

# St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

URN: 140520

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Most Rev. John Wilson Archbishop of Southwark

22–23 November 2023

## Summary of key findings

### Overall effectiveness

The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school

#### Catholic life and mission (p.2)

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.3)

The quality of curriculum religious education

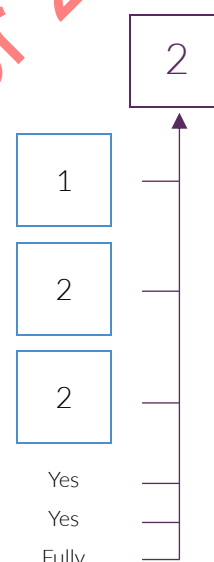
#### Collective worship (p.7)

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

- The motto, 'love God, love learning, love life,' is embodied by the whole community as a living reality.
- The school has a deep sense of commitment to supporting its pupils, staff and families based on the highest level of care.
- The school is dedicated to nurturing a community rooted in Catholic Social Teaching fostering compassion, social justice, and the dignity of each person.
- Planned prayer and liturgy are central to the life of the school involving all members of the school community.
- The school fosters an environment where Gospel values are lived out impacting upon pupil behaviour which is exemplary.

## What the school needs to improve

- Use higher order questioning, to challenge all pupils enabling them to make greater progress.
- Increase pupils' confidence and skill to deliver effective prayer and liturgy.
- Ensure leaders' and governors' self-evaluation of religious education is forensic and challenging and leads to strategic action to improve outcomes.

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## 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

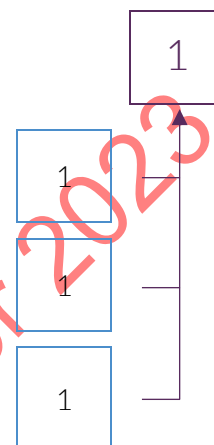
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

#### 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



All members of the school community understand and embrace the mission, 'Love God, Love Learning, Love Life' and their active participation in this enhances the Catholic life of the school. Pupils clearly express that they are valued and cared for as unique persons. They state that the school 'helps us to follow Jesus' path, to be like him, caring for the poor,' and that 'all are created in God's image.' Catholic Social Teaching is fully embedded in the school and pupils gladly embrace this. Pupils highly value leadership roles, as exemplified by the Mini-Vinnies who are very active in the community, for example, visiting the elderly and singing Christmas Carols and collecting for charitable causes. They fully understand the theological underpinning of this, stating that they help people with less because they believe everyone should and because they believe in God. The behaviour of the pupils is exemplary in lessons and throughout the school. They engage with the work of the parish and the priests of the parish leading to a strong sense of community. Parents and staff speak of a culture of welcome, describing the school as a family where everyone is made to feel included in all aspects of the life of the school. Relationships, sex and health education is well planned and in line with Church teaching using the diocesan approved TenTen programme, and parents are fully consulted on the programme.

The mission statement is a clear and inspiring expression of the educational mission of the Church. Staff and pupils stated that they regularly 're-develop it,' and implement it across the school. As a result, it has a significant impact on the life of the school which excels at being a community based on Catholic tradition and practice. There is a lived sense of community where all describe 'a family who help each other'. Pastoral care is a real strength and there is a genuine commitment to the most vulnerable. The school goes the extra mile to provide an exceptionally supportive community valuing all as made in God's image. Parents say that 'the school has good things in place to support their children with additional needs', describing the school as, 'an amazing school, so supportive of our family.' The school celebrates those from other faiths and cultures and loving and caring relationships

with each other consistently bear witness to the school's Catholic life and mission. Pupils feel safe, are happy and actively engaged. They live out the school mission statement, which is 'worked on and owned by everyone'.

Governors and leaders are ambitious for the Catholic life and mission of the school. Governors say that regular meetings, joining in with learning walks and contribution to the self-evaluation helps them to monitor and evaluate the Catholic life of the school. The minutes of meetings clearly demonstrate this. Christ is at the heart of the school and leaders and governors can clearly articulate the Church's mission in education, fastidiously exercising their duty as guardians of this. The head teacher exemplifies servant leadership by fostering an environment where serving others and empowering the school community are foundational of her leadership approach. There is a very strong partnership between the school and the local parish of which the school is central life. The parish priest spoke highly of the school saying that 'there is something happening which is really beautiful.' He regularly visits the school, and states that he gives support in relation to work with ethnic minorities. 100% of parent responses stated that the school is supportive of them in their role as the first educators of their children, saying that 'the school ethos and CST is enabling our little ones to become confident and resilient young learners.'

## Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

### Religious education key judgement grade

#### Pupil outcomes

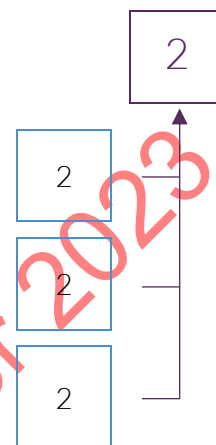
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

#### 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 a secure knowledge and understanding which leads to good progress in knowing and remembering more. Data shows that pupils including those with disadvantages achieve well in all key stages, and at least as well when compared with other core curriculum subjects. Pupils are religiously literate and engaged young people. They can speak with confidence about what they have learned showing an awareness of some subject specific concepts. For example, they are able to talk confidently about what they have learnt about Rosh Hashanah and Diwali using key words such as 'shofar.' Through their understanding of Catholic Social Teaching pupils can relate what they have learnt to the demands of religious commitment to everyday life. Work presented shows some high quality with signs of emerging individuality and creativity. Art, music, and drama are used to enhance learning effectively and pupils enjoy their learning. Parents state that their children 'enjoy religious education,' and that 'there is regular religious education homework which involves them and lets us know what they are learning.' Pupils' behaviour in lessons is good because they enjoy their religious education and teaching ensures pupils develop skills such as Bible referencing, by being 'Bible detectives'.

Teachers have a good understanding of how pupils learn and are committed to the value of religious education. Adaptive teaching happens through varied activities in lessons and planning is linked to pupils' current assessment. Where teachers use questioning well during lessons, they are able to identify pupils' understanding to help them make connections with their learning. A response to the question: Why did God send Jesus? a pupil said, 'because he is an amazing king and friend' and, 'to be a role model, to share love and to make sure everyone knows they are special.' Teachers provide pupils with opportunities to present their learning using a variety of forms of expression. They recognise the impact religious education has on the religious and moral development of pupils relating what has been learnt to Catholic Social Teaching. For example, reference is made to the class

charter and how we need to 'share and care' like 'DJ the dolphin.' Teachers' feedback to pupils, helps them to move forward in their learning, however the approach is not consistent across all year groups.

Leaders and governors ensure the religious education curriculum is a faithful reflection of the *Religious Education Curriculum Directory (2012)* using the 'Come and See' programme. Religious education is comparable to other core subjects of terms of professional development, resourcing, staffing and the assessment policy is equitably applied to all core subjects. Leaders' and governors' evaluation of religious education is informed by regularly carrying out work scrutiny, learning walks and lesson observations. Minutes show the reports are made to the local governing committee resulting in strategic action being taken. In addition, moderation is carried out across schools within the Trust which supports the school's own internal moderation. Staff are given the opportunity for professional development in relation to both subject knowledge and pedagogy. The Trust religious education lead is very supportive building staff confidence in knowledge and understanding of scripture which leads to good planning of the curriculum and improvements in teaching and learning and provides sufficient opportunities for all learners, including different groups, to progress. Leaders ensure that pupils are provided with enrichment activities that enhance pupil learning in religious education. Pupils and parents spoke enthusiastically about a visit to the parish church which enhanced their enjoyment of religious education.

## Collective worship

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

### Collective worship key judgement grade

#### Pupil outcomes

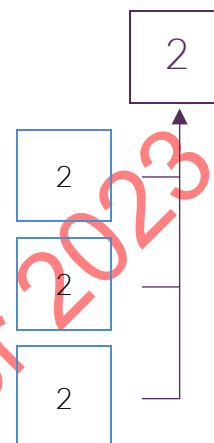
How well pupils participate in and respond to the school's collective worship

#### Provision

The quality of collective worship provided by the school

#### Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for collective worship



Catholic Social Teaching is woven into the content of prayer and liturgy helping pupils to respond to the messages shared and relating them to their own lives helping pupils participate fully in prayer and liturgy. Pupils write their own prayers which are then shared during times of prayer. Some pupils work well with teachers, other pupils and priests, to prepare engaging experiences of prayer and liturgy. They take leadership roles in these and respond positively. The parish priest stated that he felt the pupils could preach to him. Music is an integral part of prayer and liturgy, for example pupils composed their own mission song. The Mini-Vinnies and Catholic life mentors have key leadership roles in organising and leading prayer and liturgy in the school. The celebration of the Mass is central to the life of the school with some pupils undertaking liturgical ministries such as reading, singing, writing, and praying the universal prayer. In addition, the parish priest said that the pupils' dramatisation of the Stations of the Cross had a big impact upon the parents. Pupils can articulate ways in which prayer and liturgy influence and are influenced by both the curriculum and wider life of the school. They speak spontaneously about the values of the school and understand how to reflect on their experience and can articulate ways in which these experiences have led to action.

Planned prayer and liturgy experiences are central to the life of the school forming the rhythm of the school day which reflects the prayer life of the Church. Pupils regularly attend Mass in the parish church and are models of reverence and respect for parishioners. Staff value the opportunity to attend an early morning Mass, and the school provides retreat opportunities for staff as part of their wellbeing programme. Relevant staff are skilled in helping pupils to plan and lead prayer and liturgy. Seasonally appropriate scripture and liturgical music are used. For example pupils organised and led a whole school act of collective worship on the theme of Christ the Universal King which began with 'Jesus remember me' playing quietly, the reading was Jesus crucified and the good thief Lk 23:39-43 and the closing hymn was 'Sing Hosanna.' Well cared-for prayer spaces which reflect the liturgical calendar are visible and well presented in all classrooms. They are a focus for prayer and significant events such

as Remembrance Sunday are given prominence. Families are included in the prayer life of the school through prayers on the website and age-appropriate prayer books being taken home. The parish priest stated that there is an excellent relationship with the local parish which helps pupils participate more fully in the liturgy.

The school's policy of prayer and liturgy, included with the religious education policy, is well formulated and fit for purpose. It is accessible and useful for staff. Leaders and governors ensure the school calendar, through the newsletters to parents, reflects significant dates in the Church's year and encourages parents to attend events. Governors and the Trust have a good knowledge of the school's needs and participate in the prayer life of the school. They offer challenge and support, and the Trust engages with training non-Catholic teachers to enable them to have some confidence in taking part in and leading prayer and liturgy. There is a schedule showing when school sets aside times to celebrate the Eucharist for example at the beginning of the academic year, on holy days, and in class. These are highly valued by all members of the school community.

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## Information about the school

Full name of school	St Joseph's Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	140520
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	8863719
Full postal address of the school	St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Ackholt Road, Aylesham, Canterbury, CT3 3AS
School phone number	01304840370
Head Teacher	Hester Seager-Fleming
Chair of Local Governing Body	Carmel Digman
School Website	<a href="http://www.stjosephs-aylesham.co.uk">www.stjosephs-aylesham.co.uk</a>
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	Kent Catholic Schools' Partnership
Phase	Primary
Type of school	Academy
Admissions policy	N/A
Age-range of pupils	4-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	March 2016
Previous denominational inspection grade	1

## The inspection team

Stephen Horsman  
Maria Liddy

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