



St Michael & St John's Catholic Primary School

URN: 119644

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Bishop of Salford

10–11 July 2024

Summary of key findings

Overall effectiveness

The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school

1

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

1

Collective worship (p.7)

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

1

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

What the school does well

- Ss Michael and John's is a Catholic school in which the mission statement is alive and permeates throughout providing outstanding witness to the message of Jesus Christ. This leads to a deeply caring and inclusive climate which is experienced within and beyond the school, especially with the parish where excellent links have been developed.
- Consistently good teaching and high expectations with a well-planned curriculum leads to outstanding outcomes for the pupils. Their knowledge of scripture and the liturgical year is very strong. Standards of pupils' work are high and their level of enjoyment and engagement is commendable. The ability of pupils to reflect on their learning successfully contributes to the progress they make in religious education.
- Ss Michael and John's have made great strides forward in developing the prayer life of the school. Children deeply enjoy this significant aspect of school life. Experiences are broad

and well-planned with the children taking ownership in both leading and planning prayer. Collective worship is a strength of the school.

- The staff team, under the outstanding leadership of the headteacher, are wholly committed and dedicated to their ministry for the children's educational and spiritual growth. They have excellent relationships with the children and the parents and provide a strong capacity for improvement.
- The pupils at Ss Michael and John's are a credit to their school and its community. They behave exceptionally well. They have strong attitudes to learning and have developed an impressive level of confidence, assertiveness and eloquence in the context of kind, respectful and meaningful friendships.

What the school needs to improve

- To research new, exciting and creative approaches to celebrate the school's mission statement in action and to revitalise the prominent place it has in the school.
- To extend the work currently in place to increase the level of creative opportunities in the children's work, to the development of greater variety and creativity in pedagogical approaches, to give even greater challenge and broader experiences for the children.
- To enhance the place of self-evaluation in collective worship and prayer and liturgy particularly in pupil voice to support an ever-improving culture of strong spiritual development.

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

Ss Michael and John's is an outstanding Catholic school. Its Christian mission and gospel values are at the heart of its very special and authentic character. The school provides for the children a deeply nurturing environment, rooted in positive relationships throughout. Pupils feel safe and secure, they thrive in this strong ethos and as one parent commented, 'they just adore the staff who work with them.' Opportunities are provided for the pupils to contribute to the school community and beyond through a wide range of ambassadorial teams such as chaplaincy, growing in faith together team (GIFT Team), Laudato Si, reading ambassadors, eco warriors, prefects, a school council and a well-being club. This encourages them to understand that they can have an impact on the world they live in in so many different ways and they do this to great effect. The school enjoys unusually strong links with the parish and have a great fondness for the parish priest. Parents speak with appreciation and acknowledgement of this highly inclusive school, whether long-standing members of the community or new arrivals, whether Catholic or of other faiths, all are made to feel fully part of the school very quickly because of the strong welcome and care provided. A key feature of this is the extent to which pupils and families are recognised and celebrated as unique and special. Everyone is known. This is illustrated by the spontaneous voice of one pupil who said, 'we all live together as one big family.'

As a consequence of the high quality of provision for Catholic life and mission, the pupils achieve outstanding outcomes. From an early age, they grow in confidence, they feel supported and encouraged in offering their own views. Pupils respond so well to the warmth and caring nature modelled by the staff team and they mirror this in their friendships with each other. Behaviour and attitudes are excellent, not only for learning but throughout the school day. As a result, pupils grow in their ability to express themselves with assertiveness and eloquence. They feel a

strong sense of mission and are passionate of both improving themselves and the world they live in. Pupils fully recognise that they are able to make a difference – they do this extremely well through supporting charities like St. Joseph’s Penny, Ukrainian Appeal, providing food parcels, Cafod and Children in Need, and by promoting positive behaviour. Hence bullying is virtually unheard of. Pupils are encouraged to celebrate their individuality and good work. Testimony to the strength of relationships is the impressive way pupils evaluate and assess each other’s contribution. The outstanding outcomes achieved in Catholic life and mission have an impact across all activities in the school.

The high quality of Catholic life and mission is rooted in the dedication and commitment of the staff team. The headteacher provides exceptional leadership encouraging everyone in the school to promote its unique identity as a vibrant community with Gospel values at the centre. Teaching is very much seen as a vocation and ministry and this is heartfelt across the school – a reflection of the headteacher’s dedication, with her team, to provide the best Catholic education they can for the pupils. Governors are knowledgeable and experienced - they bring to the school an effective blend of support and challenge. They know their school well and understandably are very proud of its ethos, achievements and the place it holds in the community. Pupils take on leadership roles with enthusiasm and do this extremely well. With leadership being so effective at all levels, the school is well placed to continue to grow and develop with a strong capacity for improvement. The school’s mission statement holds a prominent place throughout the school and provides the foundation for the wide range of successes witnessed. The school has identified that a review of the mission statement is timely with a view to researching creative ways to revitalise the school.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

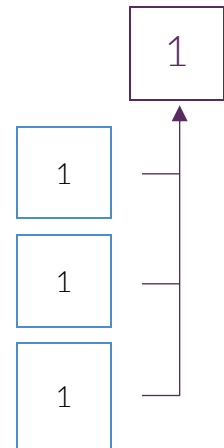
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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



Religious education is given the highest priority at Ss Michael and John's. Provision is outstanding. Consistently good teaching delivering a well-planned curriculum provides pupils with lessons and learning experiences which are varied and stimulating. Standards are very high and the quality of children's work reflects this. Teachers provide a very positive learning environment allowing pupils to make a valuable contribution to their own learning and that of others with confidence. Class sizes are relatively small lower down the school which helps give the children a strong start. Inward mobility is managed successfully to integrate new arrivals quickly into the school without any disruption. Religious education is well-resourced, the amount of time allocated to religious education meets the requirement of the 10% of the school curriculum. Consequently, pupils' achievement is outstanding. They love religious education. One pupil stated, 'we like every subject but RE is probably the best.' Pupils have high levels of engagement in lessons and are very keen to participate and share their own ideas. Ss Michael and John's is committed to a model of assessment for learning which encourages skilled self and peer evaluation, leading to good progress in lessons and questioning which promotes and internalises learning. Feedback in the pupils' books and in lessons has a considerable impact on the exceptional progress made. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of scripture and the liturgical year is excellent. They can eloquently describe the relevance of the gospels to their own lives. Scripture forms a central thread across all activities in the school.

The curriculum is based around the '*Come and See*' religious education scheme supplemented by a range of other resources, with a prominent place given to Catholic social teaching. In lessons, teachers use a variety of approaches to support the development of the pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills. These include questioning, periods of reflection, collaborative and

paired learning opportunities and the inclusion of creativity. There is a good variety of experiences for the children. Underpinning everything at Ss Michael and John's are the strong relationships which promote the pupils' exceptional moral, spiritual and personal development. Teachers' subject knowledge is profound. With their deep commitment and dedication to the subject, religious education takes a central and prominent place throughout the school. Much of this is evident in the celebration of pupils' work and the enjoyment the children have in their learning. Building on the substantial focus, which has taken place to increase the level of creativity in pupils' work, Ss Michael and John's are looking to enhance teachers' planning to bring greater variety and creativity to pedagogical approaches by developing longer and sustained learning programmes and projects. They are also looking to devise more ways for the children to take ownership in the direction of what they are learning.

Leadership in religious education is outstanding. All staff contribute to the centrality of religious education at Ss Michael and John's. The headteacher, supported by her capable leadership team, drive religious education forward ensuring that the *Religious Education Curriculum Directory* is adhered to, and updates and changes are implemented. High quality staff training is accessed - provided by Salford Diocese and other external providers. The school is outward looking and meets with the Catholic schools in its cluster (which is chaired by the headteacher). The school collaborates with the Romero Trust as well as taking advantage of opportunities provided by Salford Diocese. Such activities include the monitoring of pupils' work and outcomes and shared professional development. The governing board provide an impressive level of support and challenge for the school. They know their school well and have developed, with the headteacher, a vision and strategy which has led to this school developing as a highly successful place of learning. They ensure that effective policies are in place, that they are adhered to and reviewed appropriately. Despite changes in the leadership in religious education, the school continues to improve. This is a result of the determined approach of the headteacher, the willingness of staff to step up and take on a range of responsibilities and support and acknowledgement of the governing board.

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

Collective worship at Ss Michael and John's is outstanding and holds a central place in day-to-day school life. Pupils enjoy a wide variety of prayer experience and respond with high levels of enthusiasm and enjoyment. They pray with reverence and in line with the school's Catholic life and mission, they respect and value the contribution of staff and other pupils. Opportunities for prayer include whole school staff-led worship, class-based reflections, assemblies and liturgies provided by ambassadorial groups and the capable GIFT Team. Consideration is given to the liturgical year and the curriculum when choosing themes, although allowance is given for spontaneous prayer. All worship includes scripture, keeping gospel values at the heart and reinforcing the pupils' religious education and their knowledge, skills and understanding. Close links with the parish provide further experiences which enhance the spiritual growth of the pupils particularly relating to the sacramental programme. Mass is attended regularly throughout the year. Pupils engage with prayer, with attentiveness and value the times they have for silent moments, meditation and spontaneity. They sing with enthusiasm and joy – particularly the school choir who sang the Hail Mary with sign language. Older children in the school provide choreographed prayer which is deeply moving and powerful. Not only do pupils contribute to and plan their own liturgies, they are also developing as skilled evaluators. This provides an important tool for further improvement and development.

The high quality of collective worship features traditional prayers and prayer which is very personal. Such is the strength of relationships throughout the school, pupils share their thoughts and prayer in the knowledge that the adults and children that are with them deeply respect and value them. This has led to a real impact on their personal and spiritual growth. Pupils know about different faiths and welcome the traditions they bring. This is evidenced by the prayer mat in the school's prayer room. Pupils have the chance to pray both inside and

outside of school and know that one can give worship to God anywhere. A key feature of collective worship at Ss Michael and John's is the role that the adults play in promoting prayer and liturgy. It is seen as part of their own ministry and so pupils witness their teachers in prayer. As pupils grow in their journey of faith, they gain a deep understanding of their relationship with God. All classes have a prayer area. There is a prayer room and a prayer / peace garden.

Collective worship at Ss Michael and John's is outstanding because of the centrality it has throughout the school and the value placed on it throughout the whole community. The headteacher and the staff team drive improvements forward and take great joy in witnessing this aspect of pupils' spiritual growth. This leadership is exceptional. Underpinning the provision for prayer and liturgy is a policy statement which defines the school's approach. In turn, the heartfelt approach and skill of the staff bring this policy to life, rooted in the school's mission statement. The liturgical year frequently informs the themes for prayer as does the children's journey through the sacramental programme. Leaders and governors have identified the importance of professional development in this journey of improvement. This, and the work with other schools, has led to a staff team with a high skill set providing the foundation for further improvements. The school is deeply committed to effective self-evaluation. Pupils are becoming increasingly skilled and creative to make the experience of prayer and liturgy even better. Hence, the role of self-evaluation will form a key part of the next steps in the school's journey of improvement.

Information about the school

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| Full name of school | St Michael & St John's Catholic Primary School |
| School unique reference number (URN) | 119644 |
| School DfE Number (LAESTAB) | 8883744 |
| Full postal address of the school | St Michael & St John's Catholic Primary School, Lowergate, Clitheroe, BB7 1AG |
| School phone number | 01200422560 |
| Headteacher | Zoe Mabbott |
| Chair of Governors | Mark Evans |
| School Website | www.ssmj.lancs.sch.uk |
| Trusteeship | Diocesan |
| Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable) | N/A |
| Phase | Primary |
| Type of school | Voluntary Aided School |
| Admissions policy | N/A |
| Age-range of pupils | 4-11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Date of last denominational inspection | 9 th March 2016 |
| Previous denominational inspection grade | Outstanding |

The inspection team

Damian Harrison

Lead

Matt Lawrence

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 |