

St John's Catholic Primary School

URN: 119681

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Archbishop of Liverpool

14–14 November 2024

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

2

Religious education (p.5)

The quality of curriculum religious education

2

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 each of the general norms for religious education laid down by the Bishops' Conference.
- The school is fully compliant in its application of the above norms that fulfil the requirements of the Archbishop of Liverpool.
- The school has addressed all areas for improvement identified in the last inspection.

What the school does well

- Relationships at all levels are nurtured and valued, and all members of the school community feel safe, loved and respected.
- The new headteacher is an inspirational leader for all members of the school community.
- The revised *Religious Education Directory* has been successfully introduced across the whole school, together with a prioritised approach to religious vocabulary and creative strategies for learning.
- Teaching assistants are well deployed to ensure that pupils receive excellent support for learning in religious education.
- The school has a strong network of governors who ensure that Catholic life and links with the local parish are given high priority.

What the school needs to improve

- Review the mission statement and its aims with all members of the school community.
- Provide systematic implementation of a two-year planning and assessment cycle for religious education which meets the needs of all learners.
- Implement training to ensure the successful introduction of the new *Prayer and Liturgy Directory*.

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

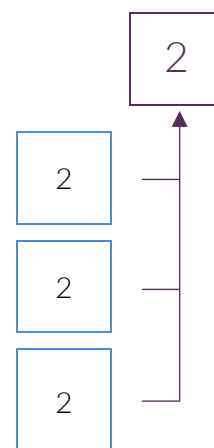
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

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 clearly articulate and understand that they are valued and cared for. They feel safe, secure and loved. Pupils know they are all unique individuals; they say that all their names are known at St John's. Pupils seek opportunities to grow in virtue. They take responsibility in caring for their beautiful outdoor environment and forest school. They look after their common home through litter picking. Pupils understand their responsibility to care for others, for example by supporting the people from the local care home. A governor said, 'The children are ambassadors for the Catholic faith, and they live out their mission'. This can be seen in the great sense of respect pupils have for each other. Everyone is welcomed and included. Relationships are strong and very special at St John's. Pupils say that there is no bullying and explain that they like to share and make new friends. This is evident from their excellent behaviour and attitudes as they play together. Pupils would now benefit from revisiting their school's mission statement, so that they can clearly articulate how they are inspired by the Catholic life of St. John's.

Staff at St John's are committed to living out their Catholic mission in all aspects of school life. Charitable fund raising includes organising coffee mornings for *MacMillan* and the *Big Lent Walk* for *Cafod*. The culture of welcome places Christ at the centre of St John's. This school is a supportive and joyful Catholic family. Staff are positive role models which is evident from their relationships with each other during daily interactions. A member of staff explained, 'Our school has a feel of love and compassion and as a staff, we feel heard'. The school environment reflects the Catholic mission, *In God's love, we shine together*. This can be seen in the lovely pledge tree in the welcoming sacred space at the school entrance. Here visitors can pause to reflect on how the school is working towards the *Cafod Live Simply Award*. Provision for relationships, sex and health education meets statutory and archdiocesan requirements. The school has fully mapped

out its learning programme across the year, which is linked to religious education and other curriculum areas.

Governors uphold and live out the Catholic mission of St John's. They see themselves as guardians of the faith and carry out this responsibility with great love and commitment. The school has effective strategies for engaging with parents, for example, through the revised newsletter which shares scripture and Gospel themes. The school interacts very well with the local parish and has an excellent relationship with the parish priest. Together they provide opportunities to support vulnerable families, particularly at Christmas, through the hardship fund and the *Reverse Advent Calendar*. Leaders and governors are witnesses to the gospels in the decisions they make, which benefit staff and pupils. They are considerate of staff well-being whilst ensuring the whole curriculum has religious education at its core. Leadership overall is highly effective in analysing strengths and areas for development. Leaders are ambitious for the future development of their school, as they look to revisit, review and strengthen understanding of their mission statement. Training and support for staff who are new in role, is given high priority. One member of staff said, 'I am lucky to be surrounded by such inspirational people'.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

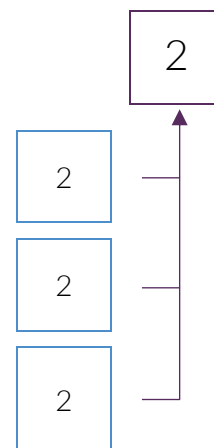
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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 work well independently and from the earliest years they are motivated and concentrate effectively. They produce good work, remembering and understanding more, over time. However, not all pupils are able to identify and express the progress they are making. Pupils have a good and growing religious vocabulary. Children in reception can articulate the nativity story. They use a range of practical activities to explore how the angels visited the shepherds. One child said that this was very special because Jesus is, 'The light of the world'. Pupils' work is creatively presented. They enjoy a variety of ways to express their ideas, for example by using water colours to respond to music and re-interpreting scripture in words and through actions. Older pupils are knowledgeable about the Bible and can locate scripture passages. They know about St. Paul's letters and that the Bible has many different books. They know about the preparation undertaken by lay people in preparation for Mass. All pupils access learning opportunities, which ensures their success. Pupils' behaviour in lessons is very good. Attainment in religious education is consistently high and in-line with other core subjects.

Teachers have a good understanding of how pupils learn in religious education. Planning is linked to pupils' current assessment, which ensures they learn well. Where teachers carefully adapt questions and tasks, learning is deep. Older pupils benefit from the teachers' expert subject knowledge as they explore their *Jesse Tree* and discover how Jesus is descended from the line of David. Teachers consistently praise and encourage all pupils, resulting in high levels of motivation. All adults create an atmosphere of purposeful learning. In some lessons, a *golden box* is used to reveal special objects, which further promotes curiosity and interest. Space and time for reflection is given during lessons, which develops pupils' spirituality, for example, when listening to music or sharing artwork. The classroom environments celebrate pupils' work across the different themes. Well-organised and attractive displays support new learning and

vocabulary. Teaching assistants are deployed effectively and are skilful in providing good support for pupils' learning.

Leaders and governors have ensured that the curriculum for religious education across all year groups reflects the *Religious Education Directory*. The knowledgeable subject leader is totally committed to the training and development of all staff. This means that teachers are increasingly well placed to implement and embed a new and challenging curriculum. Staff are supported in the development of planning for religious education through work with a local cluster group of schools and through visits to learn about best practice. There is an openness to learning together, as one staff member said, 'As a practising Catholic, I am asked for my thoughts and opinions on initiatives and ideas, and this makes me feel valued'. Governors meet regularly with the headteacher to evaluate standards and identify priorities. Planned spending in religious education is in line with other core subjects. There has been an investment of time and funding to enable staff to attend archdiocesan training for religious education. The headteacher has an inspiring vision for the continuing improvement of the subject. There is a well-planned, sequential curriculum that meets the needs of all pupils. Consequently, teaching is consistently good.

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 at St John's. They welcome the Gospel joyfully and respond in silent prayer. Pupils can describe parts of the liturgical year, such as Advent and Christmas. Newly introduced *Worship Warriors* lead readings of the scripture and prayer responses during prayer and liturgy. With support they plan their worship. However, evaluation is at an early stage of development. The very youngest children prepare for worship by setting up a focus table with a Bible, cross and a green cloth. They place a *Do not disturb* sign on the classroom door because they know this is a special time. They take this responsibility very seriously. Pupils listen carefully to the Word of God. They are respectful and reverent. Themes such as remembrance are sensitively celebrated by pupils, for example, by holding a poppy close to their hearts when remembering those who have died. Younger pupils respond through calm breathing, described as, *breathing in and out, the peace of God*. Older pupils are inspired to go forth, to be kind and caring towards others. One pupil said, 'I will be a good role model for others, so when they grow up, they will be good role models too'.

Appropriately planned prayer and liturgy is central to the life of St. John's. Time for ending the day in prayer is particularly important to pupils. During prayer and worship, the richness of the Catholic tradition is celebrated through symbol and gesture, for example, when making the sign of the cross and greeting the Gospel. Appropriate scripture passages are chosen, which reflect the liturgical season and are central to acts of worship. A wider range of creative ways to respond to the Gospel would enhance prayer and worship further. The headteacher has introduced *Worship Warriors* and further improved resources to enhance worship. Prayer spaces are provided in classrooms and other areas of the school. These areas display traditional prayers with photographs and religious images. Bibles, crosses, candles and artefacts are readily available. Pupils attend Mass, weekly in church and at special times in the liturgical year. Parents

are increasingly involved in the prayer life of St John's. The newsletter includes links to Mass times. There is a clear focus on the weekly scripture and advice for parents in how to approach the Gospel with their children. Parents are invited to celebrations, for example the Harvest Assembly.

The school's policy on prayer and liturgy is well-formulated and fit for purpose. There is a carefully prepared calendar of themes for prayer and liturgy across the year. The Eucharist is celebrated each week and reconciliation is available at key times in the Liturgical Year. The parish priest ensures that sacramental preparation is available to pupils and provides support for parents and carers. Staff have received training in the planning of prayer and liturgy and fully understand its importance. Leaders should now develop guidelines for building up the skills and levels of pupil participation in prayer and liturgy. Training days for staff often begin with Mass, and governors pray together at their meetings. The headteacher's prayer and worship provides an inspiring start each week. This energises the whole community who build on her example. Governors have attended Mass and gatherings for prayer, liturgy and worship. They are knowledgeable about the strengths and areas for improvement. Governors have an accurate appreciation of the current provision and are fully committed to further development.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St John's Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	119681
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	8883800
Full postal address of the school	St John's Catholic Primary School, Chapel Lane, Lathom, Burscough, L40 7RA
School phone number	01704893523
Headteacher	Claire Smith
Chair of governors	Alex Rimmer
School Website	www.burscough.lancs.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	4-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	7 th February 2018
Previous denominational inspection grade	1

The inspection team

Christine Mason
David Delaney

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