



Our Lady & St Joseph Catholic Primary School

URN: 139423

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Archbishop of Westminster

21–22 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

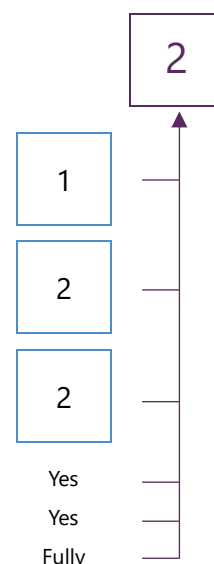
Collective worship (p.7)

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 leadership team works hard to meet the challenges of the local community and is actively engaged in supporting those in need.
- There is a calm and respectful atmosphere within the school and all members of the community live out the mission 'With Christ at our centre, we love, listen and learn'.
- Our Lady and St Joseph is a very inclusive school; all are valued and nurtured with the highest levels of care and respect.
- There is a strong link between the school and the parish and this ensures all are supported on their faith journey.
- The leadership team, including governors, have a strong understanding of their strengths and areas to develop and these are addressed through quality training and development opportunities.

What the school needs to improve

- Empower pupils to use their knowledge of Catholic social teaching to take a lead role, as they put their faith into action.
- Ensure consistency in teacher subject knowledge which will then lead to a stronger understanding of assessment in RE.
- Implement a range of ways of praying across the school, such as silence, meditation and spontaneous prayer.

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

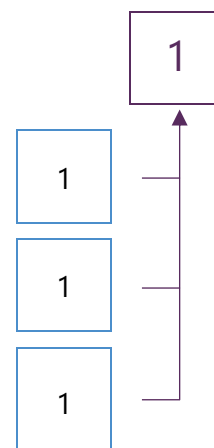
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

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



The Catholic life and mission at Our Lady and St Joseph is exceptional. All members of the school community embrace and live out the mission 'With Christ at our centre, we love, listen and learn'. One pupil stated, 'our mission statement helps us because we know Christ loves us'. The school responds to the needs of others, particularly those in their local area, such as The St Matthias Community Centre (Neighbours in Poplar) and they have set up their own OLSJ Foodbank, donating to the local hub and Feeding the Homeless. Pupils are able to link these actions to scripture. One pupil shared that 'we follow Jesus' teachings and help the poor'. Pupils are explicitly taught Catholic social teaching principles and are able to articulate that they are called to serve, especially those less fortunate than themselves. They would benefit from taking a lead role in choosing charities and organisations to support as this will ensure they are pro-active in their faith. Pupils are very proud to be part of Our Lady and St Joseph community and know they are making a difference to this part of London; the school is known as a 'beacon' in this area.

There is a lived sense of community at Our Lady and St Joseph and staff feel privileged to be a part of this community. This is evident through the high levels of care and support they show for one another and the pupils. Parents were positive about the Catholic life of the school; one commented, 'I like the fact that my child continues to learn and grow more in Christ at school, which is what we practice at home'. The Chaplaincy team spoke enthusiastically about the responsibility they have in school and how they enjoy helping people. Our Lady and St Joseph is a very inclusive school; a third of the pupils have additional needs. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are given regular opportunities to engage in all aspects of school life, they are nurtured and supported well by the adults in school. Displays around the school are vibrant and engaging and reflect the distinctive Catholic nature of the school. The Chaplaincy team are proud of their hall display which shows prayers that the children have written around the class saints. The 'interfaith' week which is held each year

ensures that pupils of all faiths and none are valued. The provision of R(S)HE is strong and meets all the statutory and diocesan guidelines.

The head teacher and the deputy head teacher, who is the RE lead, share a vision for ensuring that the Catholic life is central to this community. The governors also show a passion for the school community and have a strong understanding of the school's mission. They recognise the challenges faced and work pro-actively with senior leaders to overcome these so pupils can flourish in their faith. The parish priest is new to the community; he supports the school by leading Masses and liturgies throughout the year. This reciprocal relationship between the school and the parish, ensures families are fully supported in their faith development. In the short time he has been here, the parish priest has initiated several children and a parent from the school community into the Catholic faith. Pupil leadership has been well developed over recent years. One pupil shared that they understand their responsibility to 'work with people who are different to us'.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

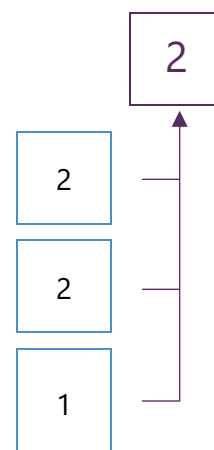
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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, including those with SEND, generally make good progress across the school from their starting points in religious education and this progress is evident in books. They enjoy learning, are reflective and engaged in lessons. Pupils are religiously literate and can speak confidently about key concepts using subject specific vocabulary. There are inconsistencies, however, in achievement in some year groups. In the strongest lessons, pupils are encouraged to work collaboratively and they enjoy learning with and from one another. They can use scripture to help them understand events in the life of Christ; for example, in a Year 5 lesson, pupils were using Mark's Gospel to help them understand the betrayal of Jesus. Most pupils can use prior knowledge when making links between religious ideas and they use Bibles effectively to support them in this. Whilst pupils talk confidently about how their work is assessed, they often struggled to articulate what they need to do to improve their understanding of a concept, although it is clear that they have a willingness to do well in RE and value this subject. Pupils achieve well in RE in comparison to the other core subjects.

Staff are enthusiastic about teaching RE. They create a positive climate for learning and as a result, pupils enjoy lessons and are eager to participate in them. Behaviour in RE lessons is good. Staff are well supported through the provision of resources but more so through the support given to them by the RE lead. The school also utilises diocesan resources effectively to help improve subject knowledge of teachers and although this is not consistently strong across all year groups, it is improving. The most effective teaching included questioning that ensured progression through the lesson and encouraged pupils to think deeply. Lessons are appropriately scaffolded to ensure all pupils can access learning in religious education, including those with special educational needs. Marking and feedback has been improved since the last inspection, there were some good examples of next step questions and comments that provided clear guidance and allowed pupils to become more competent RE learners. Where subject knowledge of staff was weaker, so was marking and feedback. The older pupils

were able to articulate how this helps them to learn more; this now needs to be consistently applied across the school. As teacher subject knowledge improves across the school, so will planning in RE; and this will ensure stronger progress for pupils as teacher's ongoing assessment ensures there is challenge in lessons. There are examples of creativity in religious education in all year groups.

Staffing and recruitment at Our Lady and St Joseph has been challenging of late. However, the leadership team are to be commended for ensuring that the religious education curriculum remains at the core of this school. They have a strong commitment to and vision for ensuring a quality religious education for all their pupils. The RE lead is highly competent and leads staff extremely well; she displays a passion for this subject alongside a strong knowledge of the school's strengths and areas to develop. Staff speak very highly of the ongoing support they are given by the RE lead, through regular collaborative planning sessions as well as weekly 'RE Surgeries'. She has an 'open-door' policy which ensures all staff are fully supported. Staff professional development is prioritised at Our Lady and St Joseph. Governors and the parish priest are committed to the school and know it well. Religious Education is also prioritised within the school budget.

Collective worship

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

Collective worship key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

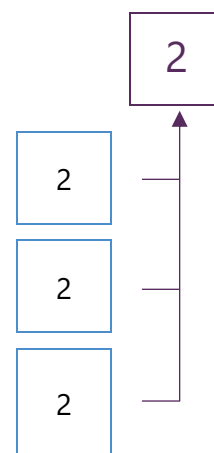
How well pupils participate in and respond to the school's collective worship

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



Collective worship and prayer are central to the life of Our Lady and St Joseph. Prayer is a regular part of the daily experience of all pupils and staff, and promotes a calm, reverent and purposeful environment which results in respect being shown to all, including those from other faiths and none. Singing is enjoyed by pupils and they have particularly liked learning their new school hymn which is based around the mission statement. They are able to articulate how they use prayer in their lives. Pupils are able to lead prayer sessions; they work with the adults in school and their peers, to plan them appropriately for their age group, choosing the music, scripture and activities. Pupils are willingly involved in the prayer life of their class and school, they show confidence and eagerness in these sessions, evaluating them regularly. The next step is for there to be an increasing focus on awe and wonder, time for silence, contemplation and meditation, for simple moments with God. There is a planned progression of prayers from the early years up to Year 6 which has been well implemented.

Our Lady and St Joseph provides opportunities for planned prayer and liturgy. Praying together, as a class, a phase and as a whole school is clearly a regular experience for all pupils and staff and this has a positive impact on the school's sense of community. The Chaplaincy team lead the younger children in prayer activities, writing and preparing bidding prayers for Masses, and praying the Rosary in the months of October and May. Parents are positive about the prayer life of the school; one parent commented, 'I am happy hearing my son teaching us his own prayers, based on his learning from school'. The school has outdoor prayer gardens and pupils enjoy utilising these for prayer sessions, often led by the Chaplaincy team. Pupils are confident in planning and leading class worship sessions and progression is evident throughout the year groups. Pupils now need to be guided to link the chosen themes for class prayer sessions with the liturgical year, so they are more meaningful, and can be linked to their learning in RE. This would also ensure that class prayer sessions link with whole school Masses, liturgies and assemblies. There is a particular strength in collective worship in the Early

Years Foundation Stage where the children are actively involved in prayer, choose appropriate objects for the focal point, and show respect and reverence.

Prayer and Liturgy is given a high priority by leaders at Our Lady and St Joseph and is authentically part of the school's self-evaluation cycle. Staff training and monitoring around collective worship, led by the RE lead, has enabled prayer to become an integral part of each class, and led by pupils. The school calendar provides a framework for Masses, liturgies and assemblies to ensure they are linked to the Liturgical year. The strong parish links mean that no opportunity to work together is missed; staff are fully supported by the parish priest as they further develop the prayer life of the school. Pupils have been well developed in leading prayer and liturgy in their classes as has the Chaplaincy team. Although they are new in post, these pupils have a desire to make further impact in the school. There is a clear succession plan in place; leaders are working with teachers to build their capacity as future leaders of prayer and liturgy.

Information about the school

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| Full name of school | Our Lady & St Joseph Catholic Primary School |
| School unique reference number (URN) | 139423 |
| School DfE Number (LAESTAB) | 2112006 |
| Full postal address of the school | Our Lady & St Joseph Catholic Primary School, Wade's Place, Poplar, London, E14 0DE |
| School phone number | 02037648860 |
| Headteacher | Patrick Devereux |
| Chair of Governors/Trustees | Jo Faulkner |
| School Website | http://www.olsj.towerhamlets.sch.uk/ |
| Trusteeship | Diocesan |
| Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable) | N/A |
| Phase | Primary |
| Type of school | Voluntary Aided School |
| Admissions policy | N/A |
| Age-range of pupils | 3-11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Date of last denominational inspection | June 2017 |
| Previous denominational inspection grade | Good |

The inspection team

| | |
|------------------|------|
| Robina Maher | Lead |
| Christine Curtis | Team |
| Dermot O'Neill | 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 |

