

# St James' Catholic Primary School

URN: 106492

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Archbishop of Liverpool

13–14 June 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

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

- Staff bear witness to the Catholic life and mission of the school.
- The sense of community and pastoral care offered to all members of the St James' family is excellent.
- Behaviour is excellent and tangible kindness is threaded throughout the school community.
- Parents are wholly supportive and proud of the school.
- Practice in Early Years provides pupils with a good start to their faith journey.

## What the school needs to improve

- Develop more challenging and creative approaches to the teaching of religious education so that pupils can demonstrate deeper thinking and individuality.
- Provide more opportunities for pupils to prepare, plan and deliver class prayer and liturgy.
- Create further opportunities to include families in the prayer life of the school and so continue to support the spiritual development of pupils.

## 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

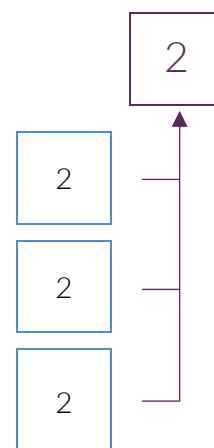
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

#### 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



St James' Catholic Primary School is a good school, valued and loved by its community where pupils feel nurtured and recognised as unique members of God's family. They demonstrate levels of respect and compassion for each other and live out the school mission statement: *'We follow in Jesus' footsteps to learn, love, rejoice, grow and forgive together'*. The mission has a visible impact on school life. One pupil stated, *"St James' is a kind and loving school, and we are proud to be part of it."* Many pupils show a willingness to devote themselves to the faith life of others through their roles as well-being leaders and by membership of mini jimmies and the school council. Pupils are aware of their responsibilities to care for our common home and were eager to talk about buddying up with the younger pupils for litter picking as a contribution to looking after God's world. Pupils have the capacity to lead more projects and take on additional responsibilities. The behaviour of all pupils observed in lessons was excellent.

Members of the school community are committed to the implementation of the mission statement and believe it is lived and witnessed. They are caring and supportive of each other and know how they can be like Jesus. Parents are supportive of the school. One parent stated, *"The school works hand in hand with parents and recognises us as the first educator of our children."* They are confident that the school supports the pupils' spiritual and moral development. The school has invested in pastoral support to meet the needs of both parents and pupils, which reflects gospel values with an emphasis on compassion. This has assisted in the achievement of the Nurture award. Staff are positive role models. They seek to participate in those activities which reflect the life and mission of the school. The school environment reflects both the mission statement and its Catholic character. There is the capacity to develop this even further. The

school's provision for relationships and sex education meets both statutory and diocesan requirements and is faithful to the teaching of the Church.

Leaders and governors ensure that policies and procedures demonstrate the Catholic identity of the school. They are regular visitors and are conscientious in their work. Leaders have worked hard to ensure that there are effective links with the local parish and over the past few years relationships have become much stronger. The school has effective strategies for engaging with parents for the benefit of pupils and realises that even more involvement will immerse them further into the spiritual life of the school. Staff are positive about the support and care they receive from leaders and governors. They believe their well-being and workload has a priority. Whilst governors support the Catholic life and mission of the school, further understanding is required so that they fully understand and recognise their role in developing its priorities for continued improvement. Pupils are skilled and ready to become more involved in evaluating Catholic life and making their own impact.

## Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

### Religious education key judgement grade

#### Pupil outcomes

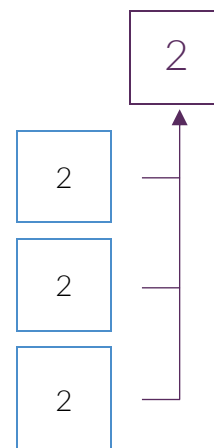
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

#### 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



Over time, pupils at St James' develop a secure knowledge and understanding of religious education. Pupils enjoy their religious education lessons and show great care and respect for each other. This was evident in the Early Years where children were provided with robust knowledge and skills that reflect the learning required by the *Religious Education Directory*. When given the opportunity pupils can work independently and take initiative in their learning. However, at times they work passively and often need to be provided with more challenging questioning and independent activities. Key religious vocabulary is used to support religious literacy. This needs to be reflected throughout the school and used more to develop pupils' understanding even further. The school's marking and feedback practice is consistent and understood by pupils. They receive detailed and positive commentary that supports their learning and most work is well presented. They can explain the marking process and how to improve their work and respond appropriately to feedback. Pupils' attainment is in line with other core curriculum subjects.

Teachers are confident in their subject knowledge which is appropriate to the year group in which they are teaching. They have commitment to their teaching of religious education and communicate this effectively to pupils. Their questioning is searching in most lessons and pupils respond appropriately. However, some questions lack challenge, and opportunities are missed to deepen the pupils' knowledge and understanding and therefore do not produce a greater depth response. Pupils' work and responses are celebrated in all classes. Teachers ensure their planning correlates with their parallel year group. Assessment of work takes place after each unit and is evidenced in the pupils' books. All feedback is positive and relevant to individual needs particularly written feedback. Teachers recognise the importance of supporting the pupils' moral and spiritual development. For example, in a lower key stage two class, pupils were given the

opportunity to reflect on moral issues as they were discussing the role of their conscience. In the classes observed during inspection teaching assistants were effectively deployed.

Leaders and governors ensure that provision for religious education fully reflects the requirement of the current Religious Education Curriculum Directory, and that religious education has full parity with other core subjects. There are good links with the parish community in relation to the sacramental programme. The school has recently implemented a religious education team which will have a significant impact on improvements and standards in religious education. Leaders are striving to validate the accuracy of their assessments through moderation within school, and this is strengthened through their work with other Catholic schools. Governors have visited the school to monitor standards and evaluate current practice. However, this needs to be more rigorous, and evidence kept of these visits, to ensure they are fully involved in both processes. Leaders have identified that further work on adaptive teaching is required to ensure that challenge for the more able pupils is a priority as well as ensuring that all pupils' abilities are catered for. Leaders have encouraged staff to attend further training in religious education and eight teachers are currently studying for the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies.

## 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 enjoy and as a result respond well to the opportunities for prayer and reflection provided by the school. They visit church regularly and they also experience class Masses. They show reverence and are respectful during times of prayer and they understand the importance of symbols within prayer and liturgy. Class prayer and liturgy is enhanced by music and joyful singing. Pupils are knowledgeable about the liturgical year, for example they understand the various colours and themes. There are resources available in the classrooms to dress their prayer areas in the relevant colours. Ways of using these prayer spaces in the classrooms need exploring so that pupils can have the opportunity to use them for quiet prayer and reflection. Further development of pupils planning and leading prayer and liturgy is underway so that everyone can undertake liturgical ministries with confidence and understanding. Pupils also need to be able to reflect on how these experiences can have a significant impact on their own prayer lives.

Assemblies, class prayer and liturgy and class Masses take place regularly at St James'. Teachers ensure that prayer and liturgical life follows the model of gathering, listening, responding, and going forth. The use of scripture is given high priority, and pupils respond reverently to the readings. However, there should be more opportunities for pupils to read directly from the Bible. The provision of prayer trees around the school encourages pupils to pray for themselves and others. These prayers are read at whole school assembly and so develop pupils understanding of praying together as a Catholic community. Staff need to continue to develop prayer and liturgy to enable consistent pupil leadership throughout the school. There are available prayer spaces and displays both in and around the classrooms reflecting the Catholic nature of the school. Parents appreciate how the school is encouraging links between children and the parish. However, school recognises the need to be more creative in its approaches to engaging with families to ensure more active participation.

Leaders, including governors, recognise the importance of prayer and liturgy for their school community. They have developed a policy that is understood by staff. Leaders and governors have provided opportunities for staff to receive appropriate training so that they can deliver prayer and liturgy in the classroom. Staff also value the opportunities to develop their own faith through prayer at the beginning of the school year and during staff meetings. They also recognise the benefits of having a planned school calendar which reflects the key times in the liturgical year, including the celebration of key feast days and holy days of obligation. A weekly school gathering which follows the theme of the previous Sunday Gospel is led by the head teacher. This enables the Word to be shared by the whole community. The Wednesday Word is purchased to enable connection between home, school and parish as they work together. School works effectively with the parish catechists to provide quality sacramental preparation for its pupils. Further strategic evaluation of prayer and liturgy by leaders and governors will continue to raise the whole impact of prayer and liturgy.



## Information about the school

Full name of school	St James' Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	106492
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	3593388
Full postal address of the school	St James' Catholic Primary School, St James Road, Orrell, Wigan, WN5 7AA
School phone number	01942748455
Headteacher	Gary Hayes
Chair of Governors	Michael Hickman
School Website	<a href="http://www.orrellsaintjames.wigan.sch.uk/">www.orrellsaintjames.wigan.sch.uk/</a>
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	4-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	28 November 2017
Previous denominational inspection grade	Outstanding

## The inspection team

Karl Landrum  
Fiona Robinson

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