

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

URN: 150299

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Bishop of Leeds

11 June 2026 – 12 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

2

1

2

2

Yes

Yes

Fully

What the school does well

- Led by the committed senior leadership team, and the dedicated wider staff, the school provides a warm and secure environment, underpinned by a strong culture of nurture, in which the children are able to develop to their God-given potential.
- Staff, pupils and parents speak highly of the strong St Joseph's family where all are respected and included.
- The pupils demonstrate exemplary behaviour in all areas of the school.
- Pupils' faith development is supported through the effective partnership between school and parish which provides many opportunities for prayer and liturgy.
- Staff have high expectations of all pupils, including those with additional needs, which in turn leads to pupils making good or better progress in religious education.

What the school needs to improve

- Through the principles of Catholic social teaching, provide pupils' with regular opportunities to articulate how scripture underpins their actions.
- Provide appropriate challenge for pupils in religious education through the development of staff subject knowledge and effective questioning.
- Develop a wide range of creative and inspirational ways to enhance prayer and worship.

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

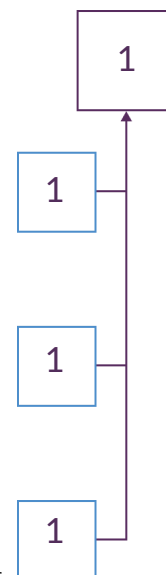
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

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 value the distinctive Catholic nature of the school and can talk about how they follow the example and teachings of Jesus. They are proud of their school, leading them to embrace both their parish and local communities. The pupils have been involved in fundraising for the local hospice, for Catholic Care and in collecting items for a local food bank. The behaviour of pupils is exemplary across the school. Parents appreciate the impact of the school's ethos on their children. One parent commented that, 'The school has high expectations for the children's behaviour and morals, meaning they are taught the right ways from a young age and know what's expected of them and others.' All pupils are supportive and caring towards those who are vulnerable or have additional needs. They clearly understand the Catholic mission of the school and can talk about how they contribute to the life of the school. The Mini Vinnie group actively participates in fundraising for charities, as well as being involved with the parish St Vincent de Paul (SVP) group. The Mini Vinnies supported the parish SVP at a recent Mass for the sick where they served drinks and took the time to talk to elderly members of the parish. Each class fundraises for its own, pupil-chosen charity. As a result of these activities, pupils can talk about Catholic social teaching and give relevant examples of this in practice but are not yet able to clearly articulate it and link the teaching to scripture and then, in turn, into action in their own lives.

The staff are committed to the mission of the school and new staff are effectively inducted into the Catholic life of the school. Staff work tirelessly to provide the highest level of pastoral

care, ensuring that all are valued and cared for, including the most vulnerable. Staff enthusiastically participate in activities that involve the mission of the school. Leaders have ensured that the school environment provides spaces for nurture, prayer and quiet reflection. The pupils at St Joseph's benefit from a warm and welcoming Catholic community where all members are valued and respected, resulting in a school where they feel happy and secure. This inclusive ethos leads to a culture of respect for those have additional needs or come from a different faith or ethnic background. The staff are focused on Christ at the centre of all they do, through their everyday commitment to the children and their families.

The headteacher, ably supported by her assistant headteacher, leads the school with faith and passion; they effectively carry out their roles as leaders of the faith community and are well-respected and valued by all stakeholders. Leaders and governors actively promote the Bishop's vision for the diocese. Leaders and governors support parents effectively in the role as their child's first educators. This was very evident when speaking to parents where they spoke warmly of how they feel supported and that leaders are approachable, listen to their concerns and do their best to support their families. The school engages effectively, in areas such as training and collaboration with curriculum development, with both the diocese and the Bishop Wheeler Catholic Academy Trust. Leaders and governors, supported by the Trust, effectively promote the Church's mission as their core responsibility. Leaders and governors regard the wellbeing of the staff as a high priority and staff feel well-supported. The school and parish have increasingly strong links, supported by the recently appointed parish priest. There is a strong commitment to the school's mission, which underpins every aspect of school life.

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

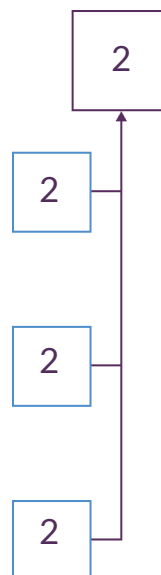
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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



Pupils enjoy religious education and make consistently good progress. Their achievement is above that seen in other core curriculum subjects, including for pupils with additional needs, who benefit from consistently effective, high-quality provision across all classes. This reflects the school's commitment to doing its best for every child. Behaviour in religious education lessons is excellent throughout the school. Pupils understand how well they are doing in religious education and can confidently explain the value of approaches such as pre- and post-assessment tasks for each unit and 'I Can' self-assessments. Books show examples of good presentation, but this is stronger in some classes than in others. Pupils' efforts are recognised through house points and in the fortnightly assembly led by the headteacher. Parents are welcomed at these assemblies and they spoke very positively about seeing their children rewarded for their efforts.

Staff work carefully and collaboratively to ensure that the Religious Education Directory is delivered through a two-year cycle designed for the school's five mixed-age classes, supporting progression across the school. Teachers are confident in delivering the curriculum, and well-considered documentation and tailored professional development support the effective induction of new staff. The school is phasing in the new curriculum requirements through a coherent whole-school plan. Staff are highly committed to teaching religious education and understand its importance, as shown in lessons and in pupils' books. Parents are kept informed about the curriculum content through regular bulletins; one parent noted,

'My child has come home and talked about her lesson and been keen to share what she's learnt.' Pupils developing knowledge and understanding of the events and impact of Pentecost were demonstrated through a study of religious art; pupils responded thoughtfully, saying, for example, 'the Holy Spirit is burning hope into them' and 'it looks like the source of everything is going into them'. Teachers provide effective support to help pupils progress, but there is some variation in the quality of questioning, which at times reduces opportunities for children to learn more quickly and be more independent. Learning is supported by consistently good teaching and skilled teaching assistants, although opportunities are sometimes missed to extend learning and deepen challenge through effective questioning and explanation of key vocabulary. In the best lessons, children are quickly clear about both the content of the lesson and its key concepts and vocabulary.

The school faithfully meets the requirements of the Religious Education Directory. Leaders and governors ensure that there is parity with other core subjects by maintaining high expectations for religious education and prioritising it through resourcing, timetabling and continuing professional development. The curriculum is planned effectively so that pupils progress sequentially through the subject content and the needs of all learners are met. The subject leader brings clear vision and strong commitment to the role, which in turn inspires colleagues to high expectations. Staff value the knowledge, professional advice and pastoral support that is provided by the religious education leader. The headteacher provides detailed information about religious education to the academy council, and the academy councillors ask appropriately challenging questions. Leaders monitor provision to inform evaluation and planning, although this process is not embedded at all levels. As a result, there are some missed opportunities to further develop the quality of religious education in the school.

Collective worship

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

Collective worship key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

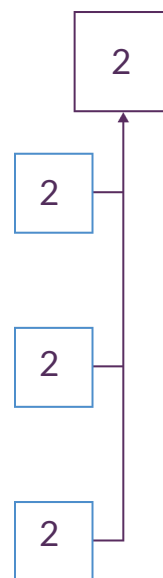
How well pupils participate in and respond to the school's collective worship

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



Pupils respond prayerfully and reflectively to the prayer life offered by the school. Impeccable behaviour in celebrations of the word is seen consistently across the school. Pupils experience a variety of prayer and liturgy during the Church's year, helping them to engage with Catholic traditions. The pupils understand the cycle of the Church's year and are able to explain the significance of the respective liturgical colours. Appropriate to their age, pupils take leading roles in prayer and liturgy. They confidently participate as leaders in the four-part format of celebration of the word. Pupils, from their earliest years, are given the opportunity to create their own prayers and read them in these celebrations. This practice is particularly strong in the Early Years Foundation Stage. There are variations between classes in the exploration of more varied ways of praying. Pupils do reflect on their prayerful activities, but these evaluations do not inform future improvements to prayer and liturgy.

The school has a well-planned cycle of prayer and liturgy based on the Church's liturgical year. There is a well-established four-part structure to celebrations of the word which is consistent across the school. Prayer spaces are respectfully and appropriately resourced. There is a regular pattern of prayer throughout the day. The pupils are taught traditional Catholic prayers and these are formalised in each class and collated in class prayer books which are available online. Scripture is planned carefully to be appropriate to the liturgical cycle and the age of those pupils participating in the liturgy. Staff are good role models for the pupils, encouraging them to engage in the prayer and liturgy provided by the school. The school

works hard to widen the school's prayer provision into the home with, for example, the Lent bags and travelling cribs that the parents share during specific times of the year. The school makes effective use of a number of prayer spaces, in addition to that which is provided in each classroom. In particular, the school has both an indoor prayer room and outdoor prayer area, both of which are utilised effectively to enhance the prayer life of the school. The school is using the increasingly strong links with the parish and, as a result, parish life is brought into the school and vice versa. The school works very effectively with the team of catechists in the parish, which includes a Year 6 retreat on the theme of 'moving on'. This partnership has provided the school with spiritual support and sustenance in the last school year, when the parish was without a priest.

Holy Days of Obligation are celebrated enthusiastically, both in school and in the parish church nearby, ensuring that such celebrations are prioritised and are given the appropriate high importance as befits a Catholic school. Pupils are given opportunities to participate in these liturgies as readers and altar servers. The school develops pupils' liturgical planning skills as they get older, using the school's own progression document, in order to provide a clear development path for their leadership of prayer. Leaders ensure that those preparing sessions of prayer and liturgy are well supported, through the school's policy on Prayer and Liturgy which is comprehensive and effective in offering guidance for teachers. Continuing professional development is provided by the school and Trust, as well as staff attending diocesan training sessions. This ensures that Prayer and Liturgy is well-planned and effective. The school is well-resourced, as a result of leaders' and governors' recognition of the importance of prayer and liturgy.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Joseph's Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	150299
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	8883805
Full postal address of the school	West Close Road, Barnoldswick, Lancashire, BB18 5EN
School phone number	01282 813045
Headteacher or Head of School	Mrs Carmen Hargreaves
Chair of Governors	Mr Joe Whalley
School Website	www.st-josephs-barlick.lancs.sch.uk
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	Bishop Wheeler Catholic Academy Trust
Phase	Primary
Type of school	Academy
Admissions policy	Non Selective
Age-range of pupils	3 - 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	09 November 2018
Previous denominational inspection grade	Good

The Inspection Team

Dominic Williams Lead

Madeleine Bannister

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