



# CATHOLIC SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

THE NATIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE INSPECTION OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS, COLLEGES AND ACADEMIES



## St John Vianney RC School

URN: 106167

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Bishop of Salford

03 June 2026 – 04 June 2026

### 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 RE

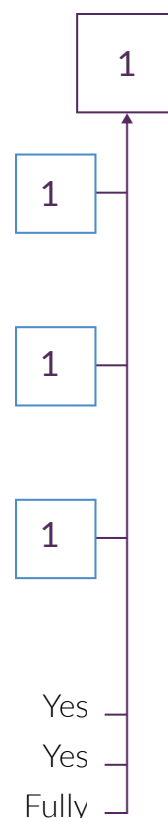
#### Collective worship (p.7)

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



## What the school does well

- St John Vianney RC School lives its mission by celebrating the gifts of each member of its community.
- The school lives a vocational and highly successful commitment to the specialist needs of its pupils, thereby making a unique contribution within the Diocese of Salford and beyond.
- Catholic social teaching is at the heart of all that is undertaken.
- There is committed inclusivity between Church, school and home partnerships working together for the common good.
- Governors, staff, pupils and parents show the highest levels of pride, appreciation and loyalty for their school.

## What the school needs to improve

- Provide more pupils with increased opportunities to lead prayer and liturgy independently, particularly during class time.

## 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

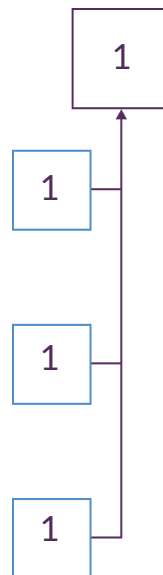
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

#### 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 speak confidently about how they live their mission. One referred to the school as a community where because 'two or three are gathered together, Jesus is here.' The same pupil cited the golden cushion used in the chapel to symbolise the presence of the Lord alongside each of us. Pupils refer with affection to the levels of care received and compare this to Jesus' command 'to be kind and respectful'. They show impressive knowledge and understanding of how to live by right behaviour and to respect, care for and forgive others. They link this to Catholic social teaching by speaking about how they respond to the needs of others; connecting this to school life through their support of Cafod Live Simply, Operation Christmas Child, harvest events and more. Their behaviour in class and around the school is first-class, demonstrating a sense of community and fun. Pupils listen to and are supportive of each other. They have boundless affection for the school chaplain and for the open invitation to be part of Growing in Faith Together (GIFT) which is an active means of assisting chaplaincy throughout the school and also participating in the Catholic nationally accredited *Faith in Action Award*.

Since the last inspection, the school has revisited the mission statement which reflects the uniqueness of the St John Vianney community. The content is understood and lived. Consequently, its impact on Catholic life is best shown by the dedication of staff in contributing to pupils' lives, which includes participation in residential experiences and much extra-curricular time. This is a place of unlimited inclusivity for those of all faiths, religions and world views, which is marked by the call to 'be involved and to make a positive difference'. Members of staff are exemplary role models for their pupils through personal skills and

conduct, as well as the understanding and practice of holistic pastoral care within this unique environment, that includes a whole range of contributing therapists and specialists. The school campus, an attractive and developing new build, complements its specialist care both in design and through sensitive planning. The latter is best expressed by the chapel, laid out and located through knowledge of and empathy for its purpose. Staff are part of the chaplaincy team, upholding the mission by supporting the pupils. The content of relationships, sex and health education is in accordance with Church teaching. There is careful planning and delivery.

One parent writes, 'I hope St John Vianney is recognised as the beacon of inclusivity that all our schools strive to be'. Returns from staff and parents' make reference to this 'Christ centred community' where 'The minute you walk through the door you can feel the faith in this school, it's a beautiful place to work in every day.' This is due to the shared management rooted in care for the wellbeing of staff and commitment to the school specialism. The latter fully informs the whole Catholic curriculum. The self-evaluation is detailed, practical and subject to regular monitoring and evaluation. There is regular professional development for staff with a commendable induction process for new members. The headteacher is at the helm in leading Catholic life and mission at St John Vianney. Together with his leadership team, chaplain and governors they 'foster an engaging, nurturing and safe environment, within which children can thrive and achieve their full potential'. The chair of governors, a priest of the diocese, speaks of shared leadership, with sharp and faith-filled wisdom that informs policies and practices within school and through active diocesan partnership. Supporting local dioceses and parishes experience the same sense of belonging, as do parents.

## Religious education

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 key judgement grade

#### Pupil outcomes

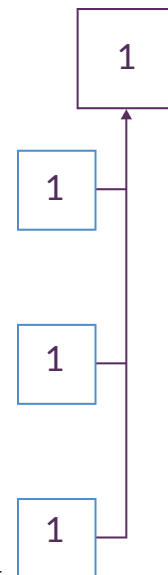
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

#### 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



At St John Vianney religious education lives its mission to ensure 'every child and young person is highly valued and encouraged to give their best'. Pupils according to their diverse specialist needs achieve best possible outcomes. They use prior learning well and connect it with their current progress. Pupils are encouraged to reflect on their efforts and to share what they have learned. There is an impressive level of curiosity and questioning as they remain on task and maintain interest. Pupils are motivated to succeed because, with assistance, their work is well presented and carefully marked to ensure they are aware of what is good and what could be done better. They appreciate the structured level of self-assessment because they want to be included in their learning. This impacts upon their motivation because the care invested in them ensures progress and a sense of purpose. Asked why they enjoy their work one replied, 'it's because we do hard work and can have a laugh as well'. They are particularly affirmed by their focus on faith through action because it gives meaning to religious education. They are keen to say how that action is carried out and to provide examples.

Religious education is taught with care and enthusiasm by confident teachers well qualified in meeting the needs of these specialist pupils. Learning support assistants too form an essential component in the entire package for teaching and learning in religious education that strives to ensure pupils are 'empowered to enrich their own lives and those of others'. In classrooms every minute counts. Various styles are used to support independent and whole group progress. A range of imaginative strategies keep pupils highly engaged. Those with

more complex needs are supported to show their understanding. The most able are challenged to think and respond more deeply. This was particularly evident in a Key Stage 5 lesson on Buddhism where students explored in-depth coverage of the relationship between happiness and suffering. Planning of content provides time for reflection and recall of prior learning. This time also provides the essential space for teachers to challenge the pupils to apply their work to everyday life through skilful questioning that evokes thoughtful answers. Many of their responses relate to the wider curriculum and to their own spiritual and moral development. There is ongoing celebration of successful work ably enriched by an emphasis on creative and written presentation.

Leaders and governors have enriched religious education since the last inspection to ensure a team of staff, 'dedicated to fostering independence and educating resilient, lifelong learners'. The line manager and subject leader provide vocational vision, professional expertise and enthusiasm which is affirmed by leaders, governors and staff. They have been invited by the diocese to advise other schools seeking their expertise. In Key Stage 3 a new adapted curriculum reflects the branches of the *Religious Education Directory*. In Key Stage 4 a new course of study has been externally verified. In Key Stage 5 there is similar external verification with planning in place for Level 1 accreditation. Preparation for each key stage has been subject to diocesan consultation. The content of the whole religious education curriculum is underpinned by the focus on faith through action, which has amplified pupils' knowledge and understanding of Catholic social teaching. There is a new and efficient assessment framework that is well balanced between teacher and self-assessment, meets the needs of the pupils and maintains their motivation. Religious education has full parity with other core subjects. There is regular professional development provided by the school and diocese. There is consistent and challenging monitoring and evaluation.

## Collective worship

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

### Collective worship key judgement grade

#### Pupil outcomes

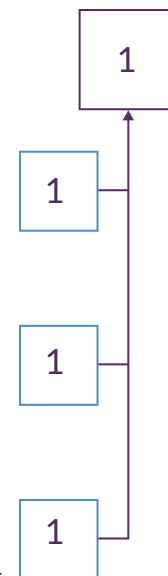
How well pupils participate in and respond to the school's collective worship

#### 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



'Jesus tells us to be kind and respectful', he said thoughtfully, 'and that is what we think about every time we come together to pray'. This fact engages one pupil deeply and similar conversations show that others think hard during prayer and liturgy, particularly about ways in which they can put their thoughts into action. Pupils reflect in silence. They use a variety of different ways of praying, including effective use of scripture, creativity and music. They are well used to singing joyfully. School should continue to increase pupils' opportunities to pray in a range of new styles. Pupils work well with others when planning liturgies together, particularly in the larger groups. During inspection they read during Mass. In the chaplaincy celebration of the Word, they also sang very well and had taken part in planning the preparation. In class they know how to use the symbolism of light and scripture. St John Vianney has a programme for training the chaplaincy group to enable pupils to take full leadership of prayer and liturgy. This should continue with a focus on enabling more pupils to lead independently particularly during class time. Pupils know their strengths and would appreciate this extra dimension.

The importance of prayer and liturgy is understood by staff. They speak about upholding Catholic life and mission by ensuring pupils have time to pray and reflect in a wide range of situations that include the sad and joyful times. They see it as a vital time for gathering the community in class or in the chapel, which is used weekly for voluntary Mass as well as a range of other services and private prayer. It is an attractive oasis of peace and calm. Each classroom has a prayer focus. Well chosen passages of scripture are used according to the time and season of the Church Year. Leaders and staff, for the most part, model exemplary

practice. There is provision for families and friends to attend, a fact that is widely appreciated. The chaplain, supported by his religious community of Spiritans, is continually on hand. This impacts on wider participation not least because pupils and staff are inspired by his presence. The chaplain personally provides a wide range of sacramental and personal consultation that includes members of the wider community. Consequently, this whole offer of provision emphasises the importance of prayer, liturgy and worship in the life of the school.

Leaders, governors, the chaplain and members of the religious education team manage provision efficiently and in accordance with the liturgical year. The pillars of prayer provide a structured schedule supported by prayer prompts for staff. The content includes a balanced programme for receiving the sacraments and themes from Advent onwards. Leadership ensures regular training for staff, which takes place each term and within the induction programme for new staff. There is additional regular diocesan training. There are quality resources that support the weekly themes and these can be adapted by staff who wish to further enrich what is available using their own creativity. Budgeting for training, and resources is generous and this is reflected in the quality of what is available. Monitoring and evaluation is undertaken through learning walks and by a process for quality assurance, the latter introduced at the beginning of the current academic year. Pupils are included in the process. This has enabled the identification and sharing of best practice amongst staff. It has also been useful for monitoring resources. The governing body includes expertise in prayer, liturgy and worship, which reinforces the school's determination to make it a shared experience in upholding Catholic life and mission.

## Information about the school

Full name of school	St John Vianney RC School
School unique reference number (URN)	106167
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	3587503
Full postal address of the school	Rye Bank Road, Firwood, Stretford, Manchester, M16 0EX
School phone number	0161 881 7843
Headteacher or Head of School	Mr Aidan Moloney
Chair of Governors	Rev Fr Dr Gerard Fieldhouse-Byrne
School Website	<a href="http://www.stjohnvianneyschool.co.uk">www.stjohnvianneyschool.co.uk</a>
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Phase	All Through
Type of school	Non-maintained special school
Admissions policy	Non Selective
Age-range of pupils	5 - 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed (Sixth Form: Mixed)
Date of last denominational inspection	26 June 2019
Previous denominational inspection grade	Outstanding

## The Inspection Team

Paul Anthony Mannings Lead

Ann Bradbury

## 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