



St John's Roman Catholic Primary School

URN: 105826

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Bishop of Salford

08–09 October 2025

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

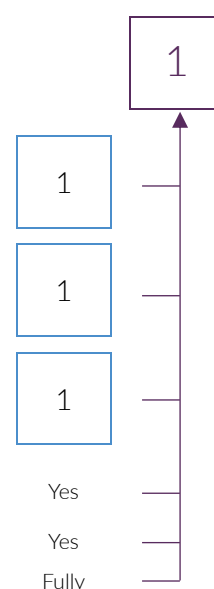
Collective worship (p.7)

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



Compliance statement

- The school is compliant with the general norms for religious education laid down by the Bishops' Conference, including spending 10% of curriculum time teaching religious education.
- The bishop has no additional requirements for primary schools in the Diocese of Salford
- The school has fully addressed all previous areas for improvement identified at the last inspection, including work on critical thinking through a 'big question' approach; and improved religious education in the early years.

What the school does well

- The dedicated and inspirational leadership of the headteacher, who has galvanised the team into following her vision for the school.
- Feedback, both written and oral, contributes towards excellent progress in religious education.
- The calm environment, and exemplary behaviour and politeness of the children reinforces the Catholic mission.
- The pastoral care provided for children and families, particularly those who are most vulnerable.
- Child-led prayer and celebration of the word, across the whole school, is progressive and developmental.

What the school needs to improve

- Embed the requirements of the new Religious Education Directory across all branches in readiness for full implementation by September 2026.

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

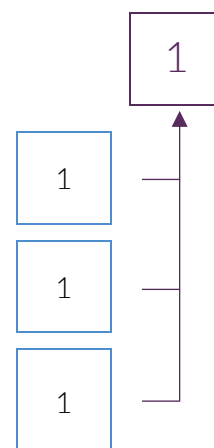
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

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



The St John's school community is a well-established, cohesive family where Gospel values are lived out daily, and every child is nurtured to grow spiritually, morally, and academically. The school is an exemplary model of unity in diversity, where pupils of many nationalities and languages flourish together in faith, friendship, and mutual respect. Parents speak with warmth and pride about the school's ethos, highlighting the strong sense of belonging and the positive influence it has on family life and faith formation. One parent commented, 'The school is welcoming and warm; it is inclusive and supportive.' The excellent provision of the *Laudato Si'* Centre, a nurture space to inspire environmental hope and action, enriches pupils' understanding of stewardship and care for creation, providing opportunities for children to contribute towards a sustainable world, inspired by Catholic social teaching. This profound awareness of stewardship is evident in the children's care for living things and their commitment to serving others, such as growing vegetables to share with the wider community. Pupils exhibit resilience and a mature approach to both learning and faith, embracing the belief that, 'We all make mistakes, and mistakes help us to grow.' Together, these elements ensure that the Catholic life and mission of the school is lived with authenticity, joy, and purpose. This is exemplified in the mission statement, where each class takes ownership of a specific line, enabling pupils to unite as 'One Family in Christ', bringing the school's mission to life through words, actions and community spirit.

St John's places great importance on its mission, which is central to its vision, and clearly known, lived, and celebrated by the whole community. This commitment is evident in the way the school flourishes as a multi-cultural, multi-faith, and multi-lingual community. The culture of welcome is evident from entering the school, and is reflected in the calm school environment, which shows love in every corner and is a place where children feel safe, respected and cherished. Despite being situated in an area of significant deprivation, the school is united in living out the Church's mission, firmly rooted in the Word of God. Its inclusive ethos and dedication to service are visible

in daily practice; and affirmed by its recognition as a *School of Sanctuary* for its compassionate support of families seeking refuge. Pupils have deep pride in their school community. They know, understand, and live the mission statement, which is embedded in every aspect of school life. The school is a joyful, nurturing environment where pupils aspire to reach their God-given potential. They speak warmly about belonging to the St John the Baptist family, where Christ is truly at the centre of everything they do, permeating all aspects of school life, reflected in the high expectations of all staff, strong relationships, and a deep commitment to serving others within and beyond the school family.

Leadership of Catholic life and mission is outstanding. The school radiates an exemplary sense of care and love, rooted in its Catholic mission and lived out daily by all members of the community. Governors, leaders, staff, and pupils alike, go above and beyond to ensure that every new member is warmly welcomed, regardless of language, culture, faith or individual needs. Funding is used creatively and compassionately to remove barriers to learning while maintaining each child's dignity and sense of worth. In the early years, the prioritisation of sign language exemplifies the school's inclusive ethos, enabling all children to communicate, connect and belong from their very first days. This is truly a beacon of hope and welcome – a living testament to faith in action and love made visible. From the moment that the children step on the school premises in the morning, they experience genuine, personalised care and love. Leaders demonstrate a profound understanding of the needs of the community and the families they serve, making thoughtful and compassionate decisions to ensure that parents are well supported. Barriers are identified and prioritised to ensure their dignity. The provision for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities is exemplary; their individual needs are carefully prioritised and supported, ensuring that every child feels emotionally regulated, valued, and empowered. The school maintains a thriving partnership with the parents and parish, which is central to its Catholic life and mission, supported by weekly visits from the committed parish priest.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

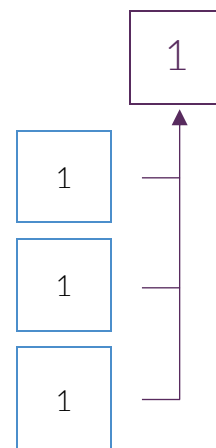
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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



The outcomes in religious education at St John's are outstanding. Pupils consistently achieve results that exceed those in other core subjects, such as English, across all year groups. This excellence is evident throughout the school. For example, children in Key Stage 1 were able to articulate thoughtfully how they could care for God's creation and act as stewards in their daily lives. In lessons, through their written work and assessments, pupils demonstrate exceptional knowledge, understanding, and skills in religious education. They speak confidently and fluently about their learning, reflecting a deep engagement with the subject. This was reflected in a Key Stage 2 lesson where children purposefully articulated their reasoning using the school's oracy framework, respectfully building upon each other's ideas on how the Nicene Creed represents the idea of the new covenant. The school effectively builds and consolidates prior knowledge, using a clear 'learning roadmap' at the start of each lesson to connect previous learning with the current lesson and to clarify expectations for the end of each unit. This approach ensures that pupils' learning is secure, progressive, and meaningful. The newly arrived children are supported well to access the religious education curriculum through personalised support and high expectations. Pupil leaders support and welcome new children in school through the 'Young Interpreter' programme.

The provision for religious education is outstanding. The subject leader demonstrates strong leadership in establishing consistency across all lessons, while successfully managing the transition to the new *Religious Education Directory*. Pupils are able to articulate their learning confidently and with clarity. Staff use questioning skilfully to assess precisely where pupils are in their understanding and engagement, adapting activities, explanations, and responses to maximise learning. Pupils are resilient, enthusiastic, and committed to succeeding in their learning, evident in practice across the school, with consistent use of marking and feedback to ignite curiosity and strengthen outcomes. Strong subject knowledge amongst staff further enhances pupils' learning, resulting in very good progress from their individual starting points. Pupils consistently demonstrate exceptional engagement and ownership of their learning. They

are encouraged to choose how to express their understanding, whether through written work, creative arts, presentations, or practical activities. This choice empowers them to reflect their individual strengths and talents while deepening their understanding of the curriculum. Staff provide highly effective guidance and scaffolding, ensuring that all pupils can make informed decisions about how to demonstrate their learning. As a result, pupils' work is varied, imaginative, and of a consistently high standard, reflecting both their knowledge and their personal interpretation of the topic.

The leadership of religious education at the school is outstanding. The headteacher and senior leaders demonstrate unwavering commitment, passion, and rigour in ensuring the highest possible outcomes for all pupils. The 'no excuses' culture, led by the headteacher, have ensured that religious education holds full parity with English and maths, and the consistently high standards evident in lessons, pupils' books, and outcomes provide clear evidence of this. Leadership is firmly rooted in the Gospel message, which leaders' model daily, resulting in pupils embodying these values in their attitudes, behaviour, and interactions throughout the school. The inspiring vision of the religious education subject leader drives a rigorous cycle of monitoring and evaluation, leading to sustained achievement over the last three years. This success reflects both the dedication of the school leadership and the commitment of the wider school team. Pupils are proud of their learning, and the school community benefits from a strong culture of high expectations, care, and moral development. The school has a clear understanding of its next steps, which are carefully outlined in the school improvement plan. Its journey to this point demonstrates that outstanding outcomes are the result of strategic leadership, collaborative effort, and a steadfast commitment to living out the Catholic ethos in all aspects of school life.

Collective worship

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

Collective worship key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

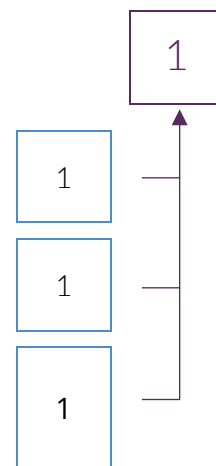
How well pupils participate in and respond to the school's collective worship

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



Pupil outcomes in collective worship are outstanding. As 'One Family in Christ', children work together, to research, plan and deliver whole school and class celebrations of the word independently, incorporating a range of scripture. They confidently express their unique talents through the use of creativity. In one celebration of the word observed, children prayed the Hail Mary in Portuguese; and in another, children used actions to bring scripture to life. All children evaluate their prayer and liturgy sessions and their effectiveness, planning for improvement each week. The school's inclusive practice ensures all children are involved at all stages. This inclusivity was observed throughout the inspection, for example, when children were asked to place their hands in their prayer position, enabling all children, of all faiths, to participate reverently and respectfully, regardless of faith background. Throughout the day, children use prayer areas to stop and reflect when moving through the beautifully created environment which includes a prayer intention area for refugees, a beautiful prayer room and a dedicated area for devotions to Mary. The children reported that these sacred spaces are both well used and well valued. The impact of this is well-rounded individuals who have a genuine care and compassion for the world around them.

The progression in pupils' skills, knowledge, and understanding of prayer and liturgy is evident. Pupil leaders confidently explained their reasons for selecting Sunday's Gospel for their celebration of the word, with one child reflecting, 'We want to understand and know the Gospel more deeply.' Moments of stillness were consistently observed throughout the inspection, notably during the silence following the second reading of the gospel in the whole-school *Lectio Divina*, which was thoughtfully led by the pupils themselves; and through meditative prayer observed in every class worship. Pupils have a willingness to share their own personal thoughts, prayers and responses during celebrations of the word, and this was seen when pupils were given the freedom to respond to prayer and scripture spontaneously. Children could articulate how the liturgical year is planned for in their prayer, using the school progression document.

This carefully planned provision ensures children learn a wide range of prayers as they journey through the school. Well-structured routines and provision in early years ensure all children access and participate in creative and age-appropriate prayer and liturgy, as seen in one celebration of the word where children sang and danced joyfully.

Leadership of prayer and liturgy is outstanding. The dedicated leader demonstrates a profound understanding of the rich variety of prayer within the Catholic tradition, while also embracing approaches that allow all members of the community, regardless of faith, to participate fully. They are highly skilled in guiding all pupils to plan and lead meaningful celebrations of the word and other acts of prayer. Every aspect of prayer and liturgy is carefully considered, ensuring experiences are inclusive, engaging, and thought-provoking. Both the indoor and outdoor environments are thoughtfully designed to reflect and promote the Catholic ethos, with high-quality resources readily available to support and enrich prayer and liturgy. Leaders have invested in a dedicated outdoor prayer area, Elijah's Cave, which is used for both the celebration of the word and spontaneous reflection during playtimes. This demonstrates a strong commitment to children's faith development, providing opportunities for them to respond freely, engage creatively, and nurture a personal relationship with God. Leaders have ensured children in the Early Years Foundation Stage benefit from a dedicated outdoor worship space, Elijah's Nook, ensuring that the foundations of faith are fostered from the earliest stages of their school journey. Across the school, pupils display a profound understanding of their calling as missionary disciples. They confidently recall and interpret Biblical stories and teachings, demonstrating a clear ability to apply these lessons to their daily lives. Their reflections show insight, personal responsibility, and a strong commitment to living out their faith in practical ways.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St John's Roman Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	105826
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	3543501
Full postal address of the school	Ann Street, Rochdale, Lancashire, OL11 1EZ
School phone number	01706 647195
Executive headteacher	N/A
Headteacher	Mrs Lisa Campbell
Chair of Governors	Mrs Heather Preston
School Website	http://www.stjohnsrc.rochdale.sch.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	23 May 2018
Previous denominational inspection grade	Outstanding

The inspection team

Jim Graves

Kathleen McKeating

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