



Catholic Schools Inspectorate inspection report for St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

URN: 116901

Carried out on behalf of the Most Rev. Bernard Longley, Archbishop of Birmingham on:

Date: 12-13 July 2023

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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

- Governors and staff are passionate about and committed to the school and the community it serves.
- St Joseph's is an inclusive community, welcoming all and striving to meet the needs of everyone.
- Parish links are strong and enhance the school's provision of Catholic life, religious education, and prayer.
- Staff's subject knowledge in religious education is strong and imparted well so pupils make good progress.

- Prayer, especially group prayer, is a priority for the school and is appreciated by staff, pupils, and their parents.

What the school needs to improve:

- Evaluate the impact of developmental actions taken and ensure that these inform future improvement planning in Catholic life, religious education, and prayer.
- Ensure that Catholic social teachings become central to school life and are planned into the breadth of the curriculum.
- Provide additional challenge for pupils who achieve well in religious education lessons.

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:.....

2

Pupil outcomes

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

2

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

2



Pupils at St Joseph's Catholic primary school feel valued and cared for. They understand that the school is committed to helping others and respecting everyone; they articulate that 'everyone is welcome here.' Subsequently, behaviour is good as pupils know how the school's mission, 'Following in the footsteps of Jesus, together we love, live, and learn,' shapes their attitudes. Their knowledge and acceptance of those belonging to other faiths and religions lead to a sense of mutual respect across the school, in which pupils feel safe and happy. Pupils support others locally, nationally, and globally and benefit from the ongoing link with a school in Tanzania. They lead in developing this and have further ideas of charities they wish to support. Whilst pupils understand that they should help those who need support, most cannot articulate that this is because they are Christ's disciples. Therefore, whilst they are actively involved in responding to the demands of Catholic social teachings, pupils cannot confidently articulate the theology underpinning their social actions.

Staff at St Joseph's proactively embrace the school's mission statement, reflected in how they interact with pupils, families, and each other. The commitment and passion of governors, leaders, and staff creates a strong sense of community. A clear and shared understanding of the type of Catholic education St Joseph's strives to offer unites staff in their work. Staff explain that 'God's love is at the core of everything'. As a result, the pastoral care of pupils and the nurturing of their talents take a very high priority at St Joseph's, as seen in the provision of the 'Thrive' programme, playground pals, and other additional support strategies. Those with additional academic or emotional needs are cared for well and provided with the support they need to be fully involved in school life. This is done in a calm, highly skilled, and yet subtle manner. Consequently, the inclusive nature of St Joseph's is one of its strengths; all staff go the extra mile to ensure all are hospitably welcomed. Staff relationships with each other, the pupils, and their families demonstrate a commitment to the school's Catholic life. The school's physical environment reflects its mission with well-maintained prayer areas in classrooms, communal areas, and the school prayer garden; St Joseph's clearly is a Catholic school.

Maintaining the vision and values of the school with Christ at its centre is a priority for governors and leaders. Consequently, the decisions and actions they take are consistently informed by their Catholic mission. Governors are highly ambitious for the school and drive its Catholic life and mission forward through their involvement in evaluation and monitoring. The head teacher is inspirational to many in the school community and was described to inspectors as being 'so good, so approachable, and that filters through to us'. Leaders and governors embrace their relationship with the parish and have worked hard to develop effective links further. This has resulted in a flourishing partnership, which the whole community appreciates. Parishioners and school work together to support families, as seen when parishioners provide tea and coffee for parents when they gather to collect their children from school. School leaders are good witnesses to Catholic social teaching and are committed to this being at the heart of their work. Whilst they model Christian behaviours strongly, Catholic social teaching is not yet embedded securely throughout the curriculum. Pupils evaluate Catholic life alongside leaders, governors, and staff; consequently, evaluation is accurate. However, the impact of school leaders' actions is not always clearly identified and used to inform future improvement planning.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade:.....

2

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

Pupils have a good knowledge of religious education appropriate to their age. Consequently, they make good progress and are religiously literate. This is reflected in attainment data for religious education, which is at least in line with other core subjects and often higher. Pupils can talk confidently about what they have learned in religious education lessons but cannot confidently link this learning to religious commitment in everyday life. Pupils enjoy religious education lessons and are actively engaged in their learning in most lessons. Pupils describe religious education as 'fun', and they appreciate the opportunities for spiritual and moral development that their teachers provide and how they handle their questions. One pupil told inspectors they like the subject because they are made to feel as if 'there are no wrong answers in RE'. Pupils learn well independently and collaboratively in lessons; they respect and support the learning needs of their peers well. Because pupils enjoy their lessons, their behaviour is good, and work is mostly well presented. Pupils are well supported in lessons, and tasks are adapted to allow all pupils to access learning. Pupils understand the feedback they are given and can explain how well they have achieved in a lesson. However, they cannot consistently articulate how to improve their learning further.

Teachers have very good subject knowledge in religious education and plan appropriately throughout the school to ensure pupils' progress. They are committed to delivering high-quality religious education lessons, and most teachers have high expectations of pupils resulting in good learning for most pupils. Teachers' questioning is good because they effectively use techniques to ascertain what knowledge pupils have learnt and subsequently adapt their explanations to secure this. However, questioning is used less effectively to challenge pupils' thinking and promote higher-order thinking and reflection. Pupils can present their work in various ways, such as sequencing, role play, and art; this adds to their enjoyment of religious education. A range of resources is provided, and pupils are taught to use them well. For example, pupils are confident in independently

using the Bible to look up references. Teaching assistants support all pupils very well, facilitating full access to the curriculum and upskilling pupils to overcome barriers to learning. Effective feedback is given to pupils during lessons to enhance progress and address misconceptions. Consequently, pupils understand when they have achieved well in lessons.

Despite recent changes in the subject's leadership, the vision for religious education remains strong. Governors and leaders have ensured that religious education is considered an integral part of the school curriculum by ensuring that the timetable allocation, reports to parents, and homework tasks reflect this. Teachers are confident to teach religious education because of the high-quality training and support they receive from leaders, which empowers them to provide consistently good lessons. Monitoring the subject's achievements is frequent and thorough; leaders always provide feedback to staff addressing the school's areas for improvement. Areas for improvement are accurately identified, and leaders effectively address them. However, the impact of these actions is not always evaluated so that they inform future improvements. Leaders ensure that religious education is planned sequentially across the age phases of the school; consequently, pupils know more, understand more, and can do more as they move through the school.

Collective worship

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

Collective worship key judgement grade:.....

2

Pupil outcomes

How well pupils participate in and respond to the school's collective worship

2

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

2



Pupils respond well to the many experiences of prayer and liturgy available to them. They talk very favourably about being able to lead prayer for their peers, readily volunteering to do this in and enjoy supporting other forms of worship, such as the weekly gospel assembly. Pupils in most classrooms are given the opportunity to lead prayer for their peers and are skilfully supported by staff to do so. Consequently, they understand the varying forms of prayer and are confident in planning and delivering worship. They skilfully use scripture, prayer, singing, reflection, and silence independently. The liturgy leaders are rightly proud of their role in school. They are elected to their role by their peers and play an essential role in supporting their peers in prayer. For example, they ensure that everyone in their class makes the sign of the cross correctly at the beginning and end of a prayer. Pupils have a good knowledge of structured and traditional Catholic prayer forms, but they also understand that prayer is personal and can be spontaneous. Pupils know it is important to have a varied approach to prayer, explaining that 'You can pray anytime, anywhere.' Whilst pupils can articulately discuss types of prayer and always engage reverently in it, they are less confident in speaking about how their prayers and reflections inspire them into action.

Prayer is central to everyday school life. Staff and pupils highly value the opportunities given to them daily. For example, staff pray together and plan daily reflections and prayers for their colleagues. There is a creative balance of routine and spontaneous prayer across the school, reflected in pupils' understanding of various ways of speaking with God. Staff are excellent role models for this; they frequently pray with pupils, leading prayer formally during worship sessions and more spontaneously when appropriate. The Church's liturgical year is carefully reflected in the opportunities for prayer provided and in the well-chosen scripture passages, hymns, and traditional prayers used to mark certain seasons and feasts. Pupils reflect spiritually during prayer, leading them to know that 'Jesus was in our hearts' when they pray. Parents and families are also provided opportunities to join in with prayer and liturgy across the school. They appreciate the value and

significance of doing so, regardless of their personal faith commitments, because staff greatly emphasise it. A parent commented that they 'find huge comfort in prayer, despite not being Catholic', attesting to the inclusivity of St Joseph's.

Leaders and governors identify prayer as a central priority, evident in the well-formulated prayer policy and how they construct the school calendar around prayer. The school calendar for prayer and liturgy includes all holy days of obligation and other important times within the church year, such as Easter and Christmas. The parish priest offers the opportunity for the Sacrament of Reconciliation during Lent and Advent to pupils. Leaders understand pupils' need for sequential skill development as they travel through school and plan well to develop this. This is reflected in the quality and amount of support pupils need to plan, lead, and participate in worship sessions as they grow older. Leaders' and teachers' skill in facilitating this enables pupils to become more independent as they move through the school. Governors, leaders, and pupils undertake monitoring of prayer and liturgy, with pupils evaluating the sessions they have planned or those that have been delivered by their peers so that they know how to improve their provision further next time. Other monitoring forms lead to an analysis of the school's strengths but with less focus on the impact of actions undertaken to secure improvements.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Joseph's Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	116901
Full postal address of the school	Newtown Road, Malvern, Worcestershire, WR14 1PF
School phone number	01684 573016
Name of head teacher or principal	Therese Langford
Chair of governing board	Margaret Griffiths and Christopher Park (joint)
School Website	www.stjoesmalvern.co.uk
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 Birmingham
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	November 2016
Previous denominational inspection grade	2

The inspection team

Michelle Walsh

Lead inspector

Sarah Rathbone

Team inspector

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