



St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

URN: 117465

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Archbishop of Westminster

08–09 February 2024

Summary of key findings

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

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

What the school does well

- The school has effectively implemented Catholic social teaching which is woven into everything they do.
- The mission, 'To love and Learn in the footsteps of Christ', is clearly understood and lived by all pupils and staff.
- The Catholic ethos permeates throughout, Christ is at the centre of everything they do.
- Pupils love their religious education lessons and religious literacy is a strength.
- Prayer and liturgy provide ample opportunity for reflection, awe and wonder, there is a deep sense of spirituality throughout the school.

What the school needs to improve

- Ensure the *Religious Education Directory* is fully implemented across the school by 2026.
- Fully embed the new Prayer and Liturgy Directory in all aspects of collective worship by 2025.

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

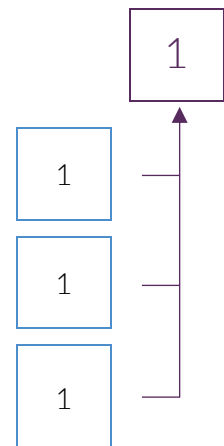
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

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



Catholic values are central to life at St Joseph's and pupils have a very clear understanding of the school's Catholic identity. As a Caritas Ambassador said, 'Jesus commanded us to love God, love one another and help others'. Pupils understand that their Catholic community is fully committed to following the teachings of Christ. Pupils know that they have a responsibility to care for the most vulnerable in society and choose charities to help them respond to those in need. Pupils support local charities such as the local food bank and Breast Cancer appeal, national charities, for example the Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal, and global charities such as Cafod. They clearly understand how this work links with Catholic social teaching. Pupils are taught that God calls them to serve. The school ensures that pupils gain high quality leadership experiences ranging from Caritas Ambassadors, *Laudato Si* leaders, Class Apostles, Eco Warrior and Minnie Vinnie roles. As a result, pupils are adept at linking their work to Catholic social teaching and can clearly articulate the theology underpinning their actions.

Christ is at the heart of this school, there is a lived sense of community, evident in the quality of relationships and the strong culture of welcome. The school goes the extra mile to provide an exceptionally supportive and joyful community for each of its members, valuing all without exception and acknowledging Christ's presence in the other. The Head Apostle in Year 6 leads a lunchtime prayer club in the Chapel for younger children, which is very well attended. The school promotes inclusivity and respect for diversity, ensuring every pupil feels welcomed and accepted. Pupils enjoy learning about other faith communities. Leaders have worked tirelessly to promote diversity through the naming of their class saints to ensure that they reflect the community it serves. Staff are exemplary role models for pupils. They have very good relationships with each other and with pupils. Governors informed us that 'no matter what subject the children are doing, pupils are living the Catholic life and mission of the school.' Care and attention are given to the school environment and pupils greatly value the new chapel. Relationships, sexual and health education (RSHE) is carefully planned and meets diocesan

requirements. It is firmly rooted in the teachings of Christ. Pupils enjoy their RSHE lessons and produce well-presented and creative work. Pupils are confident to articulate their learning in RSHE.

All policies and procedures as well as the school website reflect the strong Catholic identity of St Joseph's. Leaders and governors are inspirational witnesses to the Gospel and to Catholic social teaching in their direction of the school at every level. The head teacher leads by example; there is an open-door policy for staff and parents. 'The head teacher has built up a community for everyone'. The school avails of diocesan training offered, and leaders ensure that they take part in deanery and diocesan moderation. The school piloted the new framework for the diocese. The school has strong links with the local church, the priest is a frequent visitor. He spoke about how confidently pupils communicate their ideas in Mass and was lost for words regarding pupils' knowledge and understanding. Parents are regularly consulted and are very happy with the provision offered. One parent, new to the community, commented on how nurturing the school environment was. Catholic social teaching is a strength, it is woven across the curriculum, through history, literature and mathematics. Leaders and governors are mindful of the well-being of staff. Staff appreciate that leaders have an open-door policy, and they feel very well supported by leaders. 'She (head teacher) has a brilliant team because we all feel valued, our well-being is her priority'. Governors offer challenge and support and provided examples of how they ensured that the school's Catholic mission is always given the highest priority.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

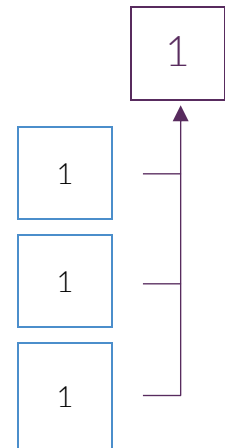
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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



Teaching is effectively mapped against the *Religious Education Curriculum Directory* and as a result pupils are developing excellent knowledge, understanding and skills. Data indicates good or better progress for all pupils, which has parity with English and mathematics data. Lessons connect effectively to prior learning, and pupils can recall scripture and think ethically and theologically; as a result, pupils can demonstrate how they can put their faith into action. This was evident in a Year 6 lesson on Justice - What do we learn from Dorothy Day? Pupils were able to recall their Catholic social teaching and link it to scripture. Pupils produce work of a consistently high quality, demonstrating excellent presentation, individuality, and creativity. Each class has a 'WOW' wall to display their best work in religious education, which indicates strong progress over time. Pupils are religiously literate and actively engaged in their learning. They concentrate extremely well, love the challenge and are curious and interested learners. Teachers have implemented structures to enable pupils to think for themselves and offer insights into their learning. Behaviour in lessons is outstanding. Pupils enjoy religious education lessons and approach lessons with interest. To extend pupil's cultural capital the school engaged in an art exhibition, connecting religious themes and Bible stories. Inspired, by a range of Catholic artists, pupils produced work of outstanding quality. Parents were invited to the exhibition opening, and fully appreciated the creativity and talent of the work on display.

Teachers' subject knowledge is strong. They are committed to the value of religious education and communicate this effectively. Lessons consistently highlight key vocabulary, and all teachers make links with prior learning. Pupils are provided with knowledge organisers at the start of each topic, as a consequence of this good practice, and the consistent use of key vocabulary, religious literacy is strong. Teachers have high expectations for pupils, questioning is used effectively, employing open ended questions and challenge to deepen responses in both religious education lessons and in worship, thus increasing engagement and maximising learning for all. Planning is linked to assessment and knowledge of the individual; all lessons extend pupils' learning. Celebration of effort is clearly evident throughout the school. Teachers understand the impact

of learning in religious education on moral and spiritual development and lessons all relate to how pupils make sense of the world. Teachers give time and space in lessons for pupils to reflect and relate their learning to Catholic social teaching. Additional adults are used effectively to support pupils with additional needs. Pupils present their work using a variety of forms of expression including art, drama, information technology and mathematics.

The curriculum for religious education is imaginative and ambitious. Religious education has parity with other core subjects and leaders are committed to ensuring that staff avail of high-quality professional development. The leader of religious education is inspiring in her leadership. She is wholly committed to the school community and an advocate for her subject. This results in teaching that is likely to be outstanding and at least consistently good. The quality of subject leadership is recognised beyond the school and the subject leader willingly shares this expertise to the benefit of other diocesan schools. Curriculum planning is strong, it is structured and builds on prior learning. Challenge opportunities are planned, and the scheme used is carefully supplemented. Governors offer challenge and support. They are keenly aware of the next steps to improve religious education. Leaders including governors work closely together to make connections between discrete subject areas so that the curriculum as a whole is a compelling expression of the Catholic understanding of reality.

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

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

1

The prayer and liturgical life provided by the school is full and rich. Pupils are exposed to a wide variety of prayer opportunities that are part of the Catholic tradition. The quality of responses across the school is exceptional. In a Year 5 meditation celebrating the feast day of St Josephine Bakhita, pupils were able to make seamless links to prior teaching on the Beatitudes, Catholic social teaching, and diversity, celebrating St Josephine as the first black woman saint. During the inspection we were able to witness a variety of worship opportunities using scripture, symbols, silence, meditation, reflection, and song. Pupils work collaboratively with other pupils and teachers to prepare creative and well constructed experiences of prayer and liturgy. During an observed whole school prayer and liturgy service, Year 6 pupils called on the school to reflect on 'How can we make the light of Christ shine brightly?' Pupils were challenged to deepen their responses by asking how, or give an example, to expand a response. One staff member commented 'when it is prayer time you can feel the respect and love at the school'. Pupils also demonstrate they can pray in a spontaneous way. The Head Apostle leads a lunch time prayer session in the chapel. The younger pupils respond well to their older role model and participated prayerfully as the apostle led them through a Bible story, circle of prayer and the 5-finger prayer.

Prayer is central to the life of the school. There is a creative balance between routine and innovative times for prayer. The school involves parents in the prayer life of the school by the use of prayer bags. Pupils enjoy taking them home and writing prayers with their families. Families enjoy sending in photographs to school as well as sharing prayers they have written. A parent informed us that, 'St Joseph's gives all of us, opportunities to deepen our relationship with God.' The leader for religious education is an inspiring role model. She is a reflective practitioner and actively encourages pupils to think spiritually and evaluate reflectively. The school has worked hard to secure a flourishing partnership with the local parish and the parish priest cannot speak highly enough of their efforts. Leaders are outward facing and are always looking at ways to improve their practice. They acted on the Year 6 apostles' suggestion to add more singing in their prayer and liturgy and introduce prayer bags for the older pupils.

The school has published a progression in prayer book from Foundation to year 6, which all year groups find useful. The subject leader for religious education clearly puts policy into practice. As they move through the school, pupils are increasingly able to plan, participate in and evaluate prayer and liturgy. Leaders plan the liturgical year carefully. They timetable Masses and Reconciliation at key times of the year. Professional development opportunities in prayer and liturgy are of high quality and focus on liturgical formation. Both the leader of religious education and the head teacher take part in diocesan training so that all staff fully understand the centrality of prayer. As a result, staff are highly skilled to support and lead prayer and liturgy. Budgets are significant and reflect the highest importance placed on the development of prayer and liturgy. Leaders including governors ensure evaluation of prayer and liturgy is impactful and focused on improvement. Leaders are outward focused and are constantly seeking ways to improve. The voice of pupils, as well as adults in school, is important and valued in the evaluation of prayer and liturgy.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Joseph's Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	117465
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	9193383
Full postal address of the school	St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Ainsdale Road, South Oxhey, Watford, WD19 7DW
School phone number	02084285371
Headteacher	Linda Payne
Chair of Governors	Adrian Ramsden & Michael Hamilton
School Website	www.stjosephs775.herts.sch.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	June 2017
Previous denominational inspection grade	Outstanding

The inspection team

Deirdre Finan
Liz Keane

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