

INSPECTION REPORT

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**Inspection carried out Under Canon 806
and in accordance with Section 48 of the Education Act 2005**

Name of School **St John Vianney School**
Rye Bank Road, Stretford, Manchester, M16 0EX

Inspection date 26th June 2019

Reporting Inspectors Sheldon Logue and Patricia Ganley

Type of school	Special
URN	10017770
Age range of pupils	5-19
Number on roll	108
Appropriate authority	The Governing Board
Chair of Governors	Fr Gerard Fieldhouse-Byrne
Headteacher	Aidan Moloney
Religious Education Subject Leader	Julie Garfin
Date of previous inspection	12 th -13 th April 2011

The Inspection judgements are:	Grade	Explanation of the Grades
Overall effectiveness of the school	1	1 = Outstanding 2 = Good 3=Requires Improvement 4 = Inadequate
Catholic Leadership	1	
The Catholic Life of the school (incorporating Welcome, Welfare and Witness)	1	
Religious Education (incorporating Word)	1	
Collective Worship	1	
The following pages provide reasons to support these judgements		

CHARACTERISTICS AND CONTEXT OF THE SCHOOL

St John Vianney RC Special School is a Salford Diocesan managed school that caters for pupils with significant learning needs. It is the only Special School in the Diocese and has a unique offer and status. All learners have EHCPs and the school provides bespoke provision. Children currently attend from Salford, Trafford, Manchester, Rochdale, Cheshire East, Stockport, St Helen's and Tameside. The school aims to provide an excellent education for all learners and fully embraces the teachings of the Catholic faith. St John Vianney is a truly inclusive school and of the 108 learners, 22% are Roman Catholic, a further 34 are Christian and 35 stated they are of 'no' religious background. Over 47% of the learners are disadvantaged. The School is nationally accredited for its excellent ASC provision. In 2017, the school secured an Ofsted 'good' rating, and the Leadership team were recognised for its '*maintenance of a good quality of education since the last inspection*'. A new Headteacher was appointed and took up his tenure in September 2018.

THE KEY STRENGTHS OF THE SCHOOL INCLUDE:

- **A truly inclusive school community which seeks to meet the academic, emotional and social needs of the pupils which are significantly diverse and complex.**
- **A highly positive school ethos built on Gospel values and high-quality relationships between pupils and staff which results in a strong sense of togetherness.**
- **An exceptionally strong pastoral system for all pupils led by caring and dedicated staff which manifests itself in genuine love for the pupils at St John Vianney, especially those with the greatest need.**
- **Highly effective partnerships with parents and carers which ensure that St John Vianney is a special place to be.**

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL IS OUTSTANDING

St John Vianney is an outstanding school that is unique within the Diocese of Salford, where all pupils have EHC Plans. Although this creates many challenges, the school remains faithful to its mission as a Catholic school. Furthermore, it is these complex needs that inspires this community. There is a very strong vision for continuous development from the headteacher and other leaders. All stakeholders are united in their commitment to the pupils and dedicate themselves to ensure that there is a distinct Catholic learning environment that nurtures everyone to develop their 'talents to the full'. Genuine care and love for the pupils is the highest priority and the 'voice of the child' underpins safeguarding. Welfare is demonstrated daily through excellent pastoral systems. Pupils feel safe and enjoy coming to school. The pupils here are amazing and fully participate in all aspects of the schools' mission. This is most notably demonstrated by the active chaplaincy team which is thriving and drives the liturgical life of the school. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the caring environment and provision; St John Vianney embodies a Catholic family where all are loved. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is fully embedded across all areas of the curriculum and the use of sign language throughout the day being embraced by pupils and staff is a classic example. The governors stated that policies reflected the aims of the school which were to ensure pupils were 'safe, happy and well looked after'. The school's development plan is coherent and ambitious for the community.

THE QUALITY OF CATHOLIC LEADERSHIP IS OUTSTANDING

The headteacher is passionate that St John Vianney provides a truly Catholic and inclusive education and under his stewardship he has created an environment that is underpinned by love and nurture. This ensures a vibrant witness to the Catholic faith. He is supported in this endeavour by his able senior leadership team who work closely with him to realise the schools' vision. Governors are committed, proactive and they professionally challenge the leadership; being complacent is not the St John Vianney way. Leaders consult, involve and engage parents to form a true working partnership. The Religious Education subject leader is ambitious for all and promotes the highest quality of provision for the pupils. Her work at Diocesan level continues to grow and the school is now the lead school in ensuring proper assessment for pupils with special needs. It is clear from self-evaluation and planning documents that leaders know the strengths of the school, but equally which

aspects can improve further. At all leadership levels the mantra at this School is *'We are in this together to ensure the pupils get the best education possible. Any barriers we will overcome as a team'*. Staff are extremely proud of the community and that it is a safe, happy and purposeful community. Safeguarding is prominent. Above all, the leaders of St John Vianney are proud that celebration permeates all that they do. This is both recognised and appreciated by pupils and parents. Undoubtedly, this is a community where the teachings of Christ are at the centre.

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL (incorporating Welcome, Welfare and Witness) IS OUTSTANDING

The quality of welcome is outstanding. A real 'sense of belonging' is engendered through listening to pupils and a strong parental induction process. Hospitality and openness shown to visitors is exceptional. As one member of staff eloquently said *"you can feel the school. I believe that's the Holy Spirit saying that this is a special place – come and enjoy it"*. Welfare is at the heart of St John Vianney as demonstrated by positive relationships and the 'togetherness' of pupils, staff, parents and governors is highly evident and lived out in practice. One member of staff said, *"you need to have a big heart to work here"* and this epitomised that staff viewed working here as their vocation. Embedded partnerships with a plethora of external agencies results in exceptional pastoral care. Therapists, CARITAS social worker and chaplain are great examples of this. External accreditation, for example, by the National Autism Society acknowledges the positive work of the community. Celebrating diversity within the school is a strength. Pupils feel valued, are happy and confident to bear witness to their faith. St John Vianney is a place of hope and stability where building confidence and self-esteem is vital. A great example of celebration and building confidence was when pupils proudly showcased their work through a film and had a real sense of achievement. Celebration of faith is rewarded with accolades; in 2018 St John Vianney was presented with the Bishop's award for their work on their social justice programme and in 2019 the school won the national 'Cardinal Hume award' from the 'millionminutes' organisation for their pupil led charity work. The large chaplaincy team bears witness to Christ by supporting CAFOD or Revive, Cornerstone and helping those less fortunate, such as the homeless. Furthermore, charitable outreach is accompanied by direct engagement with the groups they are trying to help, an example being inviting in asylum seekers to tell their story. The school prayer was written by staff and embraces the values of the mission statement.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (incorporating Word) IS OUTSTANDING

The St John Vianney Mission is known and developed at all levels. Scripture reflects the Catholic ethos and is prominently displayed. The Religious Education department is led by a committed leader who has the highest expectations for all pupils. The Religious Education subject leader currently coordinates 'The Diocesan Certificate in Religious Education' for KS4 and KS5 learners, which assesses Religious Education progress for pupils with SEND or additional needs. The Religious Education department is appropriately staffed and the quality of Religious Education teaching is strong and meets the needs of the pupils. Many pupils don't have natural empathy but the curriculum educates them to *"walk with Christ"*. In a Religious Education lesson, the parable of the good Samaritan was a great example of challenging pupils on 'big issues' through thought-provoking questions. Gospel values were a central tenet of these discussions. Creative teaching, for example, by using Drama, made the content readily accessible. Religious Education is at the core of the curriculum and there are coherent plans to improve the rigour of assessment and undertake major reviews of curriculum coverage. Lesson observations and pupil voice highlighted outstanding relationships and there was a real sense of pride in all classes. The GIFT chaplaincy team ensures the Religious Education curriculum is enriched by retreats, working with Caritas or charity work. Furthermore, attendance in Diocesan events, such as GIFT days or opening the Year of Mercy ceremony further augments pupils' religious experiences. Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development was strong. As part of ongoing renewal there are plans to review the mission statement to further develop 'togetherness' within this faith community.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP IS OUTSTANDING

There are extensive and varied opportunities for collective worship and daily prayer; reflection and worship are central to the school. At the forefront of promoting worship is a vibrant chaplaincy team who plan the liturgical programme that incorporates assemblies and reflection time. The chaplaincy team plan the retreats and always give feedback to their successes in assembly. When asked what aspect of a Catholic school do they like most, one pupil said *"Part of the chaplaincy team. When I first started, I was really nervous but then I joined in and loved it"*. This is testament to the impact of the chaplaincy team on building life skills. The chaplain celebrates weekly Mass with staff and this is well attended. The chaplain visits school twice weekly and builds a really close connection with pupils and staff. He spoke movingly about the many positive aspects of the prayer and liturgical life of the school. Apart from the many opportunities for the children and young people, he spoke about how staff in turn lead a reflection each week for each other and how this has helped to bring the whole staff team to a close unity through personal sharing of their faith. The school is working to develop more opportunities for silent prayer. The 'Four Pillars of Prayer' are being embedded and all members of the community are encouraged to offer personal prayer petitions on post-it stickers in the chapel, which are then prayed for by everyone. Weekly scripture quotations celebrated across the school allows staff to reflect on its relevance to their personal lives. The liturgical life is often led by the pupils. A pupil led assembly on the parable of the talents celebrated pupils' talents whilst ensuring key messages from scripture were understood. All pupils participate in retreats which is an opportunity for spiritual reflection, deepens their faith and builds positive friendships. It is highly evident that those children who are not Catholic join in and show great reverence for the worship taking place. Collectively, these worship opportunities support the formation of a strong faith community.

AGREED AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT

- **To review the school's mission statement with all major stakeholders; pupils, parents, staff and governors so that it reflects the uniqueness of the community of St John Vianney.**
- **To further embed a robust assessment process so that pupils continue to make at least good progress and use this as a beacon throughout the Diocese for pupils with complex needs.**
- **To embed the newly revised curriculum, with Religious Education at its core, so that it both challenges and meets the needs of the pupils.**