



# St. John's Catholic Primary School

URN: 132796

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Archbishop of Liverpool

13–14 December 2023

## 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 mission statement is lived out by all members of St. John's community by dedicated staff and friendly pupils who bear witness to Christ.
- Relationships and pastoral care for staff, pupils and families is a major key strength of St. John's.
- Parish links have flourished and been sustained over many years to the benefit of pupils.
- Pupils show love and respect for each other.
- The effective teaching of scripture in religious education enables pupils to discuss ideas, develop their vocabulary and deepen their knowledge.

## What the school needs to improve

- Provide a wide range of prayer styles, which celebrate the richness of the Catholic tradition and follows the liturgical year.

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- Deepen learning in religious education through the use of skilled questioning by pupils and staff.
  - Provide opportunities for pupils to plan and lead prayer and liturgy across the school, focussing on prayer responses to scripture and the call to go forth, so living out the Gospel call to action.

## 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**

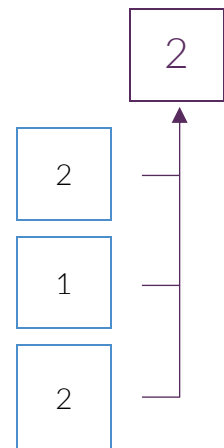
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

**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 understand and value the Catholic mission and ethos of St. John's. They know, 'Christ is at the centre of the school community, where they live, love and learn together'. Pupils are happy, secure and confident. They know that they are valued as unique individuals because of strong affirming relationships. One pupil said, 'Every teacher in our school is kind and caring'. Pupils understand that that they follow the examples of Christ, saying, 'We are followers of Jesus'. Those pupils who take on additional responsibilities, for example, the Faith Friends, know the reasons why they respond to those in need, locally and globally. They have demonstrated this through raising funds through a Santa dash, for Cafod. They organise and lead collections of warm clothing for the Whitechapel Centre and they support local food banks. Faith Friends lead, 'messy play', for families of year one pupils, to creatively explore their faith journey. Other pupils would benefit from a deepening of their understanding of the links between Catholic social teaching and their many actions that support the needs of others. Pupils behave well in lessons and throughout the school. They demonstrate respect for themselves and others, including those of other faiths and cultures. One parent said, 'St. John's teaches the children to be respectful and kind and to follow Catholic values, my child thrives with all the positive staff here'.

The mission statement at St. John's is at the heart of the school. It is regularly reviewed at the start of each year by pupils, staff and governors. Everyday life experience is firmly rooted in the word of God, creating a joyful and vibrant family community. One member of staff stated, 'Our staff and governors are excellent at supporting our children and community by living out our Gospel values and putting our faith into practice'. Staff are exemplary role models. They embrace the mission and readily implement it across the whole curriculum. Plans for relationships, sex and health education meet archdiocesan and statutory guidelines and are well thought out and

woven throughout the curriculum. Staff are very loyal to the school and there is an exceptionally strong pastoral team. Staff know the families extremely well and can offer support at the earliest opportunity. Everyone is warmly welcomed, especially those who are the most vulnerable members of the school community. The school environment reflects that this is a Catholic school, especially in the lovely entrance hall, which is a welcoming space for visitors and a quiet space for reflection.

Leaders and governors clearly articulate the Church's mission. They understand that this is their core responsibility. Governors provide both support and challenge as they evaluate the work of their school. One governor said, 'Our mission, underpins everything, we are not just a school, but a community of faith'. Staff work closely with catechists in preparation for the Faith in Action Award and in the sacramental preparation programme. Consequently, links between the school and parish are growing in strength. The new parish priest is a welcome visitor. Leaders embrace the role of parents, supporting them in their vocation, for example through the invitations to attend celebrations and by the information shared through, 'Home and School Together'. New staff receive an effective induction. One staff member said, 'I was provided with many opportunities to be immersed in the Catholic life of the school, I gained a deep understanding of our school values, before having a class of my own'. Leaders and governors demonstrate care for staffs' well-being and as a result staff say that they are very well supported. The whole community is thankful for their headteacher. She is greatly respected, for the support and pastoral care provided.

## Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

### Religious education key judgement grade

#### Pupil outcomes

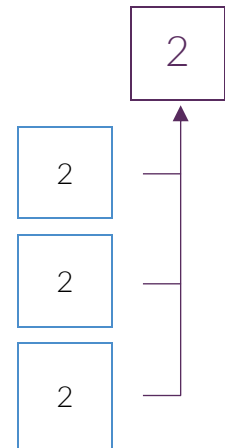
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

#### 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, including those with additional needs achieve well in religious education. Their learning enables them to develop the knowledge, skills and understanding required by the Religious Education Directory. They engage well and greatly enjoy their learning. Nursery pupils are excited to make puppets of Mary and the Angel Gabriel to retell the Christmas story. Pupils like to respond in different ways and can work well collaboratively and independently. They like to talk about their ideas with a partner and some pupils enjoy responding to questions to enhance their learning. Where teachers ask probing questions, pupils respond well, for example an older pupil said, 'Some people lose their faith, others have hope'. When prompted, he further developed his ideas explaining that, 'We need to put our faith in God, who is with us every step of the way'. However, not all pupils have the opportunity to be challenged in this way. Pupils are improving their understanding and use of religious vocabulary very well and this is a strength of many lessons, for example, the youngest children talk about the Annunciation, year six pupils discuss the Incarnation. Pupils would benefit from opportunities to develop their own questions to enhance their learning further. They produce good work which is increasingly well presented and attainment is in-line with other core subjects.

Teachers are committed to the value of religious education. They have good subject knowledge and plan effectively, using the Come and See programme. Teachers in early years have successfully started to implement revised planning for the new Directory. All pupils benefit from a range of ways to express their learning, for example, discussion with a partner, role play and re-tell to reinforce Bible stories, comparing scripture from different sources, making a story board. Teachers and support staff ensure that strong adaptive teaching strategies are used very well, resulting in successful learning for pupils with additional needs. Teachers skilfully use religious education lessons to explore themes which develop pupils both morally and spiritually.

Pupils enjoyed a moral debate about decisions made by king Herod and a spiritual time for reflection enabled older pupils to remember previous exploration of Advent scripture. Pupils' work is celebrated through displays and verbal feedback, and this motivates pupils to make good progress. Teachers use questioning during lessons as a key method for assessment. This could be further developed to ensure that all pupils are given the opportunity to be challenged, to respond and to deepen their learning further.

Leaders and governors ensure that the curriculum meets the requirements of the Directory and that there is equal parity between religious education and other core subjects. Parents receive information from the pupil annual report and through curriculum guidance meetings and documents. One parent said, 'I think the school goes above and beyond in religious education'. Governors are well informed and knowledgeable because of their involvement in self-evaluation. They visit lessons, scrutinise attainment data and discuss standards with the curriculum team. The Headteacher's termly report gives priority to the activities and learning of this Catholic school. Governors are enabled to ask challenging questions about the development of religious education and have taken part in meetings about the revised Directory. Continuing professional development opportunities are available for staff, for example, the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies and attendance at the local cluster group for the subject leader. The subject leader has a clear vision for teaching and learning. She guides staff, leads the religious education team and organises staff meetings to discuss the outcomes of assessments and moderation. Her leadership has resulted in teaching that is consistently good and sometimes outstanding. This results in good outcomes in religious education.

## 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 at St. John's respond well to the prayer and liturgy provided. They work well with others in preparing some aspects of prayer and liturgy. Pupils across the school prepare focus tables for reflection using artefacts, candles and the Bible. Older pupils select symbols representing Advent, for example, a star and a Christmas bauble, to set the atmosphere. Pupils with additional roles enjoy working with 'Faith's Alive' co-ordinators from the parish. They prepare readings and liturgical role play for sharing at services, for the benefit of others. Pupils read confidently from the Bible and reflect in silence as they consider the scripture they have heard. Pupils' knowledge and understanding could be enhanced further through the development of a wider range of ways to pray, that are part of the Catholic tradition. This will then increase their skills in planning and evaluating the quality of their liturgy. Pupils say that they like to have opportunities to pause, to pray, and to reflect at the focus tables around the school and in the prayer garden. Older pupils reflect on their experiences of prayer and liturgy, and some can say how these experiences have led to action.

Planned prayer and worship are part of routine gatherings for pupils, staff and leaders. Special moments are celebrated in prayer by the whole school family, for example, the welcome Mass at the start of the year and the leavers' Mass. The parish community and families are invited to share in worship through, for example, the Advent assembly led by year four, the harvest festival and carol service, held in the church. The weekly assembly is led by senior leaders for all pupils and staff. It is enhanced by opportunities for communal singing of hymns, which could also be used to enhance class worship. There is a daily pattern of prayer, however, pupils would benefit from knowing a wider range of Catholic traditional prayers, organised more consistently across the school. Seasonally appropriate scripture is central to worship, for example, readings from Isaiah during Advent, and the stations of the cross in Lent. Time and attention are given to the

creation of beautiful prayer spaces around the school, particularly in the school entrance hall, which gives all members of the school community the opportunity to pause and reflect. The Nursery environment has been very carefully created to ensure a special area, which is particularly conducive to prayer for the very youngest children.

Governors work with senior leaders to evaluate prayer and liturgy, they like to see first-hand how pupils engage and respond. They have taken the opportunity to visit for prayer and liturgy and to attend Mass. They are proud of the reverent and respectful pupils at these special times. Leaders observe teachers as they provide engaging opportunities for prayer and liturgy, which enable pupils to reflect in the prayerful atmosphere created. The subject leader said, 'Pupils say that this is their favourite time of the day, it is a beautiful opportunity to hit pause'. Pupils lead some aspects of prayer and liturgy, with guidance from teachers. This could be developed further through providing staff training and a clear plan for building up the skills of pupils in planning and leading prayer and liturgy as they progress through the school. All staff have received some professional development through archdiocesan training and receive ongoing support from senior leaders, who lead prayer and liturgy for others. The school is well-resourced for prayer and liturgy, which is evident in the beautiful prayer areas. Masses are planned from the Lectionary and scripture is appropriately selected for celebrations across the liturgical year, for example the Ash Wednesday service of reconciliation.



## Information about the school

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|--|---|
| Full name of school                            | St John's Catholic Primary School   |
| School unique reference number (URN)           | 132796  |
| School DfE Number (LAESTAB)                    | 3412234   |
| Full postal address of the school              | St John's Catholic Primary School, Fountains Road,<br>Kirkdale, Liverpool, L4 1UN |
| School phone number                            | 01519221924   |
| Headteacher                                    | Denise Maudsley   |
| Chair of Governors                             | Joanne McNeill  |
| School Website                                 | <a href="https://www.stjohnskirkdale.co.uk">https://www.stjohnskirkdale.co.uk</a> |
| 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                            | 3 -11   |
| Gender of pupils                               | Mixed   |
| Date of last denominational inspection         | 4 <sup>th</sup> October 2016  |
| Previous denominational inspection grade       | Outstanding   |

## The inspection team

|                 |      |
|-----------------|------|
| Christine Mason | Lead |
| Alan Saunders   | Team |
| Fiona Robinson  | 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 |