



St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

URN: 148110

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Bishop of Brentwood

21–22 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

1

Religious education (p.5)

The quality of curriculum religious education

2

Collective worship (p.7)

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

2

The school is fully compliant with the curriculum requirements laid down by the Bishops' Conference

Yes

The school is fully compliant with all requirements of the diocesan bishop

Yes

The school has responded to the areas for improvement from the last inspection

Fully

2

What the school does well

- All pupils at St Joseph's are celebrated, included and cherished. They all know and believe that they will thrive and be safe in their school, which is full of happiness.
- Staff are deeply committed and extraordinarily proud to be part of the school community, where the Catholic ethos shines through each of them.
- Parents feel especially welcome at all times, and they are highly appreciative of the ethos, values and prayer life offered by the school.
- The pastoral care provided by staff is exceptional as they know the families well and foster positive relationships that support pupils, parents and carers.

- This family school develops a strong sense of belonging within its pupils, parents and staff; everyone values this 'little oasis of happiness by the sea'.

What the school needs to improve

- Develop clear and systematic assessment procedures for religious education.
- Ensure that teachers' planning in religious education results in pupil work of a consistently high quality and standard of presentation.
- Ensure prayer and liturgy is thoroughly and systematically evaluated by leaders and governors, leading to improvements in policy and practice for pupils.

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

2

1

Pupils fully understand and embrace the mission statement. They are, as the mission statement says, inspired by the life of St Joseph, living, loving and learning together. Pupils actively participate in activities that significantly enhance the Catholic life of the school, including singing at a local care home and attending parish Cafod lunches. Additionally, pupils undertake activities to support those who have dementia, further developing pupils' understanding of the condition. Pupils feel exceptionally happy, safe and secure. They know they are valued and one Year 6 pupil clearly explained that 'God made us in his own image'. Pupils grow in virtue at the school, which is recognised and greatly appreciated by parents. One parent stated that they are 'very happy with the values the school teaches', whilst another parent said their child in Reception knew the meaning of humility. Pupils are increasingly aware of Catholic social teaching and are beginning to articulate aspects of the theology underpinning their actions. Pupils now need to take a leading role in finding ways to respond locally, nationally and globally to the demands of Catholic social teaching. Pupils show great respect for each other in their behaviour. They explain with pride how they have collected recipes from around the world; created a map showing the diversity of their community; and speak confidently about other actions that have culminated in achieving the silver Diversity Award.

Staff know, live and give witness to the mission statement. They are all exceptionally proud to be part of the St Joseph's family. There is a strong commitment to the life of the school. The staff form an exceptionally joyful community with a strong sense of family and belonging. One member of staff expressed her delight in feeling part of the community and the mutual support they give to one another. A second member of staff explained, 'there is an overwhelming sense of community and kindness throughout the school, among all stakeholders'. There is an

embedded cultural of welcome and pastoral care at the school is excellent. Staff know the families exceptionally well and they reach out to families in challenging circumstances. The physical environment reflects the Catholic character of the school, which includes a small chapel. Chaplaincy provision is strong and effective in supporting the moral development of pupils. Staff are exemplary role models in all aspects of school life, but particularly in their positive interactions with pupils. The provision for relationship, sex and health education meets both the statutory and diocesan requirements. The policy has been shared with parents.

Leaders and governors are able to articulate the Church's mission and ensure Christ is at the heart of the school. They ensure that the whole child is educated, that the school is inclusive and great value is placed on the moral development of pupils. Engagement with the diocese is good and both staff and governors attend training. There is a robust and flourishing partnership with the local parish. The parish priest is a welcome and regular visitor. Parishioners are invited to attend mass in the school, for example to celebrate the recent Feast of St Joseph. The partnership with parents is exceptionally strong; they all feel welcome within the school family and are highly supportive of the school's mission. One parent explained, 'St Joseph's are constantly involving families and parents in all aspects of the children's Catholic education'. Another parent wrote, 'Catholic life is celebrated and cherished at the school. My child feels part of a larger community.' The school's "SMILE curriculum" to develop personal social and health education is excellent and there are many links to Catholic social teaching, including Laudato Si' and Fair Trade. Governors are ambitious for the Catholic life and mission of the school and they are increasingly conscientious in their work. However, the self-evaluation of their monitoring and analysis now needs to be more effective in leading to well-targeted and planned improvements. Professional development opportunities are good, and new staff, including early career teachers, are appreciative of their induction which supports them in contributing to the Catholic life and mission of the school.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

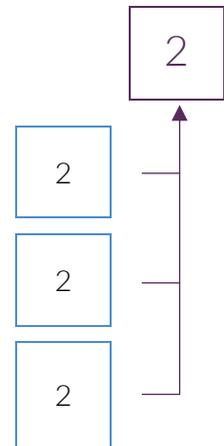
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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 develop a secure knowledge of religious education. They can recall Bible stories, miracles and some parables. For example, in Early Years pupils stated that 'Jesus is the light of the world'. Pupils in Key Stage 2 know that Jesus' first miracle is the Wedding Feast at Cana and that Jesus told parables such as the Good Samaritan to help people understand His message. Pupils make good progress in knowing and remembering more as measured against curriculum intent. Some pupils are beginning to ask good questions in their religious education lessons. In a Key Stage 1 lesson, where pupils were learning about Jesus washing the feet of the disciples, one pupil asked, 'If you were a servant, who would wash your feet?' Pupils work independently, are engaged during their lessons and talk about their enjoyment of religious education, particularly art, drama and dance. Attainment is good when compared to core subjects. However, there is a need to ensure that pupils' work is consistently well presented and of a high standard. Older pupils are able to self-assess their progress in religious education. There now needs to be a consistent approach throughout the school to ensure that all pupils can articulate how well they are doing and what they need to do to further improve their work.

Teachers are committed to, and fully understand, the importance of religious education. One teacher explained that religious education teaching 'is the beating heart of our school'. Most teachers are confident in their subject knowledge, although planning is not always linked to pupils' current assessment. Bibles are readily available for all pupils. They are very well used within Key Stage 2 lessons, and pupils refer to scripture, enhancing their learning. Teachers provide pupils with feedback on their learning. Some pupils in Key Stage 2 reflect on this marking in their books and respond to the thoughtful questions with their purple pens. This now needs to be implemented consistently. Teachers recognise the impact religious education has on the moral and spiritual development of pupils and provide time and space for this to occur. For

example in Key Stage 1, pupils lay on the carpet to reflect on how they could be selfless, whilst listening to the hymn 'Make me a Channel of your Peace'. Teachers provide pupils with opportunities to present their learning in a variety of forms. Examples include writing from the point of view of the disciples; using pointillism or collage to represent Bible stories; and using drama. Other adults are used exceptionally well to support the learning of pupils with additional needs.

Leaders and governors ensure that the school curriculum is a faithful expression of the Religious Education Curriculum Directory. The headteacher guarantees that religious education is regarded as the 'core of the core' and that it is given at least parity to other core subjects in terms of timetabling and staffing. Leaders and governors ensure professional development opportunities are provided. However, uptake of these opportunities must now improve consistency in subject knowledge and ensure the effective use of assessment by staff when planning to meet the needs of all pupils. Art and drama, alongside visits to the local parish church and the beach environment provide engaging and enriching opportunities to enhance religious education. The subject leader has a clear vision and the expertise to effectively improve teaching and learning in religious education, which includes the ambition to raise consistency in standards. Key to this vision is improved monitoring, analysis and self-evaluation by leaders and governors, which will give greater strategic actions and outstanding outcomes.

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

2

Provision

The quality of collective worship provided by the school

2

Leadership

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

2

2

Pupils are deeply engaged in the prayer and liturgy provided by the school. In assembly they reflect in silence and join in with singing. All pupils demonstrate great respect before the Gospel is read using their “special thumbs” to mark the cross on their forehead, lips and heart. Pupils can clearly articulate their knowledge of the liturgical year and know they attend mass for All Saints’ Day, Ash Wednesday and holy days of obligation. Pupils work collaboratively with their teachers to plan and lead prayer and liturgy with increasing skill and confidence, particularly in Years 5 and 6. Additionally, older Key Stage 2 pupils are developing their capacity to evaluate prayer and liturgy, including in whole-school assembly. These pupils are able to reflect on the message of the scripture readings and consider how they put their faith into action. These planning, leading and evaluating skills now need to be further developed for the younger pupils. Opportunities to write prayers connected to the “SMILE curriculum” are provided within personal, social and health education lessons. For example one pupil prayed for help in ‘taking care of our bodies and not to be ashamed ... let us not worry.’ Pupils know that prayer can help them to be calm and reflect.

Prayer is central to the life of the school. Significant times of joy, such as the Feast Day of St Joseph, and sorrow, including Remembrance Day, are celebrated with the community. Pupils experience a range of ways of praying, including silent reflection and traditional prayers. In a school assembly, for example, the pupils were introduced to the Litany of Joy. Well-chosen and seasonally appropriate scripture is central to prayer and liturgy. In class liturgies pupils were reflecting on the washing of the disciples’ feet and the Passion of Our Lord. Staff are very good role models during class worship and whole-school assemblies. The school makes good use of the space available, including a reflective prayer focus in each classroom. Families are regularly welcomed to acts of worship in classes and parents have an opportunity to review religious

education books after the liturgy. One parent explained, 'the school actively involves parents in collective worship and in the Catholic life of the school.' Parents greatly value these opportunities to participate in the prayer and liturgy with the pupils.

The school's policy on prayer and liturgy is accessible to staff. However, this now needs to be more ambitious to support staff in further developing pupils' skills in planning and leading prayer and liturgy. Additional professional development opportunities for staff in the development of prayer and liturgy would be beneficial in the implementation of a revised policy. Leaders have planned a school calendar that provides opportunities to celebrate the Eucharist. The religious education leader, who plans the school liturgies, has a good knowledge of the needs of the community to inform her planning. The school uses their chapel to provide opportunities for pupils to reflect during the reconciliation services in Advent and Lent. Leaders ensure resources are made available to support high quality experiences of prayer and liturgy. Leaders and governors have a good knowledge of the school's provision of prayer and liturgy as they regularly attend school Mass and other events. This knowledge now needs to be used as part of a regular review of prayer and liturgy as part of the school's cycles of rigorous self-evaluation.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Joseph's Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	148110
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	8813302
Full postal address of the school	St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, The Drive, Dovercourt, CO12 3SU
School phone number	01255503493
Headteacher	Samantha Golding
Chair of Local Governing Body	Sheila Davis
School Website	http://www.st-josephs-dovercourt.essex.sch.uk
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	The Rosary Trust - A Catholic Multi Academy
Phase	Primary
Type of school	Academy
Admissions policy	Non-Selective
Age-range of pupils	5-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	16 November 2017
Previous denominational inspection grade	2

The inspection team

Gael Hicks

Sheila Birtles

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