prayer and liturgy which is embraced by all. There is a clear direction for prayer and its development as the children progress. Newly appointed pupil chaplains are growing in confidence as they work with previous chaplains to undertake ministries and deliver the word of God to younger children. This was experienced during a Key Stage 1 worship which linked to the school's 'prayers for life' and all children participated respectfully and prayerfully. Senior leaders and governors at the school place the highest priority on the development of all staff. The knowledgeable and passionate deputy and religion subject leader uses instructional coaching to ensure that all staff are following policies and are delivering meaningful class celebrations of the word. They invest many hours to provide the highest quality resources and coaching to ensure the children have the best possible outcomes in prayer. Leaders at all levels skilfully reflect upon prayer at St Antony's, and now need to develop next steps to further develop provision, promoting growing independence and maturity from the children themselves, enabling them to select and use appropriate scripture in celebrations of the word.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Antony's Roman Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	119516
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	8893512
Full postal address of the school	St Antony's Roman Catholic Primary School, Shadsworth Road, Blackburn, BB1 2HP
School phone number	00125454686
Headteacher	Heather McGowan
Chair of governors	Fr Gerard Barry
School Website	www.stantonymsrc.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	3-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	1 st February 2017
Previous denominational inspection grade	Good

The inspection team

Jane Myerscough
Matthew Lawrence

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