



## Catholic Schools Inspectorate inspection report for St Michael's Catholic Primary School

URN: 111393

Carried out on behalf of the Most Rev. Malcolm McMahon, Archbishop of Liverpool on:

Date: 23<sup>rd</sup> - 24<sup>th</sup> November 2023

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 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 pupils are confident, religiously literate and represent the school community with great pride.
- The headteacher and governing body are dedicated to the school community.
- There are strong and flourishing links between school and parish.
- The leader of religious education is an outstanding role model for others, demonstrating an aspirational vision for the school.
- Parents are proud and highly supportive of the school because of its commitment to the religious journey of their children.

What the school needs to improve:

- Fully include pupil leadership teams in the evaluation of the Catholic life and mission.
- Implement the new Religious Education Directory in line with the Archdiocesan programme of induction.
- Enable chaplains to fully support the delivery of prayer and liturgy in early years and key stage 1.

## 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

In St Michael's there is a strong sense of community. Every member of the school community lives out and embraces the mission and values. Pupils clearly understand they are part of a Catholic family whose core values come from Jesus. Pupils can talk confidently about the school's mission and can relate this to their daily lives by being inclusive and welcoming to all; this helps them to clearly express that everyone is made in the image and likeness of God. The pupils have much to contribute to the school's development. There is exceptional readiness to take on roles of leadership, responsibility and service, resulting in a strong community. Their caring nature is extended to the ways in which they support those in the local area. There is an established link between the school and a local care home. Regular visits take place and the impact is evident in the way that the pupils and staff talk about the strength of the relationship. Pupils are extremely respectful and their faith in action is exemplified by extensive fundraising and a real sense of respect for those of diverse backgrounds and faiths. Pupils respect their dedicated staff and each other, benefiting greatly from the care and support they receive. Consequently, pupils feel safe and valued and develop a sense of belonging. This is reflected in their excellent behaviour for learning.

All stakeholders are proud of the school mission 'In God's love we believe and achieve'. This is underpinned by the core values that are lived out and permeate throughout the school. These values are exemplified by strong positive relationships resulting in a happy and safe environment for all. The word of God is central in school, which is evident in prayer, liturgy, and lessons. As a result, pupils recognise its importance in their everyday lives and live out the mission and the values as children God. Staff are excellent role models who bear witness to

the Catholic faith. They are committed to the school's mission, which is evident in how they support each other and by the love and care they show the pupils. The parish priest supports the pupils in their faith journey through the sacramental preparation programmes and wider school care. The school environment is a celebration of the school mission, which pupils use to support their prayer and worship. The relationships, sex and health education programme promotes acceptance, tolerance and understanding of others and these qualities are modelled by all. Parents are kept fully informed of the content of the programme and have the opportunity to review the offer at regular intervals.

Leaders, including governors, are committed to the Church's mission in education and could proudly articulate how it shapes decisions and the school vision. They are passionate about Catholic education through their monitoring, evaluation and reviewing of progress, so ensuring they are constantly driving the school forward. Parents are regularly invited to school to support the development of their children and encourage them to be part of the wider family. The traveling crib promotes a stronger relationship with families and develops their faith which unites school, home and parish. The headteacher is dedicated to meeting the needs of his staff and encourages and supports their physical and mental well-being. Staff new to the school are fully appreciative of their induction to Catholic education and value the support given by every member of the school family. All staff are treated with respect and dignity, resulting in an aspirational and dedicated staff team. Feedback demonstrates how they feel valued and supported and refers highly to the role of the mission in their working life. In the survey one member of staff commented, 'I think the staff at school epitomize what Catholic Life should be. Staff go above and beyond to help children even bringing in clothes and food for those children in need. Staff care for each other and look out for each other.'

## 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

A consistent approach to teaching and learning enables pupils to develop their knowledge and understanding of religious education. Pupils speak confidently about their learning, using high level vocabulary with accuracy. Pupils enjoy their religious education lessons and demonstrate that they know more, remember more, and achieve well in lessons. Staff have high expectations. Behaviour for learning in lessons is excellent with all pupils on task and actively engaged. Pupils' books provide evidence of the effective use of their knowledge, understanding and skills to reflect spiritually and think ethically. Their written and creative work in is of a high standard and well presented. These workbooks are excellent models of practice at all stages. By the end of Year 6, many pupils meet, and some exceed diocesan expectations. Significant groups of pupils across the school make at least good progress. Lessons are planned to meet pupils' needs, particularly those with special educational needs, who are provided with appropriate support to succeed. Attainment in religious education compares favourably with other core subjects.

Teaching in religious education is of a high standard. Staff have strong subject knowledge and when necessary seek guidance from the subject leader for religious education. Teachers plan lessons carefully, adapting their teaching where needed to ensure that all pupils are included and engaged. Lessons are structured to draw out pupils' responses through skilful questioning, thereby expanding the learning of all pupils. Staff have a deep understanding of the impact that their teaching can have on the moral and spiritual development of pupils. They plan regular opportunities for reflection and discernment, and this means that pupils are confident in sharing their thoughts and opinions. Staff value the support offered by senior leaders. They expressed how leaders inspire and motivate them to strive for the best outcomes

for pupils. Teachers and support staff model learning well, ask challenging questions and well-briefed support staff have a strong impact on learning. The coverage and progress evident in pupil workbooks match the outcomes in the school tracking and analysis. Staff have established a clear procedure for providing feedback to pupils. Staff understand what the next steps are for all and adapt their planning appropriately. Teachers follow the schools marking and feedback policy. They encourage and support pupils to do their best and to understand how to improve in religious education lessons.

Leaders and governors ensure that the curriculum at St Michael's reflects the expectations of the *Religious Education Directory* and that all year groups cover the required content. Leaders and governors ensure that religious education is comparable with other core subjects in terms of resourcing, timetabling and staffing. The curriculum is thoughtfully planned and well-structured to meet the needs of different groups of pupils and enhance the learning for all. The subject lead has a clear vision for religious education and provides strong support for colleagues. The leader of religious education is excellent in her role. She along with the senior leaders, demonstrate an aspirational vision for the school. Collectively, all the staff are excellent role models for others. The leader of religious education is highly effective in the support she offers to staff and the wider community through her dedication and attendance at the core cluster group. She leads with knowledge and commitment that together demonstrate a clear vision for the continued development of religious education. Leaders use a clear cycle of monitoring of teaching and learning. This provides staff with feedback which contributes to the school's outcomes. Leaders use the impact of monitoring to improve the quality of provision even further. Governors are skilled and have the relevant experience to challenge leaders to ensure that strategic action plans are in place and impact in moving progress.

## 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

At St Michael's prayer and liturgy is embedded at the heart of school life for all. Pupils are reverent and respectful during prayer and liturgy opportunities provided. They reflect on experiences, sing well and can clearly articulate their thoughts and prayer. The content is inclusive and accessible to all. Pupils are given a wide variety of opportunities to take part in prayer and liturgy. They participate regularly in planned liturgical prayer and the pupil leadership teams show expertise in planning and delivering worship. The four sections of gather, listen, respond and go forth are explicit in all acts of prayer and contribute significantly to increasing pupils' understanding of prayer. Pupils spoke confidently about how with the support of the subject lead they prepare experiences of prayer. They volunteer to set up whole school and class focus points. Pupils are respectful when listening to God's word. They express the importance of scripture within the school and understand the impact scripture has on their own lives and the lives of others. Year 6 pupils express great pride in being chaplains. One said, 'I am proud of collective worship because it gives us time reflect about ourselves and it helps us to become closer to God.' Prayer and liturgy help them to feel valued as an important part of school life.

Carefully planned prayer and worship is central to the life of the school. Pupils have regular high quality spiritual experiences through celebration assemblies, adult/pupil led acts of worship and special masses and celebrations in church. A pattern of prayer throughout the day is embedded across the school. Pupils recognise and value the importance of prayer as the opportunity to talk to God. Staff are creative and use music, art and a range of resources when leading prayer. They are highly skilled and knowledgeable in creating prayer opportunities for pupils. Scripture is used well, and readings are chosen in relation to the liturgical season. The school has dedicated time to create resources for reflective spaces both

in and out of class, which focus on the liturgical season. As a result of this, classrooms and communal spaces have focused areas that are of a high quality, relevant and engaging in living out the school's mission. Prayer spaces outside further enhance the quality of the provision. The pupils and staff use these spaces both in structured and during personal times for reflection and prayer.

Clear expectations regarding the progression of the planning and delivery of prayer and liturgy are clearly defined, understood and adhered to by all staff. Leaders and governors are positive role models of good practice for staff and pupils in prioritizing planning, resourcing and delivering quality acts of worship. This enables pupils to acquire the relevant skills to lead their own worship. Pupils can clearly describe the stages of prayer and liturgy. The subject leader has a clear overview of the quality of prayer and liturgy throughout the school. She has modelled good practice and provided support and nurturing for members of the staff team. As a result, all staff are now confident in planning and leading high-quality acts of worship. Themes for masses and assemblies always reflect the liturgical calendar and children are given the opportunity to celebrate Mass in church as a class family, school family and parish family. Leaders and governors monitor and review prayer and liturgy as part of the Catholic self-evaluation process and whole school improvement plan and monitoring cycle.



## Information about the school

Full name of school	St Michael's Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	111393
Full postal address of the school	St Michael's Road, Widnes, WA8 8TD
School phone number	0151 424 4468
Name of head teacher or principal	Mr Paul Loughran
Chair of governing board	Mr Mike Volynchok
School Website	<a href="https://www.stmichaelscatholicprimaryschool.co.uk">https://www.stmichaelscatholicprimaryschool.co.uk</a>
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	n/a
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age-range of pupils	4 to 11
Trustees	Archdiocese of Liverpool
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	February 2016
Previous denominational inspection grade	Outstanding

## The inspection team

Jude Ryan	Lead inspector
Clare Dwerryhouse	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