



St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

URN: 119629

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Bishop of Lancaster

07–08 March 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 curriculum requirements laid down by the Bishops' Conference

Yes

The school is fully compliant with all requirements of the diocesan bishop

Yes

The school has responded to the areas for improvement from the last inspection

Fully

2

What the school does well

- The school provides excellent pastoral care for all pupils including the most vulnerable.
- There is an embedded culture of welcome for all in school.
- The school environment effectively witnesses to its identity mission and charism, through beautifully prepared displays and prayers spaces.
- The recently appointed headteacher and religious education subject leader work very well together and share a clear vision to improve teaching and learning in religious education.
- Strong, effective links with the parish enable pupils to participate in a variety of liturgies.

What the school needs to improve

- Embed the Jesuit values and mission statement so that all members of the school community can confidently express the distinctive character of their school.
- Develop further opportunities for work scrutiny and moderation of standards in religious education (both in school and with other diocesan schools) to ensure the quality of pupils' work is securely good in every year group.
- Use the recently introduced whole school planner for Celebration of the Word to lead children to a deeper and more conscious participation in prayer.

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

2

Provision

The quality of provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school

1

Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school

2

2

Following a period of instability in staffing, including an extended period with no substantive head teacher, the recently appointed headteacher is driving improvements across the school to ensure the Catholic identity is distinct and strong.

Pupils express that they are special to their teachers because they are special to God. They take on responsibilities such as 'Mini Vinnies' and 'Pope Francis' Earth Angels' in pursuit of the common good and serving those in need. For example, raising money for Cafod and fundraising for local homeless charities. Leaders recognise that this work can be further developed by ensuring pupils have a knowledge of the theology which underpins these charitable works.

Pupils value the school's chaplaincy provision, including the involvement of the parish priest in the Catholic life of the school. This recently inspired a group of pupils to set up a mental health support group, which is impacting all classes. There are well-planned and effective opportunities for the spiritual and moral development of pupils and staff.

The school's mission has been reviewed and developed with the addition of Jesuit values. This needs to be further embedded so that all members of the school community can bear witness to the Word of God.

Christ is at the heart of this inclusive, welcoming school community. All staff, including the learning mentor and Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSAs) go the extra mile to provide exceptional support for children and their families. The commitment to these support roles by leaders, demonstrates the highest level of pastoral care for all, including those who are vulnerable.

The outstanding care and attention given to displays and prayer spaces around school reflects the dignity of each person and demonstrates staff commitment to bear witness to the mission of the school.

The provision for relationships, sex and health education (RSHE) meets statutory and diocesan requirements. A named governor takes responsibility for this aspect of the curriculum and has completed a series of training modules to enable her to ensure the school complies with the requirements.

All leaders, including governors, ensure Christ is at the heart of the school and can clearly articulate the church's mission in education. Regular policy review ensures this maintains a high profile.

The school engages well with the diocese and works in partnership with the bishop. As a result, they have taken definitive steps to join the Blessed Edward Bamber Catholic Multi-Academy Trust next academic year.

There are good links with the local parish and priest to support the liturgical calendar. Feast days, Holy Days plus other liturgies are planned and celebrated with the whole school/parish community. One parent told inspectors, 'families are invited to regular opportunities of worship and dedicated Masses, which is welcomed.'

Leaders have developed effective strategies for engaging parents and carers to the benefit of pupils. In response to the parental questionnaire, most parents felt they understand the school's Catholic mission and are supportive of it.

There is a commitment to Catholic social teaching throughout the school. Pupils express a desire to make a difference to the world. They recognise that all staff support them in this work.

Leaders, including governors, demonstrate respect for the dignity of all staff, with a commitment to both physical and mental wellbeing. Governors regularly join staff for an informal chat and staff value this time and feel cared for.

Governors are ambitious for the Catholic life and mission of the school. They are involved in the evaluation of the Catholic life of the school and provide support and challenge where necessary. Tying this more closely to monitoring, with regular checkpoints throughout the year, would ensure evaluations remain current.

Teachers value the professional development opportunities they are given and feel fully supported by leaders and parishioners.

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

2

Provision

The quality of teaching, learning, and assessment in religious education

2

Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for religious education

2

2

Pupils enjoy religious education and most take an active part in lessons. They demonstrate an increasingly developed knowledge and understanding of the content set out in the Religious Education Directory.

Baseline data shows that pupils enter school with limited knowledge of the Catholic faith. As a result of good teaching, they make good progress and attainment is broadly in line with expectations at the end of Early Years Foundation Stage. Across Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 the majority of pupils continue to make progress so that they reach age-related expectations by the end of Year 6.

Pupils can speak with a developing confidence about what they are learning in religious education. Pupils are able to use some subject-specific vocabulary effectively. For example, a pupil in key stage one explained the meaning of 'covenant' as an unbreakable promise with God.

Across the school most pupils are able to work independently and concentrate well. Where pupils find this difficult, adults are well-deployed to support them.

The standard of work in pupil books is broadly comparable with other subjects but varies across the school. Observations during inspection showed that increased independence, good behaviour and better outcomes were achieved where teachers modelled and scaffolded tasks for pupils.

Marking and feedback in religious education meets the requirements of the school's policy. Some children can articulate what they need to do to improve further. More frequent in-house

moderation and work scrutiny will ensure that all staff assess consistently and that expectations across all year groups are known and understood.

Teachers are committed to the value of religious education. With the introduction of the *Religious Education Directory*, they have developed good subject knowledge. Three of the four classes have recently adapted their curriculum in line with the updated Directory and have introduced a new scheme.

Teachers use a range of strategies and resources to engage pupils. This includes group work, 'talk partners' for paired work plus independent work. Good use is also made of artwork during lessons. During inspection, pupils in Early Years were enthralled by a visual retelling of The Good Samaritan. Children were inspired to make connections between themselves and the people in the scripture. They could express feelings and link this to Catholic social teaching.

Across the whole school, pupils are given time for reflection in lessons. This impacts the spiritual and moral development of the pupils.

In some classes effective questioning is used during direct teaching to enable pupils to extend their learning.

The religious education subject leader, who works closely with the recently appointed headteacher, provides excellent support for class teachers. She has a clear vision for teaching and learning. Through effective engagement with the diocese, she has ensured religious education maintains parity with other core subjects.

Governors are informed of the improvement strategy for religious education in school. They support and challenge the headteacher and religious education subject leader in taking strategic action where necessary. They recognise the importance of maintaining a high level of monitoring, as the new curriculum is embedded, to ensure the accuracy of self-evaluation.

Some parents who responded to the parental questionnaire expressed a lack of knowledge about what their child is learning in religious education. However, inspectors viewed evidence from 'Class Dojo' which shows the school regularly shares learning in religious education. One parent told inspectors, 'my children love RE, they regularly come home talking about what they have learnt and are very faithful children.'

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 very well to the experiences of prayer and liturgy provided by the school. There is a clear daily pattern of prayer which is given a high priority. For example, pupils pray at the beginning and end of the school day and before lunch, as well as celebrating the Word of God in class and as a whole school.

Scripture is used in every prayer and liturgy. This is either linked to the liturgical year or to themes covered in curriculum religious education lessons. During inspection, pupils demonstrated a good understanding of the season of Lent. They used the beautifully created stations of the cross around school for personal prayer and reflection.

Pupils say they enjoy prayer and liturgy, and some are able to discuss what they have gained from it. They can talk about the gospel message they will take forward, as they work in school or go home to their families.

There is a policy on prayer and liturgy, which is followed by all staff. As a result, there is consistency of practice across the whole school, and everyone uses an agreed planning format. This ensures all gather quietly, listen to the Word of God, respond and reflect, then go forth and share the gospel. Across all three key stages, pupils gather quietly, reflect in silence and join in with prayers. Leaders recognise this can be developed further to engage pupils more deeply and lead them to full, active and conscious participation.

Staff support pupils in planning these prayerful activities and then spend time with them, reflecting and reviewing the prayer experience. During inspection, pupils were well-supported by adults to lead prayer in their class. Older pupils were encouraged to reflect on and improve prayer they had led.

Key staff lead whole school prayer and liturgy, modelling good practice to other staff and to pupils and bringing the school community together. Staff use a range of resources, including the Cafod and Ten: Ten prayer materials, to enhance the prayer life of their pupils. They are well-supported by school leaders and diocesan advisers to ensure a joyful, spiritual experience for all pupils.

Communal displays and prayer spaces in each classroom are lovingly prepared to reflect the liturgical year. These are very well maintained, resourced and conducive to prayer.

Leaders work hard to maintain the good relationship with the parish to help pupils participate more fully in the liturgy. For example, a member of the parish works with pupils to prepare them for the ministry of reading at Mass. Pupils, staff and families regularly attend liturgies, Masses and other significant events in the church, which is on the same site as the school.

The headteacher works closely with the parish priest to plan the school calendar so that opportunities to celebrate the Eucharist are regularly offered to the whole school community.

Leaders have identified the need to review the policy and plans for prayer and liturgy in line with the new *Prayer and Liturgy Directory*. This will include reviewing the strategy for building up skills of participation, reflective of the age and capacity of the pupils. There is commitment by all leaders to ensure provision for prayer and liturgy is prioritised when setting budgets and planning timetables. This includes a commitment to high quality professional development including the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies (CCRS).

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Joseph's Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	119629
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	8883717
Full postal address of the school	St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Garstang Road North, Medlar-with-Wesham, Wesham, Preston, PR4 3HA
School phone number	01772683009
Headteacher	Louise Freeman
Chair of Governors	Ged Lawrenson
School Website	www.st-josephs-kirkham.lancs.sch.uk
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	N/A
Phase	Primary
Type of school	Voluntary Aided School
Admissions policy	N/A
Age-range of pupils	5-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	November 2017
Previous denominational inspection grade	1 - Outstanding

The inspection team

Jacqueline Hampson
Claire O'Donnell

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