



St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

URN: 146246

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Archbishop of Westminster

26–27 September 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 general norms for religious education laid down by the Bishops' Conference

Yes

The school is fully compliant with any additional requirements of the diocesan bishop

Yes

The school has responded to the areas for improvement from the last inspection

Fully

Compliance statement

- The school is fully compliant with the general norms for religious education laid down by the Bishops' Conference.
- The school is fully compliant with the additional requirements of the diocesan bishop.
- All areas for improvement outlined in the previous diocesan inspection have been addressed in full.

What the school does well

- School leaders and governors clearly articulate the Church's mission and ensure that Christ is at the heart of the school.
- Pupils are provided with a variety of ways of praying and with frequent opportunities to plan and lead prayer and liturgy.
- The school mission statement 'At St Joseph's, we love, learn and live by the example of Jesus Christ' is lived out by the pupils who show their expression of it by embracing opportunities to lead and serve.
- The school is a welcoming community of faith, celebrated through flourishing partnerships with its parents and the local parish.
- Teachers provide pupils with many opportunities to present their learning in religious education creatively, using a variety of forms of expression.

What the school needs to improve

- Promote a culture of enquiry by offering all pupils greater opportunities for challenge and independence in learning.
- Further enhance the quality of prayer and liturgy using music and other art forms so that pupils may experience spirituality on a deeper level.
- Plan opportunities in the curriculum which link religious education to other discrete subject areas so that the Catholic understanding of reality is fully expressed.

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

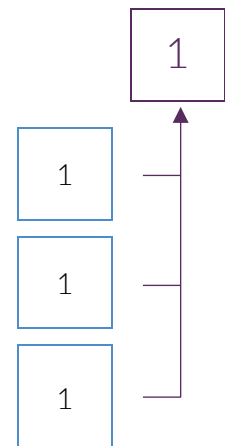
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

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 at St Joseph's school embrace their mission 'to love, learn and live by the example of Jesus Christ'. Pupils avidly seek opportunities to grow in virtue, pursue the common good and serve those in need by participating in the range of leadership roles offered to them, such as Caritas ambassadors and membership of the school council, the chaplaincy team and the eco team. A member of the chaplaincy team ably articulated her mission: 'I am very keen to learn more about God's love and I want to help others understand this.' Pupils talk positively about the difference they make to their local, national and global communities, and they have a developed understanding of the theology underpinning their actions. One pupil observed, 'As a steward of the earth, I recognise the importance of preserving and nurturing the beautiful creation that surrounds us.' Pupils enjoy running the St Joseph's Helping Hand food bank, tending the school vegetable garden and fundraising for Cafod, St Luke's Hospice and Children in Need. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary, showing a deep respect for their own personal dignity and others. Pupils can clearly express the understanding that they are made in the image and likeness of God. They demonstrate a deep respect for others, which is strengthened by a programme of learning about other faiths.

St Joseph's excels at being a Christ-centred school community. Parents speak warmly of the welcome provided to all families. One parent stated that 'Catholic values are intrinsically fed into all aspects of St Joseph's school life.' A member of staff declared, 'Christ is always placed at the centre of what we do.' Another commented that 'the school lives out its mission statement and has faith at the heart of its teachings.' Staff are exemplary role models. They embrace the mission of the school, which is encapsulated not only in their relationships with each other, but also in the highest levels of care and nurture they provide for all pupils, particularly the most vulnerable.

One parent shared her appreciation that the school guides her child in spiritual development, as it enables her child 'to thrive and learn even more about her faith.' The school environment bears exceptional witness to its Catholic identity and through the prayer room, Caritas garden, religious imagery and vibrant displays, reflects the presence of Christ throughout. The provision for relationships, sex and health education is carefully planned and meets all diocesan requirements. The programme is well-resourced and promotes a holistic vision of the human person.

Leaders and governors rightly see the school as a source of inspiration to the whole community and are highly ambitious about its contribution to the lives of those it serves. Governors are committed, well-organised and conscientious. Governors' reports bear witness to their determination to support the school's mission. They ensure that all policies reflect the Catholic mission of the school and have prioritised investment in this area, so that resources are targeted to support those in greatest need. The leadership team show their commitment to the principles of Catholic social teaching through the provision of a planned curriculum closely matched to the *Religious Education Directory*. Making connections between religious education and other subjects would aid pupils in a fuller understanding of the Catholic reality. Leaders and governors work closely with the diocese, attending training and working in partnership to enthusiastically respond to diocesan policies and initiatives. They are highly committed to the further development of all staff. Leaders and governors recognise the parish as being central to the Catholic life of the school, and this is demonstrated by a flourishing partnership with the local parish. The school builds on this partnership by providing a vibrant parent engagement strategy, ensuring that parents are kept well-informed about key events in the Catholic life of the school. As a result, one parent commented, 'We trust our school to care, nurture and guide our children in the same way that St Joseph guided his family.'

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

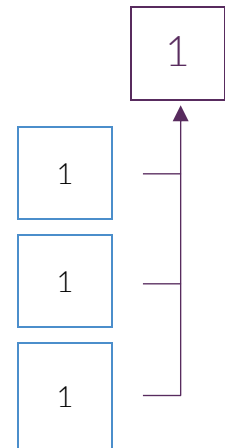
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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, understanding and skills in religious education which exemplifies the learning required by the Directory. At the beginning of lessons, pupils are invited to recall prior learning through reviewing their knowledge and linking what they already know to new learning. There is a consistent structure and excellent pace to lessons throughout the school so that pupils are enabled to progress through their learning, fully engaged and using their knowledge, understanding and skills effectively to reflect spiritually and think theologically. They are adept at relating learning in lessons to their own lives. Pupils use subject-specific vocabulary seamlessly during class discussions. They can work both collaboratively and independently and their passion and enthusiasm results in excellent progress. A Year 4 pupil observed, 'I like working in religious education because it makes me feel closer to God.' Effective adult support and excellent visual resources are used so that all groups are given the help they need to achieve success. Achievement in religious education is above average when compared with other core subjects. Creative learning methods enhance pupils' engagement and allow them to explore their learning through a wide variety of media. Presentation of pupils' work is meticulous and is of a consistently high standard. All pupils would benefit from more opportunities for challenge and independence in learning.

Teachers have a high level of confidence and are skilled and knowledgeable in the subject. They demonstrate a deep commitment and bear powerful witness to their belief in the impact religious education has on the spiritual development of pupils. This is shown in the way that pupils are regularly led into periods of reflection in lessons which they greatly value and which lead to a deeper and more meaningful experience for them. During a reflection in a Year 5 lesson, pupils offered responses to key questions on a prayer hands template, which they then placed on the class prayer table. As a result of regular professional development, through

diocesan courses and support from the religious education subject leader, planning is closely linked to high-quality assessment. Well-designed lessons extend pupils' knowledge and understanding so that pupils learn extremely well. Scripture is used as an integral part of lessons which has given pupils the opportunity to become skilled at linking messages in scripture to their daily lives. A Year 1 pupil explained that she was making a leaf from playdough 'because it's part of God's creation'. Teachers' questioning encourages pupils to delve deeper into their theological understanding to maximise learning. Pupils' achievements are celebrated in whole-school assemblies, and their work is proudly displayed in classrooms and corridors.

Leaders and governors have ensured that the religious education programme faithfully delivers a sequential, imaginative and creative curriculum as set out in the Directory. They have ensured that religious education enjoys a parity with the other core subjects in terms of staff training, resources, and accommodation. The religious education subject leader ably supports staff in planning and delivering the scheme of work so that innovative and creative teaching methods are used to promote active learning and fully engage pupils. Staff speak appreciatively of the generous support and the 'open-door' policy provided by the subject leader and senior leaders. Thorough, collaborative planning sessions secure coherence across the ages and phases of learning. Through carefully planned lessons, and high-quality resources, additional adults in class are highly effective in supporting vulnerable pupils to achieve. Action plans are shared with governors so that priorities are implemented, and their impact analysed. The link-governor for religious education visits the school regularly, providing a clear and strategic vision for development. Regular, forensic monitoring and analysis by the religious education team and governors results in accurate self-evaluation which leads to outstanding outcomes for pupils. One parent commented, 'The staff and governing body have consistently created an ethos of care and respect throughout every year for the children and their families to grow in the love of Jesus Christ.'

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

Pupils engage reverently in a full, active and joyous prayer life. A range of ways of praying is offered to pupils, including meditation, silence, and reflection, as well as spontaneous and traditional prayer. Pupils are encouraged to pray their intentions aloud, asking for help for themselves, their families, the wider community and the world, thereby demonstrating their understanding that everything is dependent upon God's abiding love. The chaplaincy team mentors younger pupils in planning liturgies and helping to lead the weekly Gospel assemblies. Pupils are skilled at using previous evaluations of sessions to improve the quality of prayer and liturgy. Scripture is central to prayer and is used meaningfully to deepen pupils' experience of prayer. Appropriate liturgical music is chosen during liturgies to provide a calm, prayerful atmosphere. Pupils' singing is of the highest standard; they readily and enthusiastically sing hymns which complement liturgies. High-quality prayer spaces are provided throughout the school, in the classrooms, and in the prayer garden. The prayer life of the school is a full expression of the Church's liturgical year. Mass is celebrated often, particularly on feast days and holy days. A staff member commented, 'The prayer life of the school is key and allows us to come together and share what is of most value to our lives – the relationship and commitment to our faith.'

Prayer supports and nourishes the school community and pupils draw inspiration from the lives of the saints. Designated prayer areas provide a focus for prayer, and pupils can say their daily prayers with confidence and reverence. Teachers designate moments of silence during prayer to facilitate deeper reflection and contemplation. Prayer times are a cherished part of the school's daily life. The school community works hard to recognise the wider Church family and, through its prayer life, helps pupils to develop a deeper understanding of the Gospel message and the call to serve. A Year 1 pupil contributed, 'God hears me when I pray for

strength' with another pupil adding, 'He is strong for me. He makes me safe.' A Year 6 pupil, learning about God's unconditional love through the parable of the prodigal son remarked, 'His father loved him, no matter what.' Children in the nursery joyously ended their liturgy by singing and dancing to 'God loves me'. The school's excellent partnership with the local parish priest ensures that pupils participate in the breadth and richness of Catholic tradition. Staff are excellent role-models for pupils, participating fully, with reverence and commitment, in the prayer life of the school. Pupils are given regular opportunities to plan, lead and evaluate liturgies, as recorded in class 'Celebration of the Word' books. Music and other art forms should be integrated regularly into prayer and liturgy to further enhance pupils' spiritual experience.

Leaders and governors ensure that pupils in the school are offered a wide range of high-quality, meaningful experiences of prayer and worship. They support staff to lead appropriate prayer and liturgy through a clear, effective policy. Leaders and governors ensure that the school calendar reflects significant dates in the liturgical calendar, resulting in a wealth of opportunities for pupils to celebrate the Eucharist. Parents are invited to attend assemblies, liturgies and Masses through newsletters, social media and the school website. One parent commented appreciatively, 'We have had plenty of opportunities to share in prayer.' The Sacrament of Reconciliation is offered at key times in the liturgical year, during Advent and Lent. Governors prioritise a generous budget for resources, for developing prayer areas and for providing professional development for all staff. Leaders and governors prioritise the formation of staff. Staff are given the opportunity to attend relevant diocesan courses, deanery meetings and moderation days. One staff member, reflecting on the importance of prayer in the life of the school, commented, 'I enjoy the way in which we come together in prayer at the beginning of our staff meetings, uniting us together.' As part of the school's self-evaluation, staff, parent and pupil voice questionnaires are regularly used by leaders to review and improve the quality and impact of prayer and liturgy.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Joseph's Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	146246
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	3103507
Full postal address of the school	St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Dobbin Close, Belmont Circle, Harrow, HA3 7LP
School phone number	02088638531
Headteacher	Christopher Briggs
Chair of local governing body	Anna Whittaker
School Website	www.stjosephs.harrow.sch.uk/
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	Blessed Holy Family Catholic Academy Trust
Phase	Primary
Type of school	Academy
Admissions policy	Non-selective
Age-range of pupils	3 -11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	October 2018
Previous denominational inspection grade	Good

The inspection team

Norah Flatley
Jade Cahill

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