CATHOLIC SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

THE NATIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE INSPECTION OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS, COLLEGES AND ACADEMIES

St John the Baptist Roman Catholic Primary School

URN: 119648

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Bishop of Salford

12–13 March 2025

Summary of key findings

Overall effectiveness

The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school

1

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

1

Religious education (p.5)

The quality of curriculum religious education

1

Collective worship (p.7)

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

1

The school is fully compliant with the general norms for religious education laid down by the Bishops' Conference	Yes
The school is fully compliant with any additional requirements of the diocesan bishop	Yes
The school has responded to the areas for improvement from the last inspection	Fully

Compliance statement

- St John the Baptist RC Primary 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 fully responded to the areas for improvement from the last inspection.

This Catholic Schools Inspectorate inspection was carried out under canons 804 & 806 of the code of canon law. For maintained schools and academies in England it fulfils the statutory requirements of s.48 of the Education Act 2005. For maintained schools and academies in Wales it fulfils the statutory requirements of s.50 of the Education Act 2005.

What the school does well

- The Catholic Life and Mission is actively lived out by the whole community, where all members feel truly loved in line with their mission statement. Staff and pupils at this school are rightly proud to be part of this very special community.
- Strong relationships are evident at St John the Baptist, as highlighted by the way that all stakeholders interact with one another. A palpable culture of welcome exists for all.
- Leaders, governors and teachers are committed to ensuring that religious education is at the forefront of school's work.
- The school provides extensive and innovative pastoral care, demonstrating outstanding commitment to the well-being of all pupils.

What the school needs to improve

- Refine approaches to help all children talk confidently about what they have learned in RE, what they need to work on, and how they are getting better at understanding their faith.
- Build on existing practice to enable pupils to further nurture and develop their creativity when leading collective 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

1

Pupil outcomes

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

1

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

1

The Catholic identity of St John the Baptist is deeply embedded in every aspect of school life, ensuring that Christ is at the heart of the community. Pupils feel loved and cared for, and at all times show respect for themselves and others. They flourish in virtue, seeking opportunities to serve others, act justly, and live with compassion. Consequently, Catholic social teaching is understood by all pupils. All pupils take great pride in their various leadership roles with one pupil stating, 'We just want to make a positive difference to our world.' Pupils are passionate about putting their faith into action by serving others. This active faith is not confined to the classroom. They raise money for a variety of charities and answer Pope Francis' call to care for our common home by recycling, planting, growing, composting and cleaning up local areas of the community. Year 6 pupils take on leadership roles such as the long standing 'Seeds and Gardeners' buddy program, where they mentor a child in Reception, serving as a compassionate role model and friend. This nurturing relationship helps younger children feel safe and valued as they begin school, while older pupils grow in moral development, learning responsibility, patience, and kindness.

At St. John the Baptist, they focus on creating a supportive and welcoming place where every pupil feels they belong and are loved. Staff fully embrace and embody the school's mission statement, 'Love one another', ensuring that it is lived out across the curriculum and in all aspects of school life. Their dedication to Catholic education is evident in their enthusiastic participation in local, national and global activities that reflect the school's Catholic identity and mission, fostering a faith-filled learning environment where Gospel values are at the heart of everything they do. They lead and encourage the whole school community in charitable initiatives that put faith into action. One shining example is the home grown, 'Mission Possible' charity, through

which staff and pupils work together to improve the life chances of vulnerable families in Kenya. Local families in need are supported through food collections, providing clothing and essential items, or offering comfort and prayer, staff go above and beyond to ensure the vulnerable experience the practical love of the Church. Staff commitment to the spiritual and moral development of pupils is total: they plan rich opportunities for prayer, reflection, and discussion of faith in lessons and assemblies, helping children deepen their understanding of Catholic teaching and values.

Leaders and governors have worked tirelessly to develop a dynamic and productive relationship with the parish, which is deeply appreciated by all. Parents are warmly welcomed into the school and are highly complementary of the excellent education and nurturing pastoral care it provides. Staff at all levels relish the responsibility to act as role models for children. They are deeply committed to the Church's mission in education and demonstrate unwavering dedication to safeguarding and promoting the Catholic life and mission of the school. One parent summed it up when they stated, 'Catholic life is a key priority of the school and this is reflected in its school values.' From the mini chapel provision, resourcing, inspirational displays to curriculum planning, every aspect of school life reflects a commitment to the teachings of Christ and the traditions of the Church. The senior leadership team, together with governors, regularly celebrate Mass and prayer with the pupils. Leaders participate in religious festivals, lead by example in charitable works, demonstrating that faith is not just an extra, but the core of the school's identity. Leaders, including governors, uphold the Bishops' vision for Catholic education and actively support diocesan policies.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

1

Pupil outcomes

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

1

Provision

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

1

Leadership

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

1

Pupils make outstanding progress in religious education, demonstrating a deepening knowledge and understanding of key theological concepts as they move through the school. In lessons, pupils' behaviour is exemplary which ensures excellent concentration enabling them to think ethically, spiritually and theologically. Teachers design engaging and creative learning experiences that build on prior knowledge. For example, in a Year 6 lesson observed, pupils deepened their understanding of the Lord's Prayer by comparing two biblical accounts, summarising key messages, and using AI to compose a song based on their learning. Carefully planned learning ensures that all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged and those with SEND, are supported and challenged appropriately. Pupils consistently reflect on their learning, responding in a variety of ways, including written reflections, artwork, music, drama, and prayer, demonstrating a personal connection to their faith. As a result, the work in religious education books, including floor books, is consistently high quality and aligns with the standards seen in other core subjects. Pupils confidently articulate their faith and demonstrate a secure understanding of scripture, Catholic teaching, and the application of Gospel values in their daily lives. Leaders and teachers use assessment thoughtfully to track and enhance pupil progress.

Teachers demonstrate strong subject knowledge and expertise, ensuring that all children receive high-quality learning experiences and make excellent progress. This includes newer teachers and those from a non-Catholic background because their professional development has been prioritised. Teachers are therefore well equipped to plan thoughtful, creative and stimulating religious education lessons. Support staff are deployed effectively in lessons to further support and challenge pupils. Leaders and teachers have a deep understanding of the transformative impact of religious education on pupils' moral and spiritual development. Through high-quality teaching, they guide pupils in making meaningful connections between scripture, Catholic

teaching, and their lived experiences, helping them to interpret the world through a lens of faith, compassion, and justice. Assessment of pupils' attainment is carried out at regular intervals and informs future teaching. Highly effective questioning leads to detailed and relevant answers. At the end of units of work, 'check out questions' and big questions' are used by teachers to provide important opportunities for children to reflect on the meaning of religious education knowledge content in their own lives. The school is actively refining its teaching approaches to ensure that all children can confidently articulate their learning.

Leadership is outstanding and contributes significantly to the subject's success. Leaders and governors are passionate and committed to providing high quality training and development resulting in improved outcomes for all. The religious education subject leader has an ambitious vision for the teaching and learning of religious education, ensuring that it is delivered to a consistently high standard across the school. Leaders strong subject expertise enables them to effectively support and guide staff, ensuring that lessons are engaging, well-structured, and theologically rich. The curriculum is monitored regularly through activities such as book scrutiny, learning walks, planning checks and data analysis; all are supportive, but hold staff to account to secure high standards. This effective monitoring and evaluation is shared with governors, informs the priorities in the school development plan and ensures that all strategic actions are well considered and implemented fully. The headteacher and leaders have a clear and accurate understanding of the strengths and areas for development. Leaders have also ensured the curriculum is a faithful expression of the *Religious Education Curriculum Directory*. Religious education has more than full parity with other core subjects in this school with clear priority given by leaders to professional development and resourcing.

Collective worship

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

Collective worship key judgement grade

1

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

1

The school environment plays a vital role in enhancing pupils' understanding of the liturgical year. Prayer and worship experiences, such as those held in the school's mini chapel, help pupils connect deeply and take part fully**.** Pupils talk about the types of prayer they use and confidently relate them to the Church's cycle of seasons and feasts, such as praying the Rosary in May**.** Demonstrating responsibility, creativity, and confidence, pupils actively prepare and lead celebrations of the Word. The high levels of reverence throughout school are exemplary. During prayer and liturgy, pupils willingly engage in moments of silence and contemplation, demonstrating a mature ability to reflect deeply on Gospel values and how they shape their actions. There is clear evidence of progression in pupils' spiritual awareness, as they move from simple responses in EYFS to more sophisticated theological reflections in Key Stage 2, linking worship to Catholic social teaching and their moral choices. Communal singing is a significant strength of the school, contributing to the celebratory atmosphere of each gathering. Additionally, pupils and families are provided with the opportunity to reflect on the weekly Mass and Gospel-based prayer and liturgy using the Wednesday Word to support this process.

Prayer is at the heart of daily school life, with a well-structured plan ensuring its integration throughout the year. All gatherings of prayer and liturgy are rooted in meaningful prayer, reflecting the liturgical calendar, school mission, and Gospel values. Moments of joy, thanksgiving, and sorrow are marked with reverence, ensuring that pupils develop a strong sense of faith, empathy, and communal support. Parents, parishioners, and the wider community are actively involved in the worshipping life of the school, fostering strong parish-school links that enhance the liturgical experiences of pupils. Prayer is woven throughout the school day, creating a culture where prayer is natural and spontaneous, not just confined to set times. The school's bespoke 'bee themed' behaviour scheme of work enables pupils to reference

expected learning behaviours within their prayers. Consequently, pupils confidently initiate and lead prayers during lessons, playtimes, and school events. Faith Friends are eager and willing to influence the prayer life of school further by creating their own celebrations of the Word for the whole school. Staff provide pupils with regular support concerning the weekly celebration of the Word, enabling them to choose appropriate themes, music and scripture. As a result, prayer is not simply an event, but a living, breathing expression of the school's Catholic identity.

A comprehensive policy for prayer and worship is firmly in place for staff providing them with a clear framework for developing pupils' skills in assessing and leading prayer and liturgy. Leaders, including governors, demonstrate a steadfast commitment to prioritising resources, in all its forms, resulting in consistently high experiences of prayer and liturgy. The headteacher and senior leaders model outstanding practice, ensuring that worship is a profound, faith-filled, and transformative experience for all pupils. Assemblies support pupils' learning, for example, pupils refered to the assembly message 'Fast on, but feast on..' when discussing how they will live out their Lenten promises. Leaders actively seek feedback from pupils, staff, and parents to enhance the worship experience, demonstrating a commitment to continuous improvement and deeper spiritual engagement. One parent commented, 'My child is encouraged and given the opportunity to worship frequently at the school.' Frequent and inspirational professional development, including that delivered by the diocese and specialist practitioners, equips staff with the theological understanding and practical skills needed to plan and deliver meaningful prayer experiences. As a result, prayer and liturgy are deeply embedded in school life, and staff at all levels fully appreciate their centrality in nurturing the faith and spiritual growth of the school community.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St John the Baptist Roman Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	119648
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	8883749
Full postal address of the school	St John the Baptist Roman Catholic Primary School, St John's Road, Padiham, Burnley, BB12 7BN
School phone number	01282771146
Headteacher	Kathleen McKeating
Chair of governors	Karen Harper
School Website	www.st-john.lancs.sch.uk
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	November 2016
Previous denominational inspection grade	Outstanding

The inspection team

Chris Horridge	Lead
Helen McGrath	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