



St Michael's Catholic Primary School

URN: 104656

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Archbishop of Liverpool

02–03 May 2024

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

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 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

1

What the school does well

- St Michael's mission statement, '*With Jesus we can achieve what we dream and believe*', is lived out joyfully in this welcoming school, which serves its multi-faith community with great love and respect.
- Strong relationships at all levels enable pupils to thrive, grow and achieve the very best that Catholic education can offer.
- Pastoral care for pupils and families is given very high priority and, as a result, vulnerable pupils settle quickly into school and make good progress in their learning.
- Behaviour of pupils is exemplary. There is great respect for other faiths and cultures.
- Highly effective, interactive and creative teaching in religious education ensures that pupils are well- motivated, achieve well and are religiously literate.

What the school needs to improve

- Engage the school community in achieving the *Cafod Live Simply Award*.
- Share best practice and provide appropriate training for staff in planning and provision for prayer and liturgy, which will deepen the spiritual responses of those present.
- Provide opportunities for pupil collaboration that will increase confidence and capacity in their planning, leading and evaluation of age appropriate 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

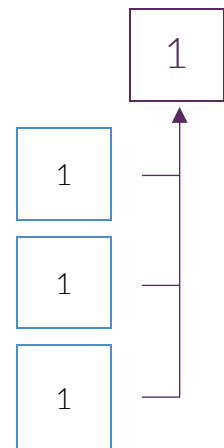
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

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 greatly value the Catholic life and mission of St Michael's. They speak of its unique story, as part of the local and global Church. They clearly articulate their mission values that are inspired by the gospels and explain how these are embedded in all aspects of school life. One pupil said, "I have a favourite piece of scripture, it is from Philippians, 'I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me'. This helps me to understand our mission statement." Pupils show a great respect for their own personal dignity and that of others, who are all made in the image and likeness of God. They demonstrate a deep sense of respect for those of other faiths and religions. One pupil stated, "We are diverse, God created us, so we all deserve to be treated equally. We are all equally important." The behaviour of pupils is exemplary in lessons and throughout the school. Pupils take their roles of responsibility very seriously. The youth St Vincent de Paul Society takes a leading role in responding to Catholic Social Teaching, for example through their work for the *Big Help Project* and collecting socks for homeless people at the Whitechapel Centre. They further develop their skills through meetings online with society members in Grenada.

The mission statement, 'With Jesus we can achieve what we dream and believe', is known, lived and witnessed throughout the school. It is underpinned with mission values which are woven, like a golden thread throughout the whole curriculum. As a result, it has a significant impact on the life of the school, which excels at being a community of faith. St Michael's provides an exceptionally inclusive and joyful community where all are valued. Staff and pupils acknowledge Christ's presence in one another in a spirit of generous hospitality. The embedded heritage of welcome celebrates the presence of those from other cultures, beliefs and traditions. For example, the *School of Sanctuary Award* honours a *world in one school*. One parent said, "This is a

wonderful school that goes above and beyond to support the local community." Pastoral care for pupils and families is outstanding. This is evidenced through the inviting and calm spaces around the school environment, for example the *Place2Be* and the *Quiet Café*. The curriculum for relationships, sex and health education is carefully planned and sequenced from Early Years to Year Six. It meets statutory and Archdiocesan requirements and is firmly rooted in the teachings of the Catholic Church.

Leaders and governors are energised, joyful and dedicated to the fulfilment of the Church's mission in education. They are a source of inspiration for the whole community as exemplary witnesses to the Gospel. The well-planned mission review days enable all to share spiritual reflections which deepen the understanding of the mission values in action. Effective self-evaluation includes gathering the views of pupils and parents, which influences the direction of the school at every level. The school is committed to the service of those in greatest need, for example, the provision of family hampers at Christmas. Dedication to the local and global Church inspired fundraising for the *Big Help Project* and for Cafod, through the *Big Lent Walk*. The large pastoral team is highly skilled in engaging with parents and carers, to the benefit of pupils. Leaders engage with the Archdiocese and the local cluster of schools and value the support of both. Senior leaders have given high priority to the induction of new staff and the overall care for the well-being and monitoring of the workloads of all staff, which is greatly appreciated. The head teacher is a source of inspiration for the whole school community. One governor said, "The head teacher allows others to grow around her, this is her gift to our school." St Michael's is indeed an oasis of love and hope for all.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

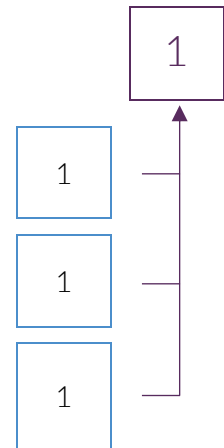
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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, in line with the *Religious Education Directory*. Pupils, many from low starting points, are making increasingly good progress and reach standards which are in-line with other core subjects. This includes pupils who are disadvantaged, those with special educational needs and those pupils with English as an additional language. Pupils are religiously literate. They are engaged young people who think ethically and theologically. They are very articulate in their ideas and explanations, particularly when discussing scripture and its impact on their lives. One pupil said, "Jesus has jobs for us, that we may not know yet; scripture helps us to find them." Pupils can speak fluently and with confidence about what they have learnt in current and previous religious education topics, using appropriate and mature vocabulary. When discussing how to be a witness, inspired by the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, one pupil explained, "You need to show integrity, but don't boast. It doesn't need to be miraculous, small acts make the biggest difference." Pupils enjoy their lessons with passion and enthusiasm. They are curious learners who enjoy collaboration and active interaction. Consequently, behaviour is exceptional.

Teachers have high levels of subject knowledge and teaching expertise. Consistent routines and high-quality strategies for teaching and learning, combined with high expectations, maximise engagement of pupils. Well-embedded pedagogy makes learning memorable, for example re-capping and retrieval, and repetition of new vocabulary is modelled very well using picture symbols, models and actions. Teachers introduce scripture stories, creating curiosity and interest as they open golden boxes. Reception children learn about Pentecost using wooden figures to represent the apostles, and fabric to symbolize the wind and flames. This inspires them to proclaim, "Alleluia!" Links to the mission statement are woven throughout lessons and time is given for purposeful discussion and spiritual reflection. For example, pupils are

challenged through a sequencing activity, exploring how scripture and mission values are important in everyday life. One pupil responded saying, "It doesn't matter about race or which country you come from. All are equal." Teachers use questioning skilfully to identify where pupils are in their understanding. They know their pupils very well. They adapt explanations and tasks to enable good progress. Praise, encouragement and immediate feedback ensure pupils understand their next steps in learning. Teaching assistants are used very effectively to optimise learning for all pupils.

Leaders and governors ensure that the school curriculum for religious education reflects the learning required by the current directory. It is sequenced, well-structured and increasingly demanding. The revised Religious Education Directory has been thoughtfully introduced in Early Years and has also enhanced teaching in other year groups. Leaders have prioritised training for all staff in the development of highly effective teaching strategies. Regular staff meetings and sharing of expertise within the school has resulted in teaching that is consistently good with outstanding features. The subject leader's vision and effective monitoring have each led to targeted support and strategic action planning. Her expertise is valued by all staff. Governors are frequent visitors to the school. They are fully involved in self-evaluation and informed by presentations and detailed head teacher's reports. Religious education has full parity with other core curriculum subjects, for example policies, reporting to parents, resourcing and timetabling. Religious education is greatly enhanced by people of other faiths within the school community, who fully engage with enrichment experiences, for example, the 'Picnic around the world'. The parish priest is a welcome and regular visitor to classrooms to support aspects of learning 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

1

Leadership

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

1

1

Pupils respond well to and enjoy the experience of prayer and liturgy provided at St Michael's. They sing joyfully, reflect in silence and respond respectfully. Pupils willingly lead aspects of prayer and liturgy, such as preparing the focus table, with religious artefacts from their golden box. They give out candles and special cards which contain messages to take away. They take responsibility for reading prayers and scripture. Pupils reflect on how they live out their mission values using this as a source for prayer. Some pupils use spontaneous prayer to express their thoughts during assembly. A Year 2 pupil said, "When we pray to God, we pray that our global neighbours will have enough food and water." Another said, "When we make a mistake, we pray to God for forgiveness." Pupils can articulate how their experience of prayer and scripture leads to action in their daily lives as they go forth. Pupils would benefit from further collaborative opportunities in planning, leading and evaluating their own class prayer and liturgy at an age-appropriate level.

Prayer and liturgy are central to the life of St Michael's and are naturally embedded through the daily pattern of prayer. The head teacher is an inspiring model of exemplary practice for staff and pupils. She leads prayer in response to mission values or the needs of her school community. Appropriate scripture passages are carefully chosen. Participants are offered a wide range of ways to respond including reflection, meditation, silence and song. They make full use of traditional prayers. Pupils, through action and gesture choose how they receive and respond to the Gospel. Pupils of all faiths are invited to enjoy the stillness and calm atmosphere created. All are welcome and all are respectfully valued. Staff support pupils in planning rejoice celebrations at the end of each topic. However, pupils could be challenged further through collaborative planning and evaluation of daily prayer and liturgy. The school makes imaginative and creative use of spaces in and around the school environment. The well-developed allotment,

forest school area and welcoming prayer spaces outside, are a realised priority for leaders. These spaces are well cared for and conducive to prayer. A representative of the youth St Vincent de Paul Society explained, "The new outside cabin is becoming a prayer space for all. It is accessible for all faiths."

The policy on prayer and liturgy is carefully formulated, accessible and useful to staff. The subject leader has shared the school's strategy for building up skills of participation and opportunities for pupil leadership in prayer and liturgy. These have been key focusses for staff training. She assists and guides others to plan and lead meaningful prayer and liturgy which is accessible and relevant to all pupils. Priority is given to high quality professional development and formation of all staff, through retreat days and mission statement reviews. The dedicated head teacher leads prayer and liturgy for pupils and staff, who benefit greatly from this modelling of inspiring practice. Liturgical year themes and scripture guidelines have been mapped out by the subject leader. Holy days and other significant days are recognised in the school's calendar and timetable. The school community can access appropriate liturgies on special days, for example during the seasons of Advent and Lent. Leaders and governors invest in good quality resources, including drapes, crosses and bibles, which enhance focus tables for prayer and liturgy. One governor said with great pride, "Our faith has always been strong. Our school is moving at a pace. There has been transformational change."

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Michael's Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	104656
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	3413571
Full postal address of the school	St Michael's Catholic Primary School, Guion Street, Off Boaler Street, Liverpool, L6 9DU
School phone number	01512638460
Headteacher	Alyson Rigby
Chair of Governors	Jeanette Riley
School Website	www.stmichaelscatholicprimary.co.uk/
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	N/A
Phase	Primary
Type of school	Voluntary Aided School
Admissions policy	N/A
Age-range of pupils	3-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	5 th December 2017
Previous denominational inspection grade	Outstanding

The inspection team

Christine Mason	Lead
Fiona Brownsey	Team
Janice Taberner	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