



# St John the Baptist Roman Catholic Primary School, a Voluntary Academy

URN: 147578

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Bishop of Salford

27–28 March 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

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

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

2

## Compliance statement

- 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 fully responded to the areas for improvement in the last inspection.

## What the school does well

- Authentic leadership of the passionate headteacher, supported by the dedicated team of staff and governors live out their mission statement of 'preparing the way'.
- The pastoral support for pupils and families foster a strong sense of community and a welcoming culture where everyone is valued.
- Catholic social teaching has a positive impact on pupils learning for life based on Gospel values.
- Teachers understanding of the importance of religious education ensure that pupils make good progress by the end of Key Stage 2.
- The richness of prayer and liturgy and the positive relationship with families and parish enhance the spiritual and moral development of pupils.

## What the school needs to improve

- Ensure all staff are prepared for the introduction of the new *Religious Education Directory* with a particular focus on developing the pupil's opportunities to think deeply and show independence in their learning.
- In preparation for the new *Prayer and Liturgy Directory*, establish robust monitoring and evaluation for prayer and liturgy to ensure that good practice is consistent throughout the school.

## 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**

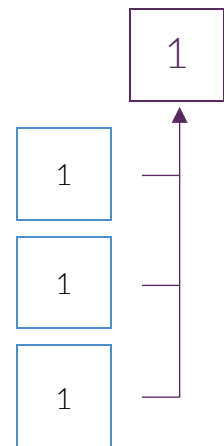
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

**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



Pupils at St John the Baptist actively and enthusiastically support the school's Catholic mission, are deeply engaged and benefit significantly from the Catholic life and mission of the school. They proudly express that the committed staff team has made them feel loved and cared for. The school cultivates a strong sense of belonging where pupils actively contribute to a community founded on justice, compassion, love, and forgiveness. This is evident in their enthusiastic involvement in various local, national, and international charities, demonstrating a lived commitment to loving their neighbour. Pupils exhibit a clear understanding of their worth as individuals created in God's image, fostering happiness, confidence, and security. They readily embrace opportunities to lead in response to Catholic Social Teaching one example is collecting money for Cafod world gifts. The active Pupil Chaplaincy team promotes the Catholic life of the school and encourage their peers to live out their faith. St. John the Baptist nurtures children who are committed ambassadors of their faith, actively living out the school's values in all they do.

The mission statement at St. John the Baptist is a guiding force, deeply understood and regularly referenced throughout all aspects of school life, truly 'preparing the way' not just through words but through actions. Staff go the extra mile, being approachable and visible outside of school hours. Many examples of this were given, showing support for the whole community and especially those who may be in need. Their dedication is clear, with one staff member stating, 'we are doing God's work'. This passion translates into positive role models for the students, who benefit from a supportive and loving environment. The strong sense of community and a culture of welcome are palpable, creating an inclusive environment where every child is equally valued. Pastoral care is a significant strength, with a clear commitment to the wellbeing of all pupils,

particularly the most vulnerable, underpinned by Catholic social teaching. The school offers a range of well-planned opportunities for the spiritual and moral development of both pupils and staff through its chaplaincy provision. The provision for Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) fully meets diocesan requirements and goes further, ensuring their comprehensive approach addresses local issues directly affect the community.

The leadership at St John the Baptist embodies an exceptional commitment to removing barriers for the whole community, allowing all to flourish. The inspirational guidance of the headteacher, who serves as a true example of servant leadership, ensures that Christ is at the centre of all the school does, one parent saying, 'she gives her heart'. The headteacher is supported by a dedicated team of leaders and governors who share this commitment and work demonstrate a clear understanding of and support for the Church's mission in education and diligently exercises its duty as guardians of the school's Catholic ethos. The pastoral lead tirelessly nurtures and supports pupils and families, one parent saying, "she is not just here for the pupil's she checks to see if we are ok too." The leader's vision for the school's Catholic identity is clearly articulated and effectively implemented, creating a vibrant and faith-filled environment. Leaders actively engage with the diocese and local church, fostering strong partnerships and ensuring the school is an integral part of the wider Catholic community. They prioritise Catholic social teaching in their decision-making and resource allocation, demonstrating their commitment to serving those in need. This dedicated team ensures that the Catholic identity, charism, and mission permeate all aspects of school life, making it a lived reality for the entire community. One parent describes, 'St. John the Baptist is one of a kind and deserves recognition.' Whilst another said, 'It offers support and kind words when life gets difficult'.

## Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

### Religious education key judgement grade

#### Pupil outcomes

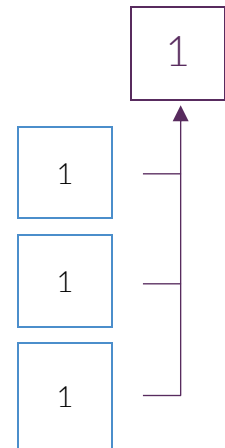
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

#### 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 a valued and effective part of the curriculum at St John the Baptist. As a result, pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), achieve good outcomes in all years and age-phases. Pupils demonstrate detailed knowledge, understanding, and skills that exemplify the learning required by the *Religious Education Curriculum Directory* and as a result make progress that is in line with or above other core curriculum subjects within the school. Religious literacy is a strength, forming engaged young people, effectively using their knowledge, understanding, and skills. Consequently, they are particularly aware of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life. Pupils can speak fluently and confidently about what they have learned in religious education, using key concepts. For example, in Year 6, children listened to a passage of scripture and then wrote modern day news report; and in Year 4, children are using abandoned, depressed, overwhelmed in their response to artwork. They are proficient in using subject-specific vocabulary and are developing their questioning skills, showing enthusiasm for the subject. Pupils are provided with opportunities to explore carefully planned questions, fostering their curiosity and desire to deepen their understanding. They approach lessons with great interest and as a result behaviour for learning is very good. Their work in religious education is of a good quality and is valued within the school, with a variety of creative activities being promoted. Further planned development for pupils to express their learning in a variety of ways would allow for greater independence and individuality.

Teachers demonstrate a high level of confidence based on authentic subject knowledge and teaching expertise, appropriate to the phase in which they are teaching. They demonstrate a deep commitment and high expectations for religious education, communicating this highly effectively to their pupils and is linked to pupils' current assessment. Teachers carefully plan

opportunities for children to learn in a variety of ways. For the younger children, active learning was seen to be an effective method to retell the events of Palm Sunday; and in lower Key Stage 2, children responded to religious artwork giving their response to The Passion. Teachers use a variety of questioning techniques, celebrate pupil effort and provide feedback to aid progress. Opportunities to make links with the wider curriculum and giving time for more reflection in order for pupils to further develop their understanding should now be prioritised. Teachers ensure pupils know how well they are doing, and of what they need to do to improve. This results in pupils making good progress by the end of Key Stage 2. They have a clear understanding of how well they are doing and of what they need to do to improve,

Leaders and governors ensure that the school curriculum for religious education is a faithful expression of the *Religious Education Curriculum Directory*, and that religious education has parity with other core subjects. Leaders and governors are committed to securing regular, quality professional development in religious education for all practitioners. The subject leader has a clear vision for the subject and supports teaching and learning along with the senior leadership team. New teachers to St. John the Baptist feel supported and as a result quality teaching and learning is seen by all. The curriculum is planned to ensure sequential progression and adaptations meet the needs of different pupils where needed. Excellent links are forged with other agencies and the wider community to provide a wide range of enrichment activities such as visitors from other faiths and organisations such as Caritas and Cafod. The self-evaluation of religious education is thorough, leading to strategic actions. Leaders and governors are committed to ensuring that religious education meets the needs of all children using regular monitoring to evaluate religious education, which includes book looks, lesson observations and pupil voice.

## 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 at St John the Baptist value the experiences of prayer and participate enthusiastically in prayer and liturgy provided by the school, including Key Stage celebrations and whole school retreats. Pupils understand the different times of the liturgical year and celebrate such times as Advent, Lent and Marian reflection in October as well as many more significant times of celebrations during the year. Pupils participate actively in prayer, by reflecting in silence and joining in community prayer with confidence. The Salford singing programme has developed confidence to pray in song and pupils of all ages regularly enjoy singing. Appropriate to their age and capacity, they understand a variety of ways of praying that are part of the Catholic tradition, and they can confidently articulate ways in which prayer influences their daily lives in school. One child said, 'Jesus asks us to treat others as you would be treated'. The chaplaincy team, who are well supported by the adult leader of chaplaincy, plan class pray time. Pupils are now ready to be more independent to plan and deliver prayer and liturgy.

Appropriately planned prayer and liturgy are central to the life of the school and are part of routine gatherings for pupils, staff and leaders. The school benefits from excellent links with the parish, the Parish Priest and deacon, who speak highly of the children's preparation and involvement in Masses and services. Seasonally appropriate scripture passages are the heart of prayer and liturgy. Staff, including senior leaders, are committed to providing quality prayer and liturgy experiences for the pupils. The Eucharist is celebrated in whole school and Key Stage 2 class Masses, and Holy Days of Obligation are celebrated with Mass where parishioners are invited. Staff, including senior leaders, are models of good practice to other staff and pupils as participants in and leaders of prayer and liturgy. Relevant staff are skilled in helping pupils to plan and lead well-constructed prayer and liturgy, drawing on their understanding of liturgical norms. There are prayer focus areas around the school, and each class has a prayer table

reflecting the liturgical year. The school has a flourishing partnership with families and the local parish and includes them in the prayer life of the school. There is a small, yet beautiful, dedicated prayer room which is well used and cherished. The outdoor sacred space has a special place in the school community where they can worship amid God's wonderful world.

Leaders and governors ensure the school has a policy on prayer and liturgy that is accessible and useful to relevant staff who use it often when preparing prayer and liturgy. They have an annual plan of provision for collective worship. However, more training for staff on how the skills in this are reflective of pupils' age and capacity is needed. The school calendar dedicates time to key dates in the liturgical year, including Holy Days of Obligation, and provides opportunities to celebrate the Eucharist and the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Leaders skilfully plan participation in prayer and liturgy which gives meaning to the action that supports their local community. Leaders have provided professional development for all staff that incorporates liturgical formation and the planning of prayer and liturgy. Relevant staff work well with families to include them in the prayer life of the school and seek to work well with the local parish to help pupils participate more fully in the liturgy in many ways. For example, the travelling crib, Advent and Lent journey bags help families to pray together. In preparation for the new prayer and liturgy directory leaders should establish robust monitoring and evaluation for prayer and liturgy to ensure that good practice is consistent throughout the school.



## Information about the school

Full name of school	St John the Baptist Roman Catholic Primary School, a Voluntary Academy
School unique reference number (URN)	147578
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	8882015
Full postal address of the school	St John the Baptist Roman Catholic Primary School, a Voluntary Academy, Thames Avenue, Burnley, BB10 2PZ
School phone number	01282438120
Headteacher	Helen Bibby
Chair of local governing body	Michael Mulrooney
School Website	<a href="http://www.stjohnsrcprimary.co.uk/">www.stjohnsrcprimary.co.uk/</a>
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	Romero Catholic Academy Trust
Phase	Primary
Type of school	Academy
Admissions policy	Non-selective
Age-range of pupils	4-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	June 2017
Previous denominational inspection grade	Outstanding

## The inspection team

Jane Myerscough  
Susan Lyonette

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

