



## Catholic Schools Inspectorate inspection report for **St Joseph's RC High School**

URN:

Carried out on behalf of the Title. Arch/bishop's name, Bishop of Salford on:

Date: 22-23 March 2023

Overall effectiveness The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school.....	<b>2</b>
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
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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	√
The school is fully compliant with all requirements of the diocesan bishop	√
The school has responded to the areas for improvement from the last inspection	Fully

### Summary of key findings

#### What the school does well

- The school's distinctive Catholic mission helps create a happy and inclusive environment in which each individual student is highly valued by committed staff.
- Through good leadership and focused teaching, students achieve well in religious education.
- The school offers a wide variety of enrichment opportunities to develop students' moral and spiritual formation.

What the school needs to improve:

- To model best practice in the delivery of collective worship so that pupils experience a consistently good variety of prayer and worship in form time.
- To increase the confidence of staff in naturally delivering social, moral, cultural and spiritual education across all subjects.
- To develop more student leadership of the Catholic life and mission of the school.

## 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:.....

2

### 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 .....

2

### Leadership

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

2



The strong sense of a school on a journey guided by a clear mission is palpable in St Joseph’s RC High School. Students have a clear understanding of the distinctive mission of the school. They feel highly valued by staff and most students understand that the welcoming and inclusive values of the school come from the teachings of Jesus Christ. Students show a strong sense of belonging to their school which many identify as being more like a family. As one student said, “Everyone feels welcome. School helps us all feel united with nobody left out.” Being a “Joey” (a current or previous member of the school) is an important source of pride for the vast majority of students. The school is working to ensure that this pride is also reflected in all students following the high standards of uniform and behaviour expected of them. As a result of the school’s aspirational values many students take up positions of leadership across the school and are increasingly confident in sharing their gifts and talents in liturgies. In order for the school to be outstanding in this area, more students need to be involved in leading the Catholic life and mission of the school.

The newly configured student mission team helps plan charity and liturgical events and has started to help leaders evaluate the quality of prayer and collective worship routinely experienced by students. Chaplaincy provision is co-ordinated by the shepherd of school life. This newly developed post supports staff in the planning and delivery of a range of opportunities for moral and spiritual development such as residential retreats, mission week and attendance at The Flame conference. The school environment reflects its mission through appropriate signage and iconography including quotations from sacred scripture. The school offers high quality pastoral care to all its students but shows an even deeper commitment to students who are vulnerable in provision called The Hive. Through a team of committed specialists this support also spreads out to parents and families in what is clearly an outward-facing school. As a result of this support,

students with complex needs or at risk of exclusion feel fully included and valued. The strong commitment of staff to the school's Catholic mission is reflected well in the words of one member of staff who said, "We have high expectations because every child is unique and made in the image of God."

The headteacher, supported by committed governors, translates the school's inspiring mission into recognisable every-day steps. This daily drip-feed of the school's values is now bearing fruit and is best seen in the excellent relationships between staff and students and in pockets of good practice in making links to Catholic social teaching in all subject areas. The provision for personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) is well-organised because beyond fulfilling national guidelines, it also responds to issues raised by students through pupil voice meetings. A religious education specialist ably supports the team to ensure that provision coheres with Catholic social teaching. Minutes of governors' meetings show that governors have a clear understanding of the school's mission and are confident in holding leaders to account. They have an honest and accurate evaluation of the school's strengths and areas for improvement and are enthusiastic in ensuring that policies and resources are preferentially dedicated to students who experience disadvantage. The school has the leadership capacity to improve further and complete its journey to be an outstanding provider of Catholic education.

## Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade:.....

2

### 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



Students enjoy religious education and achieve well in it. Results in GCSE religious education are good, particularly in higher attaining students. In both key stages, they show a good level of subject knowledge in lessons and books and use religious terminology with increasing confidence and accuracy. In response to often thought-provoking teaching, some students are inspired to ask their teachers further questions which reveals the excellent relationships evident in all observed lessons. For example, in a Year 8 religious education lesson, a student spontaneously asked, “If you are not a Christian would you go to hell when you die?” Rather than seeing this question as a diversion, the teacher ran with the question and facilitated even deeper thinking. Because of routinely good teaching and strong relationships, students’ behaviour is uniformly good or better across the whole subject. Students enjoy the many opportunities they have to discuss ethical issues in religious education, and this has helped them understand similar issues when they appear in other subjects. For example, in a science lesson on stem cell research, students were able to use knowledge of Catholic social teaching to shape their thoughtful answers. Students produce good work in their religious education books and in response to supportive marking are clear about how to improve their work further. Their books are well-presented in both key stages and confirm that as students move up the school, they can confidently recall and apply their increasing religious knowledge.

Students experience a well-planned and thoughtful curriculum in religious education which faithfully adheres to the requirements of the *Religious Education Directory*. Whilst excellent GCSE results in religious education might be the goal, this has not turned Key Stage 3 into a mini-examination factory. In contrast, the newly developed Key Stage 3 curriculum operates as a foundation for deeper knowledge and enjoyment of religious education. All teachers are subject specialists and students are clearly benefitting from their teachers’ expertise. The breadth and depth of students’ knowledge and understanding is enhanced by the support of the parish priest

who is a regular visitor to lessons. Teachers know their students well and through careful marking and assessment guide them on to their pathways of progress. Teaching in religious education is good and sometimes better. In the best teaching observed, teachers let go of tight plans and built on students' enthusiasm. They used real-life examples and skillful questioning to spark students' interest. Once hooked, even deeper understanding was observed to follow.

The subject leader for religious education offers inspiring leadership to her team and with her team is raising standards further. Consequently, expectations of what students can achieve is high. She works with other subject leaders to map out common concepts and themes covered in other subjects so that links to the core Catholic values of the school are more visible to students. The best examples of this were where links were not contrived but emerged naturally from the teaching. Leaders and governors have ensured that religious education is well-resourced in terms of budgets, staffing and other sources so that it can genuinely operate as the core of the core subjects of the school. The headteacher line manages religious education and with the support of governors offers accurate monitoring and evaluation of progress. The school is compliant with the requirement to dedicate a minimum of 10% curriculum time to the teaching of religious education. In order for religious education to be outstanding, it needs to ensure all teachers are more confident in linking their subject teaching to the school's Catholic mission.

## Collective worship

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

Collective worship key judgement grade:.....

2

### 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

Students' response to the experience of prayer and worship is varied, particularly in form time at the beginning of the school day. In the best examples, form tutors use time efficiently. Routine checks of uniform and equipment are completed at the start leaving time to be devoted to meaningful prayer and worship. In these good examples, the "sacred space" in the classroom became a focus, a candle was lit, or music was played, and this created the right conditions for quiet reflection and prayer. In one observed form period, the teacher used this technique to give students time to think and to share their thoughts about how they could do little acts of kindness on that day. Whilst this quality is not yet the routine experience for all students, the school has made some progress in building teachers' skills and confidence in leading prayer and worship since the last inspection. In order to be outstanding in this area, all teachers need to be secure in delivering creative and engaging prayer and worship in form time.

Outside of form time, students experience a wider diet of prayer and worship. For example, in assemblies, the mission team takes more of a lead in preparing and leading. This was the case in one assembly observed which was entirely student-led. Students entered the assembly hall respectfully and remained so throughout. Students spoken to confirmed this was routinely the case. In addition to assemblies, students also experience a wide variety of opportunities for different kinds of prayer inside and outside school. For example, Mission Week, residential retreats and attendance at The Flame conference. The Eucharist is celebrated in school on Holy days and feast days. Students also have opportunities to participate in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation also takes place within school. Each form room has a dedicated sacred space as a focus for prayer and the school has a well-furnished chapel. The chapel is currently an under-used resource for prayer and reflection.

Leadership of collective worship and the Catholic life of the school is through a facilitative mode. A new post entitled 'shepherd of Catholic life' was recently introduced to signal that responsibility for the Catholic life of the school was not the preserve of one post-holder but the responsibility of all staff. The 'shepherd', supported by senior leaders, ensures staff are guided and supported in delivering collective worship. She has assembled a committed group of students called the mission team to help prepare and lead prayer, worship, liturgies, and charity events. Although this is a small group in comparison to the larger number of students who exercise leadership responsibilities in other areas, the school is exploring ways to increase their number. The mission team also works with parishes and partner primary schools in supporting the development of prayer. The policy for collective worship recognises the liturgical calendar of the Church and other key moments in the life of the school. Staff experience a twice weekly briefing in which scripture and prayer play a central role. Teachers have received training and support in delivering form time prayer but would benefit from more explicit modelling of best practice so that their confidence grows further. School has begun to evaluate the quality of prayer and form time using the mission team and these results will help take the next steps in ensuring best practice spreads across the whole school.



## Information about the school

Full name of school	St Joseph's RC High School
School unique reference number (URN)	105262
Full postal address of the school	Chorley New Road, Horwich, Bolton BL6 6HW
School phone number	01204 697456
Name of head teacher or principal	Mr. T McCabe
Chair of governing board	Mrs. P Jones
School Website	<a href="https://stjosephsbolton.org.uk">https://stjosephsbolton.org.uk</a>
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	N/A
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Voluntary aided
Age-range of pupils	11-16
Trustees	Diocese of Salford
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	12 May 2015
Previous denominational inspection grade	Good

## The inspection team

Martin Reynolds	Lead inspector
Mike Wright	Team inspector
Name of inspector	Lead/team
Name of inspector	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