



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

URN: 124357

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

Date: 16-17 November 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

- Vibrant, well-crafted prayer is modelled strongly by adults who are excellent role models of Christian discipleship.
- Pupils plan and lead prayer confidently and expertly. It captures their peers' interest and brings them to a deep sense of reverence.
- All leaders and staff are deeply committed to the school's Catholic life and mission. They put into practice the Church's social teaching, showing visible witness to the values they teach pupils.
- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding because they have a secure understanding of how to enact Christian values.

- Everybody feels valued because Christ is at the heart of St Joseph's, the significance of which is understood by all.

What the school needs to improve:

- Ensure pupils' views are frequently and routinely used in the evaluation of Catholic life and mission so that development plans have a swift impact, as they do for prayer.
- Plan opportunities for all pupils to consistently deepen their understanding in religious education lessons.
- Provide feedback and questions which meet the individual needs of pupils by guiding them towards the next steps in their religious education learning.

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:.....

1

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



All pupils deeply value the love and care that they receive in school. They talk confidently about how staff help them grow and develop and understand that as the 'St Joseph's family', they have their proactive part to support others. Relationships between all within the school are strong and are based on an authentic belief that Christ is at the centre of the community. Moral development is taken very seriously, and pupils respond enthusiastically to the many opportunities they are provided to understand the example that Jesus sets and their responsibility to share their witness to this with others. One pupil said, 'It is compulsory to help others because we are Catholic.' Staff introduce pupils to the demands of Catholic social teaching, although pupils struggle to articulate how it links to their support of those in need. Behaviour is exemplary because all pupils demonstrate genuinely Christian care for one another and are welcoming of all, including visitors. They maturely understand some of their friends' struggles and actively seek to help and support each other. Whilst only a few children make up the chaplaincy team, pupils can undertake different leadership roles within the school, and they highly value sharing their gifts and talents.

All know and live the school's mission statement, which has been recently reviewed to ensure it remains relevant to the pupils. Staff are enthusiastic ambassadors for the school. They speak passionately about what it means to be part of this community and how they are empowered to contribute to it, which they readily do. All feel well-supported in their various roles and know that they are valued. There is an authentic regard for visitors, including parishioners and frequent opportunities for parents to come into school and share in learning and celebratory activities. The school environment clearly and effectively reflects its Catholic character, and plans are in place to enhance the outdoor setting with a prayer garden. The school has an embedded scheme for teaching pupils about relationships, which is well-planned and faithful to the teachings of the Church.

Leaders have maximised opportunities to work collaboratively, including engaging with the diocese, to enhance staff's spiritual and moral development and training opportunities. Parishioners support the school's mission and feel supported by the service it offers the parish. A retired priest who celebrates Mass for the pupils and frequently visits the school talks passionately about the school's strengths as a Catholic community. Parents appreciate the love and care their children are shown through the pastoral support system and that shown towards them; consequently, parents know that they are valued as the child's first educators and are supported in this vocation. Leaders and governors have great regard for staff well-being. They ensure the head teacher receives time for her formation and prioritise opportunities for staff to nurture their spiritual and moral development, such as through retreat days. Staff make links to Catholic social teaching within some of their lessons; however, these have not yet been formally mapped across the full curriculum and leaders of some subject areas are yet to explicitly identify discrete opportunities to emphasise concrete connections with Catholic social teaching in their curriculum maps. The monitoring and evaluation of Catholic life and mission, whilst happening, is not sufficiently leading to well-planned and targeted improvements, and pupil voice is under-utilised in informing priorities. This means that the role of pupils in leading appropriate aspects of school development is limited.

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

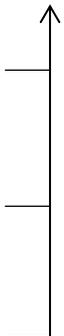
The quality of teaching, learning, and assessment in religious education.....

2

Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor, and evaluate the provision for religious education.....

1



Provision for religious education is good in all year groups. As a result, most pupils' progress in knowing more and doing more is good, as reflected in the work recorded in their exercise books. Pupils understand the key messages from lessons and can reflect upon how these affect their daily lives and choices. Pupils are encouraged to establish links with prior learning, which helps them achieve well and remember more of the knowledge they learn as they progress through the curriculum. Pupils routinely ask questions of teachers, though these are often not used or developed sufficiently to get pupils to think more deeply. Consequently, opportunities are missed to utilise pupils' questions to enhance learning. In most classes, work is presented well. However, this is not consistent across all year groups. Pupils talk of enjoying religious education because they value the subject and how it is presented. They know how well they are doing and what they must do to progress. Consequently, attainment in religious education is at least as good as other core subjects and has been sustained over the last few years.

Teachers value religious education and communicate this well to pupils. There is a clear commitment to high expectations, which all staff share. Teachers have good subject knowledge, meaning they impart knowledge confidently to pupils. Various tasks are provided so pupils can access different learning styles and meet their needs. There is a clear focus on nurturing pupils' spiritual and moral development in lessons, and this is something parents identify when talking to their children about religious education. Planning takes account of prior learning; therefore, lessons build well on pupils' understanding from when they were younger. Teachers provide regular written feedback in books to inform them how to improve their work. They ask questions throughout lessons; however, pupils have limited opportunities to develop greater-depth skills because teachers' questions lack sufficient targeted challenge. For example, all pupils in one year group are often given the same question at the end of lessons, regardless of their prior achievements or the

level at which they aspire to achieve. Staff set homework for religious education to develop pupils' understanding of lessons.

Leaders and governors ensure staff receive regular high-quality training, enabling a good provision of religious education. For example, there are strong links with local Catholic primary schools, where expertise is shared, and standards are moderated so that leaders can be confident in the accuracy of teachers' assessments. These networks help them to improve their subject knowledge and lead to a greater understanding of assessment requirements. The subject leader has a clear vision. She has led improvements in teaching and learning through feedback to staff and has ensured new staff receive the support they need, including support with planning and opportunities to observe good practice. Enrichment opportunities help pupils apply their learning; for example, elements of Catholic social teaching are brought alive through visits from external agencies. Whilst lessons link well to prior learning and result in most pupils making good progress, the needs of specific groups of pupils, including those with higher prior attainment, are not sufficiently considered when teachers plan their lessons and provide feedback. Leaders use monitoring, including governor visits, to inform the governing body of recent achievements. Pupils' views are considered, though less frequently. Whilst monitoring has led to improvements since the last inspection, there is limited evidence of forensic monitoring being undertaken within religious education. Subsequently, strategic improvement targets for religious education lack a searching level of self-challenge and subject development work is infrequent. Leaders, therefore, have limited evidence of how monitoring leads to better outcomes.

Collective worship

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

Collective worship key judgement grade:.....

1

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

Engagement in prayer and liturgy is authentic, with all pupils demonstrating deep reverence, particularly in reflective silence. Pupils consistently participate in full, active, and conscious prayer because the provision is so strong across all areas of the school. Across each year group, pupils are skilled in planning prayer and liturgy and confident in delivering it to their peers. They are well-supported in becoming more and more independent in their prayer planning, and by the time pupils reach Upper Key Stage 2, they need very little guidance from staff. During Mass, pupils confidently and enthusiastically undertake ministries, including altar serving, reading, and singing in the choir. Pupils evaluate the quality of prayer and subsequently know how to improve it. For example, they suggested door signs informing others that prayer was taking place to stop interruptions and help sustain the sense of spirituality they create. Prayer helps pupils understand the world around them, and it is an obvious act to undertake when they are in need. Pupils can articulate the messages they encounter in prayer and maturely understand how it makes a difference in people's lives, especially those most in need of prayer.

Prayer is at the heart of St Joseph's. Moments of joy and sorrow are experienced through prayerful times. Pupils and staff speak about the need to support one another through prayer. Pupils have a mature approach to communicating with God, enriched by providing an excellent variety of prayer types, including spontaneous prayer. Prayer is led by different people who use a range of traditional and contemporary styles, making it readily accessible to all. Weekly, there are various opportunities to pray in engaging and creative ways; for example, the weekly charismatic prayer group is led by the voluntary prayer group leader. During this, pupils vocalise their petitions simultaneously, creating a beautiful chorus of praise to God. Scripture is central to all forms of prayer. Staff are highly skilled and guide pupils in the use of the Bible. Music is a crucial element of the school's prayer life. A beautiful choir, where all demonstrate active participation, ensures uplifting and joyful singing. All prayer experiences profoundly affect the school community and powerfully enrich the

school's heartbeat. Parish and family links are vital to the school. There are many opportunities for prayer throughout the week, often shared with families and parish members, who regularly join the pupils at school Masses.

Leaders miss no opportunity to develop prayer further; they are relentless in their successful pursuit of excellence. Over a sustained period, pupils have developed skills to plan prayer because of a well-considered prayer policy that reflects their age and capacity. Consequently, they confidently deliver prayerful experiences which mirror those provided by leaders. Retreats are frequently offered and support the formation of pupils and staff, ensuring all are spiritually nourished and equipped to lead the school's faith life. Leaders and staff role model authentic discipleship, which comes alive through all instances of prayer. They are skilled in providing opportunities for pupils to be silent with God and ensure there are regular opportunities for this. Priority is given to high-quality resources for prayer and liturgy, which staff use well. Self-evaluation of prayer and liturgy is embedded, with evidence of pupils sharing their views and leading improvements where appropriate. Pupils regularly reflect on Mass, the key messages of scripture, and self-evaluate the effectiveness of the liturgies they lead. This enables leaders to identify improvement actions which ensure prayer meets the needs of all pupils.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Joseph's Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	124357
Full postal address of the school	Cherry Orchard, Lichfield, Staffordshire, WS14 9AN
School phone number	01543 263505
Name of head teacher or principal	Deirdre McLeary
Chair of governing board	Martina Rowe
School Website	www.stjosephslichfield.org.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	March 2017
Previous denominational inspection grade	2

The inspection team

Karyn Oakley	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