

St Mary & St Joseph's Roman Catholic Primary School

URN: 119513

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Bishop of Salford

12–13 June 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

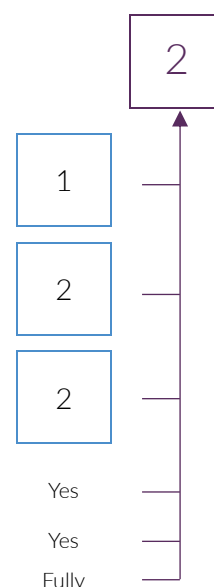
Collective worship (p.7)

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 meets the 10% requirement for teaching religious education, as laid down by the Bishop's Conference.
- There are currently no additional requirements for primary schools issued by the bishop of the Diocese of Salford.
- The school have fully addressed the areas for improvement identified in the last inspection that are applicable to CSI framework, however, some of them are not applicable.

What the school does well

- The welcome, inclusive nature and support offered to all faiths and backgrounds is exemplary at St Mary and St Joseph's.
- There is an authenticity to the mission of the school. This is clear in policy, the learning environment, and in seen in the actions of all stakeholders.
- Creativity in the strategies used to engage all pupils, no matter their faith or background, in elements of prayer and liturgy.
- Relationships between staff and pupils demonstrate the love and care in this school. No pupil is left behind. This positively impacts others taking this message into their everyday lives.

What the school needs to improve

- Enhance the confidence of staff and pupils through the school to deliver unique and meaningful collective worship in all environments which links to their SPIRIT values.
- Create more opportunities for pupils to plan, lead and evaluate prayer and liturgy.
- Continue to forge working relationships with local agencies to widen the offer of enrichment activities.

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

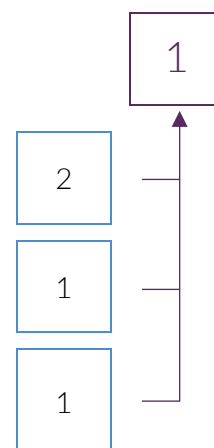
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

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



Family is at the centre of everything at St Mary and St Joseph's. All stakeholders are involved in ensuring this runs through everything they do. There is a clear mission of, 'Being different, belonging together in the family of God', which pupils clearly understand. There is a clear sense of respect and fight for justice and pupils are growing in confidence to actively contribute to enhance the Catholic mission of the school. For example, a Year 6 pupil recently raised over £400 for a charity close to his heart. A strong sense of family permeates throughout the school and the wider community, evidenced through a number of staff, parents and pupils expressing their thoughts on the school community being 'like a family'. There is a clear and strong connection between all pupils which is rooted in moral development. At St Mary and St Joseph's, all pupils know they are valued and cared for. The school's SPIRIT values are known and inspire pupils giving them a well-developed sense of respect for all faiths and backgrounds resulting in the behaviour of pupils being good in lessons and throughout the school. With providing more opportunities, pupils will be able to engage further in their own mission inspired by what they have learnt at school.

Staff embrace the school's mission statement, virtues and the SPIRIT values. It is seen as central to the life and work of the school having been revisited since the previous inspection. It has a significant impact upon the school with one parent saying there is, 'a clear sense of belonging in this community'. Everyone respects and embraces the mission of the church, and this is evidenced through the incredible welcome to the school for all. Staff show genuine love and care for their pupils and for the school environment. They are exemplary role models for their pupils and are deeply committed to this community. St Mary and St Joseph's is recognised as central to the local community by all. They all go above and beyond to ensure that all are valued.

Pupils of all cultures and faiths are warmly welcomed here with one pupil stating, 'We love coming here because we all love each other.' There is a real sense of care. The school environment effectively witnesses the school's mission and character celebrating the efforts of all and inspiring pupils to live in the likeness of Christ. Pastoral care for pupils is of the highest priority for the school and continues their mission that all are welcome. The school is blessed with a large environment and the communal spaces are given great care and attention, effectively bearing witness to its mission and the Catholic character of the school. Significant investment, such as the 4D immersion room, has been made by the school to ensure the pastoral needs of pupils and families are supported effectively whilst valuing their dignity. The school uses a variety of inspiring approaches to ensure that all pupils are able to access all aspects of school life. The provision for relationship and health education meets both statutory and diocesan requirements. The school has adopted the '*Life to the Full*' scheme of work with staff and has accessed relevant training.

Leaders at all levels are fully able to articulate the Church's mission in education, ensuring that pupils' development of their values and morals are taking the example of Jesus forward into their lives. Dedicated leadership from the headteacher, who is driven by her untiring approach to care for all, has created a school which is highly regarded by the wider community. The ambition of leaders at all levels is clear given their strong commitment to Catholic social teaching. They place their mission as one of the highest priorities. This is evidenced through the professional development of newer staff, given their profound understanding of what the school is trying to achieve in its mission. St Mary and St Joseph's clearly values the partnership with their parish priest and the role that he plays in supporting and enhancing the local community. Parents commented on the feelings of love, understanding, compassion, value and family. Staff at St Mary and St Joseph's feel their dignity is protected at all times and they feel that they are well supported by the leadership of the school through high quality CPD.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

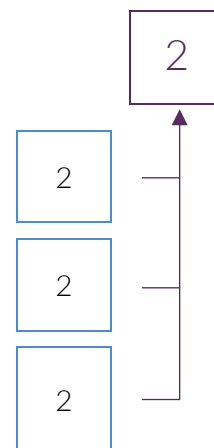
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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



Pupils at St Mary and St Joseph's are developing secure knowledge and understanding of the *Religious Education Curriculum Directory*. Pupils benefit from the clear structure of the lesson and embrace the use of scripture in the learning. They recognise how they are doing in these activities because of consistent application of the school's marking and feedback policy. Pupils at St Mary and St Joseph's demonstrate great care for all in their learning with elements of creativity. This was evident through a strong focus on religious artwork across all year groups, and pupils are beginning to think more critically about why certain pieces are chosen over others with a willingness to improve their knowledge and skills. Further opportunities to ask and answer thought-provoking questions in relation to these should now be provided. Pupils at St Mary and St Joseph's enjoy their learning in religious education, approaching their lessons with interest and are usually engaged in discussion. This results in behaviour in lessons being good. Attainment in religious education is in line with other core subjects. Pupils understand how well they achieve in religious education because teachers provide regular verbal feedback and suggestions.

Staff have improved their subject knowledge and confidence in teaching religious education due to high quality professional development. They are committed individuals, who link current learning to other faiths and cultures. To develop further, a more consistent approach of effective questioning would lead to greater outcomes for pupils. At St Mary and St Joseph's, there is a high amount of praise for the pupils' efforts and learning. It is a celebration which provides a level of motivation for the pupils to act. The culture of this verbal feedback for pupils is strong and celebrates their progress and attainment overtime. Teachers now need to ensure that all pupils are able to clearly articulate what they need to do in order to make further progress in their learning. Teachers have a profound understanding of the impact that religious education has

upon the moral and spiritual development of the pupils, whatever their faith. The use of resources has improved over time, shown in books, and resources are used effectively in all lessons. The use of double page posters in books gives clear and precise information to the reader.

Leaders and governors at St Mary and St Joseph's ensure that school curriculum is a faithful expression of the *Religious Education Curriculum Directory*. Religious education has full parity with other core curriculum subjects, including for professional development, resourcing, timetabling and staffing. Regular, high quality professional development takes place for staff, which is further tailored to the needs of less experienced staff and pupils. This is led by the resolute and conscientious subject leader who has a clear direction for the subject, working collaboratively with other leaders to improve this over time. Teaching and learning, through knowing more and remembering more, are clearly improving over time because of this. The school's curriculum is well planned to ensure that content is introduced systematically in an increasingly demanding way as learners progress. Religious education is effectively planned to meet the needs of different groups of pupils and secures coherence across different key stages and phases. There are good links with a wide range of agencies to promote pupils' learning, however, to develop further, leaders and governors could continue to enhance opportunities for enrichment activities in the wider community aimed to enhance pupils' understanding of all faiths and cultures in order to cement critical knowledge. Self-evaluation is informed through monitoring analysis and self-challenge. This is leading to good outcomes and shows the potential for outstanding outcomes to be achieved.

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 respond well to the experiences of prayer and liturgy provided by the school. They are respectful, no matter their faith or background, and join in willingly. Pupils spoke of their enjoyment and meaning of prayer stating, 'It gives us time to reflect on what we have heard in scripture'. Planning of prayer allow all pupils experiences to engage in creative ways. For example, in 'worship through song' time. To further embellish these experiences, pupils need to work with other pupils and staff on a more consistent basis and undertake liturgical ministries with increased confidence. In some of the prayer and liturgy observed, pupils were given the opportunity to reflect in silence and ponder on God's presence in their lives. For example, in Key Stage 2, the pupils gathered beautifully whilst reflecting on God's natural world. Pupils chose artefacts to place on the focal point, with one pupil selecting a candle and saying, 'Jesus is the light of the world.' Pupils in upper Key Stage 2 could assess the impact on themselves, with one pupil saying, 'It makes us want to do more in the community'. To further develop prayer and liturgy, there needs to be a consistent and progressive approach implemented, aimed to empower all pupils to plan, deliver and evaluate memorable and inspirational prayer experiences.

Prayer is central to the life of St Mary and St Joseph's. Pupils could articulate their daily pattern of prayer and its importance in their lives. The SPIRIT virtues assembly, linked to gospel values, successfully forms pupils through prayer. Staff have received training on planning and delivering of class prayer and liturgy, both from internal and external providers. They use appropriate scripture and art to attempt to prompt critical thinking. To continue to develop staff and pupils' confidence in the delivery of worship, giving further opportunity to explore and trial all forms of worship would have a greater impact on pupils and their own spiritual journey. The use of creativity in prayer is part of collective worship. Music and other art forms are being used to

enhance experiences for most pupils. Throughout the school, there are some attractive spaces to pray and reflect beautifully set up by staff and pupils. Utilising these, inside and outside, could provide a deeper impact in the experience of prayer. Staff support parents with prayer life and work well with the local parish for pupils to engage in prayer given the small number of Roman Catholic pupils in the school.

Leaders, including governors, recognise the importance of prayer for the community of St Mary and St Joseph's. Staff and pupils speak highly of their experience of prayer, including the use of traditional from the youngest children. At key times throughout the liturgical calendar, the pupils and staff gather in school to participate in Mass, and leaders ensure these are methodically planned in line with the liturgical year. The leaders at St Mary and St Joseph's provide high quality resources and CPD to their staff and they voice they feel fully supported in this process. Leaders, at all levels, recognise there are a variety of ways of praying that are part of the Catholic tradition, which includes all children as part of the multi-cultural community that the school serves. Next steps in this area are for leaders and governors to place a higher priority on the pupils' planning, delivering and evaluating of the quality and impact of prayer and liturgy. This needs to be embedded in a rigorous cycle of self-evaluation which includes the evaluative views of pupils in order to continuously improve the prayer life for the pupils at St Mary and St Joseph's.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Mary & St Joseph's Roman Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	119513
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	8893508
Full postal address of the school	St Mary & St Joseph's Roman Catholic Primary School, Bennington Street, Blackburn, BB2 3HP
School phone number	01254698301
Headteacher	Andrea Thomson
Chair of governors	Michael Ashcroft
School Website	http://www.stmaryandstjosephs.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	17 th June 2017
Previous denominational inspection grade	Good

The inspection team

Matt Lawrence
Louise Lavery

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