

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

URN: 137422

Carried out on behalf of the Right Rev. Philip Egan, Bishop of Portsmouth on:

Date: 17 - 18 May 2023

### Overall effectiveness

The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school.....

1

### 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.....

1

### Collective worship (p.7)

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

1

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

- St Joseph's lives the school's vision of welcoming Christ in everyone whilst seeking the highest possible achievements. Relationships throughout the school are built on the highest level of care and respect. The school is exceptional in its welcome and support of all members of the community, particularly the most vulnerable.
- The exemplary model of servant leadership underpins the school's success.
- Pupils demonstrate a deep sense of belonging to this welcoming, inclusive community. They are engaged and passionate about all aspects of school life.
- High-quality teaching in religious education enthuses and engages pupils, enabling them to be confident, successful learners.

- Pupils and staff participation in a wide range of prayer and liturgy opportunities is exceptionally heartfelt and enthusiastic.

What the school needs to improve:

- Ensure that the school maintains its current high standards with the advent of the new *Religious Education Directory* and the *Prayer and Liturgy Directory*.

## 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 |
| <b>Pupil outcomes</b><br>The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school .....                  | 1 |
| <b>Provision</b><br>The quality of provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school .....  | 1 |
| <b>Leadership</b><br>How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school ..... | 1 |

From the moment you enter St Joseph's a welcoming and inclusive Catholic culture is evident. The school's vision statement, 'As a Catholic family we welcome all and value Christ in everyone, whilst seeking the highest possible achievements', lies at the heart of the school community and is known, lived and experienced by all. Pupils are joyful ambassadors for their school; they have a clear understanding of the school's vision and they work hard to maintain excellent relationships with each other and with adults. One pupil commented, "We have our own family, but we also have a school family; we treat them as if they were real brothers and sisters." This care for each other extends to caring for those in the local and wider community, as part of their commitment to the social teaching of the Church. By taking on roles on the Eco-Committee, the School Committee and as RE Champions, they organise events to promote the Common Good, such as bringing in Easter Eggs for the Trussell Trust, raising money for Cafod and making a crisp bin to encourage re-use of crisp packets. Pupils are able to link this work to the principles of Catholic Social Teaching and can articulate this fluently and confidently. One of the RE champions described the school as 'powerful because our school has the power to do many things to help us and others around the world.'

All staff members are exemplary role models to pupils through their relationships with each other. They consistently bear witness to the school's vision and values through the love and care they show for all pupils. Pupils talk about the care and respect that all staff have for them and how they will support them in times of difficulty and joy. The key message of welcome is felt throughout the community and is seen as central to the vision. One pupil summed this up by saying, 'We take in people, we welcome them, we value them and we look after them'. Staff are extremely supportive

of one another and speak highly of the induction process that they receive as new members of the team. It is of particular note that so many former pupils have returned as teachers. The school environment is an explicit representation of its vision statement. Displays and sacred spaces allow areas for reflection and have been thoughtfully designed. These include The Well, a beautiful and thoughtful prayer space with stained-glass windows designed by the children, and the outdoor Spiritual Garden.

The executive principal and head teacher provide excellent role models of servant leadership. They see themselves as custodians of the vision and this is recognised by pupils, parents and staff. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school and are highly appreciative of everything it does. As one parent put it, 'Catholic values are modelled and promoted by all staff and underpin every interaction with all stakeholders.' In response to a recent parent survey, leaders have redesigned sections of the website to provide more information about the Catholic Life of the school and the events that the school organises, and this has made the website a more accessible resource. Leaders are inspirational in their commitment to Catholic Social Teaching which informs their direction of the school at every level. Resources are routinely directed to support those in greatest need, for example providing wraparound care which has recently become increasingly important for parents who work in the NHS and care sector. There is a firm commitment to the mental health and wellbeing of all staff and pastoral support is provided where necessary. Links with the local parishes are well established and the parish priest is a regular visitor to the school, offering his time to lead staff reflections, adoration, processions and celebrate Mass and provide Chaplaincy support for staff.

## Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade:.....

1

### Pupil outcomes

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education.....

1

### Provision

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

1

### Leadership

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

1

Pupils thoroughly enjoy their RE learning at St Joseph's. They speak fluently and enthusiastically about what they have learnt and show excellent knowledge, understanding and skills. Pupils are very proud of the work in their RE books and say that teachers make their lessons fun and interesting. They particularly value the range of opportunities to study other faiths, where they are able to make links with their own faith. Pupils are confident to link their learning from religious education to their moral and religious commitment in everyday life and to the principles of Catholic Social Teaching. For example, a Year 1 pupil could clearly retell the story of the feeding of the 5000 and relate it to their commitment to giving to charity. Pupils show exemplary behaviour in lessons and are highly engaged; they work independently and are highly committed to their learning, which results in very well-presented work in their books, demonstrating a deep level of understanding. Older pupils can articulate how well they are getting on and say that the feedback teachers give them helps them to identify their next steps and improve their learning.

In their interactions with pupils, all teachers demonstrate a deep commitment to the importance of religious education and expect pupils to do their best. This was clearly evident during the inspection: for example, in a Year 5 lesson seen, all pupils were desperate to find the different titles of the Holy Spirit and to share their answers with the class. Teachers make skilful use of questioning to identify where pupils are in their learning and to inform their next steps and pupils say they are given time to respond to feedback which helps them with their understanding. A range of strategies are used to ensure that all pupils make progress regardless of their abilities in other subjects, including extra support from adults, different styles of task and opportunities to revisit and go over previous learning. Teachers have strong

and secure subject knowledge, and there is a culture of staff working together with dedicated support from the subject leaders to ensure teaching is consistently of a high level. Planning of work sequences is very carefully thought-out to deliver opportunities for pupils to undertake a wide array of exciting learning activities including drama, discussion and artwork. An example was the very creative use of an agony aunt scenario in Year 6 to explore the links between the Holy Spirit and Confirmation.

The passionate commitment of the religious education leaders is recognised by staff and pupils, who speak highly of the support they have been offered. They and other senior leaders provide opportunities to plan and moderate work together and watch each other teach as well as regular training sessions. A particular feature mentioned by newer members of staff were the *How to Teach RE* and *How to Plan a Collective Worship* PowerPoints, which had been made by the religious education leaders to help support the teaching of religious education. Leaders have a well-devised programme for self-evaluation and assessment of religious education which is used to inform next steps: they regularly carry out work scrutiny and lesson observations with the result that they have an accurate view of the quality of teaching and learning across the school. They will then intervene and support if necessary. The key improvement points identified are appropriate and are monitored and evaluated by governors as part of their self-evaluation cycle. Leaders ensure that the curriculum meets the requirements of the *Religious Education Directory* and they ensure that religious education is at the heart of the school curriculum. This is clearly evidenced by the time given to religious education teaching in the curriculum and the resources that are routinely dedicated to it.

## 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

Pupils value the wide range of prayer and liturgy at St Joseph's including traditional Catholic prayer as well as more spontaneous opportunities. Pupils are fully engaged participants and act with deep reverence and respect, whether they are joining in prayer or singing or reflecting in silence. They are clear about their roles in collective worship, which includes leading at a level appropriate to their age. For example, by Year 5 and 6, pupils take turns to prepare the class act of worship by examining the scripture of the day and preparing relevant questions and reflections on it for the rest of the class. The newly appointed RE champions have embraced their role enthusiastically and work collaboratively with staff to provide high quality liturgies for their peers and younger children. A particular highlight of this is the Friday liturgy, which they lead for the whole school and which always ends with a question such as 'How can the Holy Spirit guide us to do the right thing?' for the whole community to consider over the following week. Pupils are able to articulate the way in which prayer and liturgy brings them together and helps them to reflect on the joys and difficulties in their lives. They talk about showing care by gathering together and praying when people in their community have difficulties.

The rhythm of the school day is built around regular prayer and the rich provision of the school's prayer life makes a significant contribution to the spiritual development of the school community. The prayer and liturgy provision is wide ranging and celebrates the breadth and richness of Catholic tradition and the liturgical year, including for example the Stations of the Cross, the Rosary, Benediction and processions for Corpus Christi and Our Lady. Displays around the school are vibrant and supportive of prayer and there are many areas around the school that have been dedicated to reflection and prayer. Pupils are particularly proud of The

Well, a beautiful prayer space with a tabernacle which houses the Blessed Sacrament and a prayer tree for the intentions of pupils, staff and parents. The Well is also open for families at the start of the day. The school has worked hard to bring families closer to the Catholic rhythm of the Church, in line with the Bishop's Vision and this has included developing a section of the website to showcase the liturgical celebrations that happen in school as well as sending home prayer bags for Advent and Lent to encourage parents to pray with their children.

Leaders have an in-depth and thorough knowledge and understanding of the liturgical year and ensure that the school marks events in the Church's cycle of seasons and feasts. Senior leaders have worked hard to devise an appropriate progression document to involve pupils in leading prayer so that they gradually take on more responsibility as they move through the school. Prayer is also prepared in partnership with the Parish Priest and governors, with the result that the programme of worship is matched to pupils' ages and experiences, enabling them to participate fully and joyfully in a variety of ways. Staff are effectively inducted into the school's prayer life and highly value the school's *Induction to Catholic School* programme. Leaders and governors ensure that prayer and liturgy are well-resourced and invest in training to ensure that worship and liturgy are of the highest quality. The work of the religious education governor is particularly to be commended. She is an ever-visible presence in the school and in the words of one pupil, 'She loves to spread the Word of God, she's really happy and she makes me feel like I'm at home.'

## Information about the school

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|--|---|
| Full name of school                            | St Joseph's Catholic Primary School   |
| School unique reference number (URN)           | 137422  |
| Full postal address of the school              | Bridge Road, Aldershot, Hampshire GU11 3DD  |
| School phone number                            | 01252350583   |
| Executive principal                            | Bill James  |
| Head teacher                                   | Deirdre McNeill   |
| Chair of governing board                       | Col David Kenny   |
| School Website                                 | <a href="https://www.stjosephsaldershot.org">https://www.stjosephsaldershot.org</a> |
| Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable) | Mother Teresa Catholic Academy Trust  |
| Type of school                                 | Primary   |
| School category                                | Academy   |
| Age-range of pupils                            | 4-11  |
| Trustees                                       | Mother Teresa Catholic Academy Trust  |
| Gender of pupils                               | Mixed   |
| Date of last denominational inspection         | 17 <sup>th</sup> November 2016  |
| Previous denominational inspection grade       | Outstanding   |

## The inspection team

|                   |                |
|-------------------|----------------|
| Michael Lobo      | Lead inspector |
| Veronica Woodward | Team inspector |
| Tara Sharp        | Team inspector |

## Key to grade judgements

| Grade    | England              | Wales  |
|----------|----------------------|--|
| <b>1</b> | Outstanding          | Excellent  |
| <b>2</b> | Good                 | Good   |
| <b>3</b> | Requires improvement | Adequate and requires improvement                |
| <b>4</b> | Inadequate           | Unsatisfactory and in need of urgent improvement |