



## **Inclusion Quality Mark Reaccreditation Report** **St Joseph's Roman Catholic Primary School**

18<sup>th</sup> March 2025

St Joseph's Roman Catholic primary School was accredited with Bury's Inclusion Quality Mark in March 2022. St Joseph's was provided with feedback and a written report that outlined strengths and suggested possible areas for development.

St Joseph's requested reaccreditation against the Bury Inclusion Quality Mark standards. These standards are organised into four areas: Whole School Approaches; Inclusive Learning; Supporting Emotional Health and Wellbeing; Participation and Involvement. School's performance against the standards was assessed during a full day accreditation visit on 18<sup>th</sup> March 2025. The visit was conducted by Caroline Haughton (Inclusion Project Manager) Claire Wheeler (SENCO at St Joseph and St Bede's Roman Catholic Primary School) and Zoe Mawdsley (SENCO at Higher Lane Primary School).

Activities for the accreditation included:

- Visits to EYs, KS1 and KS2 classrooms
- Interviews with pupils
- Interviews with parents and governors
- Interviews with the senior leadership team
- Review of school policies and procedures
- Discussion of pupil work
- Watching a pupil-led assembly
- Observing outdoor provision
- Observing a range of interventions supporting teaching, learning and wellbeing.

### **Whole School Approaches** ***Ethos***

- The culture of inclusion is deeply embedded in the vision and values of St Joseph's RC Primary School. It is driven from the top down and is firmly rooted in everyday policy and practice.
- As a school, considerable effort is focussed on ensuring that provision is inclusive, and as a result, pupils with a diverse range of needs feel safe and happy. When asked about their vision for inclusion, one member of the Senior

Leadership team (SLT) stated: "Inclusion is about happiness first then all else follows."

- All members of the Senior leadership Team (SLT) talked about their passion and drive to ensure all children have access to equal opportunities, with an emphasis on preparing each child to take the next step in their education with confidence and with an understanding of the world in which they live. The leadership team clearly articulate their 'inclusion journey' and evidenced a programme of high quality CPD, both for staff and parents which is well received.
- There is a vast array of clubs on offer to support children's emotional health and wellbeing: choir, martial arts, outdoor learning opportunities, the Rock Steady band, yoga, mindfulness, sports, eco club and school council but to name a few. The school have also been successful in gaining the Primary Science Quality Mark Award, Music Quality Mark Award, Platinum Sports Award and are currently striving to achieve the Arts Mark Award. This demonstrates dedication by all staff in demonstrating their commitment to the holistic development of the children in their care.
- Parents said that they feel listened to and valued, and gave examples of how the school have adjusted their children's provision following parent-initiated contact. One parent spoke about how their child had had three previous placement breakdowns and had to be home schooled until St Joseph's provided an opportunity for her son to attend. She became emotional when describing the difference the school had made to her son's progress and confidence stating: "They just understand him- he is no longer the peg in the wrong hole. If I could fund a Year 7 unit at the side of school, I would." Another carer explained how they felt the school would 'go the extra mile for anyone' in relation to the help and support they felt their children had received from the school.
- Teachers and teaching assistants spoke about their strong working relationships and how knowing their children is key in promoting a positive environment that removes barriers and impacts on classroom learning.

### ***Leadership and Governance***

- The leadership team fosters open communication and collaboration with staff, parents and the wider community to ensure a united approach to the school's vision for inclusion.
- The leadership team has cultivated an environment where inclusion is not just a policy but deeply ingrained practice. Their commitment to fostering an inclusive community is reflected in the school's operations, culture, and daily interactions.
- The SEN Governor is also the Northwest Director of Bury Together and is pivotal in driving his passion for inclusion throughout school. He has been instrumental in delivering Autism in Schools training across the Trust, to ensure all staff are fully equipped with the skills and knowledge to support children with more complex needs in the mainstream setting. He describes

how the school “thinks outside the box” and described a time when his son was struggling with some aspect of his personal hygiene. As a result of this, the school made him a “hygiene ambassador” so he could support the younger children in understanding the importance of personal care and cleanliness.

### ***CPD***

- Staff access well-planned and systematic CPD linked to Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Inclusion. This is delivered by the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) as well as the SEN Governor.
- All staff talked positively about the training they receive and said that they get the opportunity to share best practice with their colleagues regularly. Regular staff meetings ensure everyone is aware of inclusion-related expectations.
- Parents also talked about the CPD opportunities for them including mental health workshops, general SEN issues, and understanding a child’s sensory needs which is soon to be delivered by the SENCO.
- Teaching Assistants talked passionately about the opportunities and training they receive and how they feel an integral part of the school effort to drive forward inclusion at St Joseph’s. They talked about how they can move around and support different pupils with a variety of need, allowing them to build relationships and upskill themselves in the process.

### ***Person Centred Planning***

- Parents talk very positively about their children’s experience of school. They feel well informed and are kept updated about their child’s progress with regular communication from school.
- Pupil meetings are structured around person-centred approaches e.g. annual reviews. The purpose of these meetings is to identify what is important to the children and what is important for them, ensuring barriers are identified and quickly addressed to ensure success. By involving children and families in some aspects of decision-making, person-centred planning at St Joseph’s leads to positive outcomes and effective multi-agency collaboration.

### ***Understanding and valuing difference***

- The leadership team consistently communicates and demonstrates a strong commitment to diversity and inclusion, emphasising that these values are integral to pupil success.
- The school recently took part in Down Syndrome Awareness Day. The son of a member of staff who has Down Syndrome, and his dad talked to the pupils about how differences can be celebrated.
- The SLT talked passionately about the impact of young carers week held recently. A young carer prepared a presentation that she delivered in front of her class. She talked confidently and openly about her role and the impact it had on her day-to-day life. She said, “I was happy to talk about being a young

carer; it's good that other people know what I do." As a result of this, another pupil was so moved by her passion and enthusiasm that he got up early to make his parents a cup of tea before coming to school.

- St Joseph's is becoming more culturally diverse in its context, and this is providing opportunities to really explore the richness of other cultures and faiths. Parents of children for whom English is an additional language spent time with the children exploring and celebrating their religion and customs. This resulted in heightening the children's curiosity for other faiths and beliefs both in school and at home.

### ***Policies and plans***

- There is a clear vision for inclusion which is reflected through policy. Leaders have established and embedded inclusive policies that promote equality and access for all children. These policies cover areas such as anti-bullying, accessibility, and equality and diversity.
- The consistent application of these policies ensures that the school's inclusive ethos is upheld. This vision is communicated consistently to all members of the school community, ensuring that everyone understands and embraces the importance of creating an inclusive environment.
- This vision was clearly articulated by all members of St Joseph's staff during the visit, through both formal and informal conversations.

### **Inclusive Learning** ***Curriculum and teaching***

- Teachers at St Joseph's demonstrate a deep understanding of their children's individual learning needs and styles. Instances were observed of differentiated instruction tailored to accommodate the needs of all learners. All staff were proactive in providing additional support and alternative resources to ensure that each child could fully engage with the curriculum.
- In most instances, Quality First Teaching is appropriately adapted to provide meaningful learning experiences for all abilities e.g. experiential learning opportunities, visual supports, etc.
- Interactions between staff and pupils are respectful and contribute to excellent behaviour for learning. The school's classrooms are calm and purposeful where engaged learners enthusiastically share thoughts about their work. Conversations with pupils about progression in their learning demonstrate that teachers are planning progressively and thoughtfully, building on learners' prior knowledge in coherent sequence. This helps to ensure that learners make good progress.
- Additional resources to support sensory and learning needs is evident e.g. use of wobble cushions, visual timetables, now and next boards. These allow for the children to understand the routines of the class and support their ability to self-regulate.
- The school has a designated safe space where children can go if they need a moment of calm or support. The Rainbow Room is an area equipped with resources to help the children manage their emotions and

are staffed by trained professionals who can help. This safe space contributes to a sense of security and belonging for all children.

### ***Learning and progress of all groups***

- Pupils were engaged overall in purposeful learning activities throughout the school. The children were predominantly in class with a small number outside the classroom accessing targeted group intervention and bespoke 1:1 learning. The SENCO demonstrates an awareness of the importance of ensuring that the scheduling of interventions does not dilute the breadth of the curriculum; it is more about enhancing and enriching the current offer, giving children the tools to access learning and prepare them for future learning and life skills.
- Progress is not just measured against academic success; pupils' enjoyment and engagement are key indicators of the positive impact of the curriculum in terms of emotional well-being as well as learning. This is demonstrated through the breadth of extra-curricular opportunities on offer.
- Pupils at SEN Support have their provision mapped through individual intervention records that follow the cycle of assess, plan, do and review. Entry and exit assessment data supports in monitoring the impact and helps identify next steps in their learning. This is an effective way of measuring the learning and progress of individual pupils.
- The school demonstrates high aspirations for all pupil groups and effectively supports their most vulnerable pupils in whole class teaching and learning. Practitioners were observed to be using a range of experiential, visual and pre-teaching strategies to actively involve pupils at different stages of learning. This inclusive practice is embedded, and teachers lead the learning in each lesson using this approach.

### ***Transition***

- All transitions are well supported at St Joseph's because staff are in tune with the needs of all their pupils. Transition plans are individualised according to the pupil's needs.
- The school has close links to the feeder high schools where regular meetings and additional visits are incorporated into the school day.
- The use of transition booklets and letters from their new teacher supports pupils to understand the process and to make their experience less daunting and overwhelming.
- Parents are kept informed every step of the way with one parent stating, "I was told my son would never be taught in mainstream, but he's due to leave this summer fully empowered for his future and that's all thanks to the school."

## **Supporting Emotional Health and Well-being**

### ***Resilience***

- One area for further development identified in the last report was based on pupil understanding of Carol Dweck's Growth Mindset philosophy. Pupils were unclear on strategies they could use when they "got stuck" with most pupils asking the teacher for help. This has clearly been developed with most children now having an awareness of "The Three B's" which include: using your brain, bits and bobs in and around the classroom and thirdly asking your buddy. Asking the teacher was now the last resort and pupils could articulate this strategy confidently, resulting in greater independence and ownership of their learning.
- Children present as confident and happy, indicating that they feel safe in school. Parents and carers noted that staff are nurturing and caring enabling pupils to grow with confidence and independence.
- At no point is any pupil excluded from any activity or from the daily life of St Joseph's. The senior leaders did not recognise that this aspect of their provision was to be celebrated; they naturally make adaptations to activities or provision. For example, one boy in Year 6 found social contact difficult at playtime so school provided him with a quiet area to help him become more regulated and ready for learning once back in the classroom.
- The environment is conducive to promoting health and well-being with children being able to access forest school, as well as Wild Souls outdoor provision and the opportunity of spending time with Freddie the school therapy dog.
- The school has a well-being practitioner who provides bespoke 1:1 interventions to support the emotional well-being of pupils, as well as opportunities to support staff well-being through activities such as Reiki sessions.
- The school's code of conduct for behaviour is built around "ready, respectful and safe," with pupils being able to articulate this confidently. They also talked about the importance of having trusted adults in school and the mantra of "no, go and tell" to deal with any issues they were worried about.
- Staff talked positively about how the SLT invests in their health and well-being e.g. bringing in snacks, opportunity for staff meditation as well as having an open-door policy where they feel as though their opinions are valued and respected. The SEN governor is also the well-being governor, and he talked about having 1:1 conversations with all staff to ensure their well-being is taken seriously and action taken where needed.
- It was evident from the visit that St Joseph's not only supports the academic success of all children, but also promotes their social and emotional well-being, making it a model for inclusive education.

### ***Belonging***

- During the visit, it was clear that the children are proud of their school. They eagerly talked about the variety of clubs on offer and spoke enthusiastically about their learning experiences. The children were visibly happy. This pride

and love for their school directly reflects the school's inclusive and supportive environment, which fosters a strong sense of ownership and belonging amongst all the children.

- High levels of participation in extracurricular activities were evident. Children are encouraged to pursue their interests and talents, whether in sports, arts, music, or academic clubs. This engagement not only enhances their skills but also fosters a strong connection to their school.
- One parent talked about how their youngest child lacked confidence and found it difficult to perform in front of others. With the encouragement and support of the staff in school, he stood up on stage and performed in the school production, as well as taking part in an event at the Met and singing at Manchester Arena in the Young Voices concert. She stated, "I am immensely proud of him- he wouldn't be the confident young man he is today without the love and support of the school."

## **Participation and Involvement**

### ***Whole school approach***

- The parents that were interviewed felt fully involved in decision making about their children. Regular meetings are held, and they provide the opportunity to discuss what is working well and to consider areas for development.
- Parents felt that communication between home and school is effective with teachers always visible and approachable at the start and end of the day.
- Parents are encouraged to discuss any concerns with their child's class teacher and any issues that parents did raise are dealt with in a timely manner. They are therefore confident that school will always provide support when needed.
- The school celebrates pupil's achievements through assemblies, newsletters, and display boards, recognising academic, personal, and extracurricular successes.

### ***Participation of stakeholders***

- All parents/carers involved in the reaccreditation process talked positively about their experience of school. One parent stated, "children are just able to be themselves. I often see this in assemblies and school productions, support is given to the children so they can be involved."
- At St Joseph's, leaders are committed to consulting with pupils and wider community members; there is an active school council in place. In addition, there are school pupil counsellors who are visible at break times and pupils understand these counsellors can offer support when needed.

## **Wider community links**

- St Joseph's is part of St Theresa of Calcutta Catholic Academy Trust and together the schools within the Trust have collaborated on many school improvement priorities and CPD opportunities.
- St Joseph's support many charities as part of their commitment to faith in action. By actively involving children in charity work for local, national and global causes, this ensures they learn the importance of helping others and developing a strong sense of community awareness. Some examples of the charities they have supported include Bury Hospice, Children in Need, MacMillan Cancer support and CAFOD.

### **What is working exceptionally well?**

- One of the key strengths demonstrated during this re-accreditation visit has been the ethos, culture and attitudes underpinning inclusion across the whole school. This has been purposefully developed over time and is consistently applied throughout every aspect of school life; it lies deep within every member of the school community.
- The whole school community is passionate about the delivery of inclusive provision and being the advocate for all pupils. This has ensured that all pupils feel included, and children were able to demonstrate their enthusiasm for learning and love for their school.
- The school provides children with access to a wide, rich set of experiences in a coherently planned way. These experiences go beyond purely academic outcomes and help children develop and nurture their talents and interests.
- The staff are fully aware of the changes within their demographic context and ensure cultural diversity and equality is woven throughout the curriculum, so children have the knowledge and skills to understand and appreciate the diversity that makes up our wider world.
- The behaviour and attitudes of the children are a real strength of the school. Children feel safe and happy and know there is always someone available to talk to. Staff understand that behaviour is a form of communication and can draw on a range of strategies to support children in situations that they find challenging. The school has a progressive and compassionate approach to behaviour management which gives children the opportunity to engage in a restorative conversation and creates space for healing and growth.

### **What might school consider in moving forward?**

- To re-evaluate the effectiveness of the marking and feedback policies and procedure to ensure they are manageable, meaningful and consistently utilised across school. Consider the use of verbal and immediate feedback as well as pupil engagement, to reflect and respond to support next steps in learning.
- To ensure there is a consistent and structured approach to early identification and early intervention of need that is understood and followed by all staff members. This will ensure teachers are clear on the process and understand their responsibilities in the identification of SEND.
- To further develop approaches to co-production with all stakeholders to ensure that everyone has a voice in shaping the future of the school.



## **Final Outcome**

By instilling a passion for inclusivity from the top down, St Joseph's Roman Catholic Primary School has created a vibrant and empowering environment where everyone can thrive and contribute their best. Children are skilfully and seamlessly supported to overcome barriers to learning and children with a range of academic abilities can confidently articulate what they have learnt. Levels of children's enthusiasm and engagement serve as a testament to the school's success in nurturing confident, articulate, and resilient individuals. The outcome of the efforts of all stakeholders has delivered a supportive learning community that prepares pupils not only academically, but also emotionally and socially for the challenges and opportunities they will encounter in the wider world. Therefore, Bury Council is delighted to be able to reaccredit St Joseph's Roman Catholic Primary School with the Inclusion Quality Mark.