



St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

URN: 119671

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Archbishop of Liverpool

26–27 November 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

Religious education (p.5)

The quality of curriculum religious education

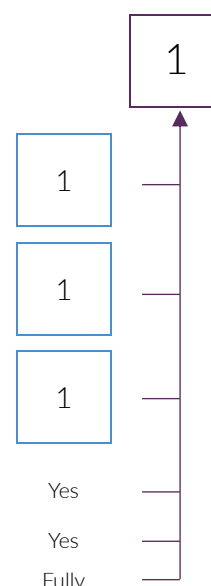
Collective worship (p.7)

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



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 the additional requirements of the Archdiocese of Liverpool.
- The school has addressed areas for improvement identified in the last inspection and in some continues to address them with new and evolving strategies.

What the school does well

- The school provides the safest of Catholic havens for its whole community.
- Pupils show a deep respect for themselves and others.
- Pupils enjoy their learning, speak clearly in lessons and have a positive impact on each other's learning.
- Leadership is inspiring because it knows and cares deeply for the St Joseph's family.
- All staff are determined to give their absolute best for the children and do so with love, care and joy.

What the school needs to improve

- In religious education enable some pupils to be more articulate in how well they are doing and the progress they have made.
- Complete steps toward establishing a consistently clear process in religious education for feedback to pupils.
- Implement systems for monitoring the impact of prayer and liturgy.

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

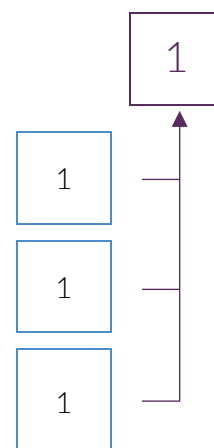
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

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. Joseph's value their school and all that it stands for. They demonstrate strong understanding and appreciation of Catholic tradition, which is embedded in daily school life. The mission statement 'Following in the footsteps of Jesus, we live, love and learn' is not rehearsed or always recalled; it is stronger than that. It is lived. It shapes decisions and moulds attitudes and behaviours. This school is a safe place for all where uniqueness is valued, and everyone is welcome. This is evident in the deep respect pupils have for their own personal dignity and that of others. They tell you they 'want people to know it's okay to have another faith.' Pupils thrive on the range of responsibilities they are given or apply for; there is faith expressed in service through Happy Mind ambassadors, pupil chaplaincy, school council, together with a variety of initiatives that support the local and wider community. Their actions are naturally embedding Catholic social teaching principles because they know it is right to be led by the example of the ministry of Jesus. Pupils' uniqueness is celebrated. As a result, pupils leave as compassionate, faith-filled individuals, equipped with a strong moral foundation and a commitment to living out the Catholic mission in their daily lives.

Staff embrace the mission statement and readily implement it across the school. They affirm it is their duty and privilege to serve. They say that St. Joseph's feels like home. A wonderful example, from a much-admired list, is their Lancashire School of Sanctuary award. From the haven of pre-school, the feeling of calmness permeates. They are uncompromising in their high expectations set because they know the pupils can reach them. Inclusion is a priority, with staff ensuring that pupils of all backgrounds and abilities feel welcomed and valued. There is clearly a pride in the fabric of the school. A range of displays and artwork reinforce the message. Decisions, 'Fantastic walking', home-made soup every morning supplemented from the Laudato

Si' polytunnel, are made to intentionally guide. This is recognised by the awards they have achieved including the UNICEF Rights Respecting Schools Gold Award. Pastoral provision is of the highest standard, ensuring that all families are well supported. Consequently, pupils are nurtured in their faith journey, enabling them to enjoy and achieve in a Christ-centred environment. Relationships, sex and health education is taught using the content of the archdiocesan approved programme. The school benefits from strong partnerships with parents. They value the opportunities to engage in faith-based activities. Parents say, 'this school is everything a parent could want.'

Leadership is inspiring at all levels. Those in the pivotal roles know how best to support the children and their families and work together. What St. Joseph's leaders think is typical is exceptional. School highly values its close relationship with the parish and community it serves. This is openly reciprocated. The Big Lent Walk, Macmillan and the Joanne Ratcliffe Foundation are supported. Under the leadership of the headteacher the school fosters a welcoming and nurturing environment. She goes to remarkable lengths to develop the value of every pupil, and her leadership ensures that Catholic life is at the heart of the school's vision and daily practice. Governors support her and are actively protective of their mission. Governor minutes show challenge, with clear recommendations inserted within the school improvement plan which include requests for reassurances and adaptations to policies. This makes the school stronger. Staff feel valued and supported. The taught curriculum is coherent, creative and compelling and takes the time to recognise and celebrate achievement. In many ways it is bespoke to the school. A staggering example is Building the Kingdom where pupils experience joy in a range of activities which engage their thirst for learning and steady them to face the challenges of life. Staff, including new staff, are supported well and training is effective.

Religious Education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

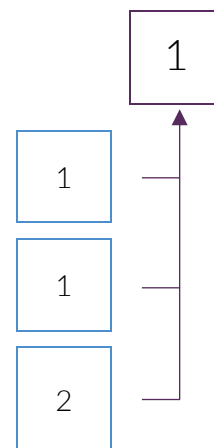
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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 are developing excellent knowledge, skills and understanding in religious education. They are fully engaged in lessons, and their levels of enjoyment and fulfilment are evident. During observations, they were consistent in articulating their learning. There is an atmosphere of trust. Kindness is embedded and expected. The vast majority work well with each other. Where support is needed it is provided alongside opportunities for independence and sustained personal concentration. Support for disadvantaged and those with special educational needs is woven seamlessly into every classroom and the sensory room. Pupils see a purpose in what they are learning. Discussions on how Mary understood 'it was her job' to have a baby and that they too 'love God' were insightful. Pupils are religiously literate and confident to speak about their learning. As a result, they make good progress. Work is presented in a variety of creative ways. Yet, this pride in content, presentation and feedback is not always consistently evident in their books. Standards in religious education competitively compare the standards in other core subjects. Feedback from some pupils observed during lessons was limited and they would benefit from more practice in articulating how well they are doing and the progress they have made.

Teachers confidently deliver lessons and have high expectations and a deep commitment for religious education. Their strong subject knowledge leads to lessons being crafted to include reviews of prior learning and precise teaching. As such teachers can move learning on at the appropriate pace to ensure all needs are met and all pupils can engage. Teachers encourage pupils to build on each other's ideas. Time is given for reflection of thoughts and opportunities to explain learning. This could be expanded further through developed questioning. High-quality resources are evident in all lessons; however, the use of physical bibles could be further increased. Support staff are equally effective in their roles. Early Years staff plan practical tasks

which develop learning. Where music, songs and other creative resources are used, teaching is powerful. There are awe and wonder moments. The curriculum is carefully planned and sequenced. New learning is systematically introduced and structured to build upon. Pupils' responses are carefully handled to affirm understanding. Teachers provide *within the moment* feedback. Learning is celebrated and the school is currently reviewing its systems for feedback through Ways of Knowing books. Teachers have a profound understanding of the impact religious education has on pupils growing spiritually and morally. They assist pupils finding ways to make links in their own lives.

Religious education is a highly respected subject, and leaders and governors ensure it is adapting appropriately to the Religious Education Directory. It is comparable to other subjects in terms of professional development, resourcing, staffing and accommodation. The new subject leader has an inspiring vision and there is rightly a confidence that she will strengthen the provision more. The school successfully enhances the curriculum with a range of enrichment activities and visitors that captivate pupils' interests and leads them to putting their faith into action. Strong connections are maintained with relevant agencies and the broader community, exemplified by visits between other local primary schools and retreats for Year 6 pupils. School uses Crafting the Bible and retreat days to promote learning further. Governors are determined that all aspects of the curriculum, including policies and an action plan, have purpose for the pupils. There is evidence of effective monitoring, analysis and evaluation and the changes currently being made will need time to embed and for impact to be judged. This will also assist in increasing governor's knowledge of attainment and progress to fully understand the achievement that is evident.

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

1

Provision

The quality of collective worship provided by the school

1

Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for collective worship

2

1

There is focus and spiritual intent within all aspects of the school's worship. It is central to daily life. The prayer opportunities planned are engaging, inclusive and lead the pupils to respond reverently. It is relevant to the pupils and the journey of faith they make. It makes clear links with the local church where relationships and roles when celebrating the Mass are undertaken with reverence and joy. The structure of whole school worship demonstrates a deep commitment to prayer which allows pupils of all ages to grow in faith and reflect upon how they can live out Jesus' mission. Pupils are invited to listen carefully to selected passages of scripture, to reflect upon them and respond in a variety of ways. They are keen to be involved, and time is given to allow this. Traditional prayers are taught over time. There is a well-established rhythm and pattern of prayer and worship that the school community anticipates and appreciates. Pupils enthusiastically participate; they pray reverently and sing joyfully. Pupils articulate the ways in which experiences of prayer shape them as Christians. Engagement in prayer and liturgy observed during the inspection demonstrated careful thought, active listening, prayerful silence and respect for others.

Prayer and liturgy is central to the life of the school. There is an embedded pattern of scripture and prayer that is planned to reflect the liturgical year. Scripture reflects Gospel values and the mission of the school. Staff are models of good practice because they engage pupils, parents and the wider community in meaningful prayer and liturgy. They model exemplary reverence and spiritual support. To ensure pupils fully understand and can relate to scripture, school should consider careful adaptations that increase levels of understanding. Each class has a special area for prayer. The school environment is enriched by dedicated prayer spaces including the Marian garden and Garden of Eden. There is a relevant and impressive range of artwork around the school including inspiring pieces created by a member of staff. The school is

committed to fostering a strong partnership with parents and the parish in encouraging their full participation in the liturgy. Parents acknowledge that school supports the whole family. Parish volunteers are welcomed into school. Pupils are exposed to significant events in the world through the Throne of Words. They are encouraged to participate during Mass which was reverently evident during the reading of the Gospel and singing of the psalm during the Advent Mass attended during the inspection.

Leaders guide the school in celebration of the word by their own understanding and knowledge of the community they serve. They have produced a helpful policy for prayer and liturgy that assists staff with their planning and delivery. It contains a strategy for building up skills of participation as pupils progress through the school which needs time to embed. Training from the archdiocese has also been beneficial in enhancing practice when planning and leading prayer time. Leaders understand and support the variety of ways of praying that upholds the Catholic tradition. Leaders work collaboratively on its ongoing development. They provide guidance and support for other staff, who have expressed their appreciation for this assistance. The next step is to implement systems for monitoring to be able to measure accurately the impact of prayer and liturgy. This will improve the leadership's ability to make evidence-based judgements. The school has suitably resourced prayer and liturgy recognising its importance. Leadership ensures that the school timetable and calendar give pupils many opportunities to join and lead a wide variety of worship and celebrations.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Joseph's Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	119671
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	8883785
Full postal address of the school	Cedar Road, Chorley, Lancashire, PR6 0JF
School phone number	01257265998
Executive headteacher	Not applicable
Headteacher	Annie Douglas
Chair of governors	Andrew Vose
School Website	www.stjosephschorley.co.uk/
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	Not applicable
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	February 2019
Previous denominational inspection grade	1

The inspection team

Joanne Farrimond
Mark Edwards

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