

St Joseph's Catholic Infant School

URN: 101546

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Archbishop of Westminster

01–02 February 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

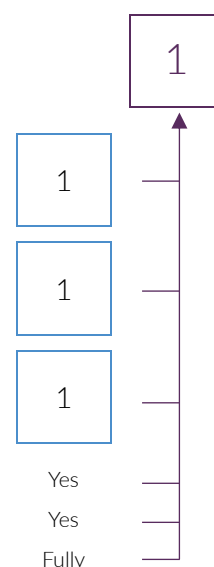
Collective worship (p.7)

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

- The Catholic life and mission at St Joseph's is reflected in every encounter ensuring a real sense of belonging and community which is valued by all and shows the school's priority to put Christ at the heart of everything.
- Relationships throughout the school are based on the highest level of care and respect.
- The well planned religious education curriculum, underpinned by strong teacher knowledge and excellent leadership, leads to continuously improving outcomes for pupils.
- Pupils are actively engaged in supporting those in need, recognising that their mission is to serve others and understanding and living fully the school Mission, 'We follow Christ's footsteps in love.'
- Pupils are offered a wide range of opportunities to engage deeply with prayer and liturgy at St Joseph's and they do so respectfully, reverently and spontaneously.

What the school needs to improve

- Audit the current religious education programme in order to identify and deliver appropriate staff training for the full implementation of the *Religious Education Directory* by 2026.
- Ensure assessment for learning processes are consistent, enabling pupils to have a clear understanding of how well they are doing, what they need to do to improve and how to articulate the progress they have made.

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 in St Joseph's clearly understand and embrace the school's mission, 'We follow Christ's footsteps in love' and provide many examples of how they do this throughout the year. Pupils show a deep respect for each other and state confidently that they feel valued and safe at school. Behaviour in class and around the school is exemplary. Pupils have opportunities to become members of a range of teams including the school council, class prayer leaders and Caritas Ambassadors. This work involves identifying and leading fundraising initiatives and helping others to lead worship. Pupils take a leading role in fundraising for various charities across the year including Cafod, The Passage and the Catholic Children's Society, and are very clear in why they do this work, making links to their mission statement and to scripture. The Prayer Leaders responded to a recent local fire by arranging a fundraising drive to support their local community because 'It is important to follow Christ's example.' They were proud to tell inspectors how they contribute to the Catholic life and mission, with one Year 2 pupil saying, 'Small actions make a big difference.' Pupils value the opportunities provided by the school to support their personal development through the wide range of clubs, their own forest school, new school choirs and a wide range of pastoral support including a dedicated school counsellor. The opportunities afforded to pupils evidently makes them flourish. St Joseph's is equipping them to become responsible, respectful and active citizens ready to play an important part in our future society.

There is a strong culture of welcome and a striving to be exceptionally supportive to all members of the community at St Joseph's. Staff feel privileged to work in the school and this is evident through the high levels of care they show for each other, the pupils and their families. One staff member said, 'It's a wonderful blessing to be working at St. Joseph's and being a part of this Catholic family.' St Joseph's is inclusive and aspirational for all. Pupils with additional needs are

given regular opportunities to engage in all aspects of school life and are well supported by the additional adults. Displays around the school are vibrant and engaging and reflect the distinctive Catholic nature of the school. During the inspection, pupils were completing a 50th anniversary mosaic to add to the many others displayed across the school. This all contributes to the warm, welcoming environment. The parish priest recognises and appreciates the dedication and hard work of the staff and acknowledges the impact on the pupils, commenting on the pupils' strong knowledge and ongoing development of Catholic practice. The provision of relationships, sex and health education is strong and meets all the statutory and diocesan guidelines and makes cross curricular links where relevant and appropriate.

This is an outstanding Catholic school. The executive head teacher and senior leaders, including the RE leads, share a commitment to ensuring that their Catholic faith is central to this community. They are very well supported by the governing body, many of whom play an active part in the weekly life of the school and parish. Leaders and governors are inspirational witnesses to the Gospel in their direction of the school. They strive to provide the highest levels of pastoral care for staff and to serve with sensitivity those in greatest need in their community. The parish priest from St Joseph's alongside his brother priests, supports the school very well by leading Masses and liturgies throughout the year. 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 the people it serves. They are passionate about their role within the school, supporting and challenging leaders and have prioritised investment of resources in this area. Leaders are highly committed to the further development of all staff which has led to high levels of confidence amongst staff.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

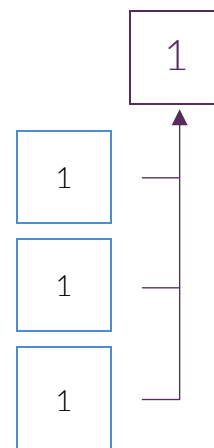
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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' positive attitude to learning, alongside their excellent behaviour, leads to outstanding outcomes in religious education. Pupils make strong progress. Their knowledge and understanding is secure in all classes due to high levels of expertise among staff, who build on prior learning and deepen pupils' understanding through skilled questioning. Pupils can explain key concepts using subject specific vocabulary and regularly make links to previous topics. Consequently, they ask incisive questions of adults. In Year 1, children discussed and asked questions about the importance of Moses being saved as a baby and recognised his role as a leader when he grew up, whilst Year 2 were able to identify and confidently discuss Miriam's faithfulness to God through reading Exodus. Additional adults are used effectively to support pupils' learning and to help all children achieve. Pupils are encouraged to work collaboratively in lessons. They enjoy their learning and approach lessons with great interest and enthusiasm, speaking proudly and confidently about their work. The use of scripture across the whole school is strong and embedded in lessons, during class worship and in assemblies. Pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage have a wide range of stories to call upon and know that the Bible is special because, 'It is God's Word'. Pupils are familiar with and can make links between events and characters in the Bible and how this influences how we live today. Outcomes for all pupils are excellent and in line with other core subjects. Leaders have recognised the need to review and adapt current assessment strategies in order to support pupils in knowing how well they are doing and how to improve further.

A well-planned curriculum from Nursery to Year 2, linked to the new Directory, supports the development of excellent religious literacy for all pupils. There is a strong focus on scripture, prayers and reflections in lessons as well as a commitment to weave Catholic social teaching into all topics. Additional high-quality resources, including effective support staff, are used to

optimise learning for all. Staff are enthusiastic about teaching religious education and ensure that it is given the highest priority. They are very well-supported and offered many excellent training opportunities including the Catholic Certificate in Religious Education, held by many teachers. Bespoke planning sessions with religious education coordinators, RE consultants and senior leaders are provided to develop teachers' subject knowledge and to promote collaboration and progression. As a result, teachers are confident in their delivery of the subject and ensure that lessons are engaging and challenging for all pupils. One parent shared, 'The RE homework is always engaging and helps me to have discussions with my young children about central teachings and principles of faith.' The use of scripture and art across the whole school is notable and strong teaching means pupils are familiar with and can make links between events and characters in the Bible and how this influences how we live today.

The executive head teacher, governors and leaders have very high expectations and therefore ensure that staff are exceptionally well supported in implementing the religious education curriculum. Continuing professional development is not only provided within the school but also through partnerships and invitations to other local schools and with the diocese. The religious education coordinators support teachers during in-school sessions and both leaders work effectively together to ensure their vision leads to improvements in teaching and learning. Staff speak of the excellent support they are given from senior leaders in the school and of how valued they feel in their roles. The governors accurately understand the strengths of the school's provision and outcomes and ensure a generous budget to support the subject. Through the religious education curriculum, St Joseph's lives out its mission to 'Follow Christ's footsteps in Love'.

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

St Joseph's is a school with prayer and worship at the very centre. There are many opportunities for pupil engagement throughout the day and week including regular Masses in the parish and school, gospel assemblies and a range of high-profile liturgical events. Pupils engage in all experiences with reverence, confidence and respect. They are able to pray communally, spontaneously and in silence, and can clearly articulate how these prayer experiences shape how they think and act. One infant pupil noted that prayer was 'an important time to talk to our friend Jesus.' All events are celebrated and shared via the school website and weekly newsletters. Staff, including leaders, provide prayerful opportunities which allow pupils time for reflection leading to a commitment to carry out their mission and to 'make a big difference.' Music and singing are integral to worship and pupils join in joyfully and confidently. A range of prayer spaces are available for pupils including the new prayer garden designed with the prayer leaders, as well as the newly relocated and beautifully decorated prayer room which is available for all pupils, parents and staff to 'gather together in God's name'.

The school ensures that the richness and breadth of the Catholic tradition is covered in the experiences offered to pupils. In classroom prayer there is an excellent use of resources to help pupils meditate and reflect. The use of scripture in prayer and liturgy is very well embedded across the school. Acts of worship are age appropriate. In the Early Years, children know that a candle represents Jesus, the Light of the World. The prayer garden, prayer room, hall and classroom displays ensure that the school is conducive to prayer. This can be seen in the creative and interactive Year of Prayer board with sound buttons of the Lord's Prayer recorded in many different languages. Pupils know where they can go to be quiet, reflect or to get spiritual support from their peers and the class prayer leaders. The executive head teacher, with her staff, prioritise family engagement and support in all areas of school life. A liturgical events

calendar is shared with families inviting them to join in all celebrations with the pupils. Inspectors joined the parent prayer group held in the prayer garden which was well attended by parents and governors.

Prayer and liturgy are an outstanding feature of St Joseph's because of the vision and commitment of its leaders. They have developed a strong culture which promotes the importance of spiritual development and the space for prayer and liturgy. The school plans for progression with a policy which spans all year groups across the school. Parents are very happy with the leadership in this area, summed up by one parent saying, 'It's lovely to see my children participate in Mass so fervently along with their peers. My children have grown so well spiritually at St Joseph's.' Governors and leaders ensure that ample resources are provided to allow for development in all areas of Catholic life including collective worship meaning high quality prayer resources are available for all pupils. As a result of outstanding leadership in collective worship, the pupil voice clearly articulates how much they enjoy being at St Joseph's and how they grow in their faith.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Joseph's Catholic Infant School
School unique reference number (URN)	101546
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	3043509
Full postal address of the school	St Joseph's Catholic Infant School, Waverley Avenue, Wembley, HA9 6TA
School phone number	02089036032
Headteacher	A Whelan
Chair of Governors	Fabiola Marini
School Website	www.sjinf.brent.sch.uk
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	Non- selective
Phase	Primary
Type of school	Voluntary Aided School
Admissions policy	N/A
Age-range of pupils	3-7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	May 2017
Previous denominational inspection grade	Outstanding

The inspection team

Mo O'Donoghue	Lead
Fearghal Nash	Team
Patricia O'Donnell	Team
Daniel Keane	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