



St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

URN: 148441

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Archbishop of Birmingham

13–14 March 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

Religious education (p.5)

The quality of curriculum religious education

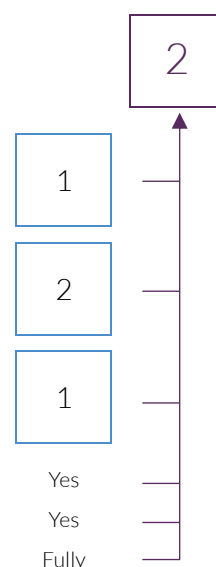
Collective worship (p.7)

The quality and range of liturgy and prayer provided by the school

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



What the school does well

- St Joseph's is a welcoming, caring, nurturing, and inclusive family school which enables all pupils to feel safe and secure.
- Senior leaders and governors are passionate in driving the vision and school mission forward in a compassionate manner.
- Pupils are respectful, kind, courteous, and enthusiastic about learning the Catholic faith.
- Pupils enjoy learning in religious education and make good links with Catholic social teaching.
- Experiences of school-led prayer and liturgy enable pupils to become closer to God and develop their faith more fully.

What the school needs to improve

- Develop a consistent approach to the teaching of religious education so pupils make good progress in knowing, remembering, and doing more through active participation.
- Actively involve governors in monitoring and review schedules, so they can speak to its accuracy and offer appropriate challenge to leaders.
- Review the prayer and liturgy policy and skills progression document so they are useful resources for staff to use.

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

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

1

The mission at St Joseph's School is for Jesus to 'Be our guide, our joy, and our hope, as we learn, live, love, and pray together'. This is totally and actively embraced by all the pupils. They have a clear sense of belonging and of their roles in working together where Christ is at the centre of this exceptionally vibrant Catholic school. Pupils are confident and recognise that everyone is a unique person made in God's image and likeness. Mutual respect and kindness for each other is clearly evidenced in their behaviour which is exemplary in lessons. Strong relationships, exceptional behaviour, and support for the most vulnerable is a hallmark of the school. One parent commented that, 'The Catholic faith is placed at the centre of all of school life' and the school 'is a warm, friendly and inviting school, where every child is valued and cared for, in a safe and loving environment for my child to learn and grow.' Pupils speak confidently about how special everyone is and how they are empowered to serve those in need. Pupils respond eagerly and joyfully to the opportunities afforded to them to help others; for example, by supporting the local food bank, fundraising for Cafod, and raising money for Father Hudson's 'Good Shepherd Appeal' and St Chad's Sanctuary. Parents are highly supportive of the school's Catholic life and mission, having recently attended Coffee mornings, for example. The 'Dream Team' project has also recently reached out to families, who are appreciative of the schools' support. Catholic social teaching and cross curricular links encourage the pupils to respond to Jesus' teachings in a meaningful way. For example, a pupil in Year 6 spoke knowledgeably about a guided reading session focussing on the story of 'The Boy in the Stripped Pyjamas', in which they reflected spiritually on the dignity of the human person. The spiritual council flourishes in their chaplaincy roles, sharing scripture to display on classroom doors, writing prayers for the school newsletter and deciding on whole school initiatives for everyone to be part of. Their motto of 'Faith without action isn't faith at all' is a lived experience.

The school's stimulating environment is fully reflective of its Catholic character; the many vibrant displays enable pupils to learn, reflect and pray, and grow spiritually and morally. Resources for relationships, sex, and health education are carefully planned to fully reflect Catholic teachings and principles. Effective links with the parish ensures that the school works in a flourishing partnership.

Senior leaders and governors share a common vision for the school and are confident in promoting it. The head teacher, together with the religious education subject leader, demonstrates exemplary commitment to caring for their school community. Governors are passionate about their role within the school, offering support and challenge. Leaders support staff development, which has led to high levels of confidence amongst staff. An effective induction programme supports new staff in becoming fully committed to the school's Catholic life and mission. One member of staff commented, 'All pupils, staff and the school community are proud of our Catholic identity and try and live out the school's mission statement in our daily lives'. There is a strong sense of pastoral support for both pupils and staff; leaders are committed to ensuring staff's mental wellbeing is prioritised. Pupils contribute to evaluating the school's Catholic life and mission by planning their actions for the year ahead, ensuring the focus on Catholic life and mission reflects the pupils' understanding of their school and impacts the wider community.

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

2

Provision

The quality of teaching, learning, and assessment in religious education

2

Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for religious education

2

2

Pupils achieve and engage well in lessons and enjoy their learning in religious education. This leads to most pupils, including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), making progress, with good or better progress being achieved further up the school, in Upper Key Stage 2. Pupils listen very attentively in lessons and engage well in class discussions. When presented with opportunities to actively engage and work independently, they thrive. 'Reflection of the day' questions provide pupils with a focus in lessons, when used regularly. They are most effective when they deepen pupils' knowledge and develop their thinking skills. For example, a reflection in Year 6 focussed on which of the Ten Commandments is considered the most important and why. One pupil said that 'The most important commandment is "Thou shalt have no other gods before me" because you should worship the real God because He made the world'. Excellent provision and subsequent outcomes achieved by Year 6 are clear. Data analysis shows that attainment in religious education is strong across the school compared to other core subjects and resources are used well, including Bibles, which are used by staff to maximise learning.

Pupils are becoming religiously literate and the focus on using appropriate vocabulary in lessons is a strong feature at St Joseph's. Together with pupils' knowledge of Scripture, which is excellent, teaching enables pupils to speak about their learning assuredly. For example, they speak confidently about the Beatitudes (Matthew 5:3-12), referring to 'Those that are spiritually poor, turning away but knowing that they need God'. The quality of pupils' learning in their exercise books is variable; however, overall pupils show an aptitude for learning religious education, especially when exposed to learning that elicits meaningful responses. Pupil outcomes in Key Stage 1 are not as strong as in Key Stage 2. A focus on questioning is enabling pupils to understand the key learning within each lesson. However, pupils are not provided with enough

opportunities for discussion, which is limiting their ability to generate their own questions to deepen learning on a personal level. Teachers adapt resources and work alongside effective teaching assistants to engage and motivate different groups of learners.

Leaders have ensured some training opportunities have been available for staff to support their subject knowledge and teaching practice. However, further training is needed to establish a consistent approach towards religious education provision, so that pupils have similar learning opportunities across the school. Sharing good practice amongst staff and revisiting the school's expectations concerning subject feedback do not currently occur frequently and so pupils' understanding of their next steps towards making progress in religious education is limited. Staff value the subject leaders' support; together with pupils, they benefit well from his knowledge and expertise. He ensures staff are provided with the most up to date training from the archdiocese. The school follows the prescribed scheme of work, ensuring pupils develop knowledge, understanding, and skills that reflect the learning required by the *Religious Education Curriculum Directory*. Subsequently, religious education is planned to meet the needs of most pupil groups; however, strategies to challenge pupils with higher prior attainment are inconsistently used, meaning they are not always given opportunities to fully extend their learning. Leaders and governors give the subject the same status as other core subject areas regarding resourcing and finance. Governors have a good grasp of religious education provision in the school, though currently lack a system for the governing board to obtain an accurate and intricate view of the school's strengths and areas of development in a timely way.

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 are fully engaged in all forms of prayer and liturgy throughout the school day, be it the traditional prayers of the Church, class prayer, the weekly Mass, or whole school worship. They participate confidently during liturgy, joining in with responses whilst embracing opportunities to pray enthusiastically through song. Pupils have a good understanding of a variety of ways of praying that are part of their rich Catholic heritage. As pupils progress through the school, they become more familiar with a range of traditional prayers, including the Angelus, which is prayed by Key Stage 2 pupils daily at noon. Pupils enjoy and benefit from the times for reflection and meditation created at break times when they can freely access the altar to pray in front of the Blessed Sacrament. One child commented, 'It is peaceful. I feel happy because I have talked to God'. When discussing worship, pupils are reflective and can articulate how prayer can affect their lives and choices. Pupil-led prayers in classrooms follow the 'Gather, listen, respond, and go forth' model, ensuring consistency in experience between classrooms. Pupils lead prayer and liturgy, confidently sharing Bible passages, to which their peers respond well. Time is given for personal reflection which elicits meaningful, age-appropriate responses. This further enhances their experience of listening to the Word of God and thinking about its message.

St Joseph's is a prayerful community and prayer is central to the school's daily life. Prayer and liturgy are well established across the school. A weekly whole school Mass and other assemblies provide pupils with a rich and varied exposure to prayer. Pupils know a wide range of traditional prayers and responses, which are consistently taught and used throughout the school. Scripture is well chosen by staff and used appropriately, based on the Church's liturgical season. Pupils are encouraged to know and understand a variety of prayers. Significant feast days are celebrated enabling pupils to have a growing understanding of the liturgical year. Leaders lead liturgy well, modelling expert knowledge and high expectations for pupils and staff. They have a

secure knowledge of praying and are familiar and confident with liturgical sources; the parish priest celebrates a weekly school Mass and inspires pupils in their faith journey. Prominent and attractive prayer areas in classrooms and dedicated areas around the school, including the peace garden, provide opportunities for pupils to spend time in prayer and reflection. Spaces are used well to ensure that prayer and liturgy are very special; effective use of lighting and religious artefacts are used to create areas around the school into sacred spaces.

Leaders place the highest priority on staff training and formation. The religious education subject leader has supported staff by modelling and supporting pupil-led prayers. Subsequently, staff also feel well supported in their roles and are actively encouraged to take part in pray times; for example, by leading prayers during staff meetings. Leaders' and governors' self-evaluation is generally robust and accurate. Their skills progression document provides support for staff and pupils in leading prayer. However, a further review of the document is needed to ensure pupils have greater autonomy and ownership of their prayers and are, where appropriate, supported by older pupils in upper Key Stage 2. Leaders are conscious that developing links with the parents to attend liturgies is an ongoing priority. Leaders, including governors, recognise the importance of prayer and liturgy when allocating resources. They ensure a sufficient budget is in place to provide high-quality resources for prayer and liturgy.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Joseph's Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	148441
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	3303339
Full postal address of the school	Rocky Lane, Nechells, Birmingham, B7 5HA
School phone number	0121 464 8140
Headteacher	Michelle Ashley
Chair of governing board	Frances McGarry
School Website	www.stjosb7.bham.sch.uk
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	St Teresa Of Calcutta Multi Academy Company
Phase	Primary
Type of school	Academy
Admissions policy	Non-selective
Age-range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	December 2017
Previous denominational inspection grade	1

The inspection team

Krystyna Bickley
Anya Poole

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