



DENOMINATIONAL INSPECTION REPORT

incorporating Section 48 and Canonical Inspection under Canon 806 on
behalf of the Archbishop of Southwark

URN 100729

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Crossfield Street

London

SE8 3PH

Inspection date: 22nd September 2022

Chair of Governors: Mr George McNamara

Executive Headteacher: Mr Joshua Levenson

Head of School: Mrs Louise Blyde

Inspectors: Mr Stephen Beck

Mrs Helen Frostick

EDUCATION COMMISSION

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Interim Director of Education: Ms Angela Cox



Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding	Grade 3	Requires improvement
Grade 2	Good	Grade 4	Inadequate

FULL REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school is a one form of entry voluntary aided Catholic Primary. It is situated in the Lewisham Deanery of the Archdiocese of Southwark. It is maintained by Lewisham Local Authority. The principal parish served by the school is Our Lady of The Assumption. The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholics is 62%. The average weekly proportion of curriculum time given to religious education is 10% in all key stages.

The school takes pupils from 4 to 11 years. The number of pupils currently on roll is 175. In recent times there has been a significant increase in mobility due to a rise in the number of families admitted to the school who have no recourse to public funds and are subsequently relocated. The attainment of pupils on entering the school is below average. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is 29.7%. Around 16% of the pupils receive extra support in class. The school celebrates its rich multinational and multicultural intake. Pupils come from predominantly Black African, Black British and Caribbean heritages, with the remainder coming from several other backgrounds, including Vietnamese, Polish and Asian groups. The proportion of pupils from homes where English is an additional language is above average at 77%.

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SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

St Joseph's is a good Catholic school because:

The Catholic identity of the school is strong fulfilling its longstanding mission statement: *'We are passionate about ensuring that all children reach their true potential. We endeavour to place Jesus at the heart of all we do: 'Striving for Excellence, United in Our Faith'* which guides the work of leaders and staff in this fully inclusive Catholic community. Work is already underway to review this mission statement to ensure it is made even more accessible to pupils, with consideration being given to forming pupil-generated versions of the statement. St Joseph's is very welcoming, and pupils have positive attitudes to learning, enjoy coming to school and feel 'part of a distinctively Catholic family'.

Pupils benefit from the opportunity to contribute to many aspects of the Catholic life of the school. For example, they hear the Word of God regularly, are provided with a range of opportunities for prayer when they can pray together, and show an understanding of the liturgical year. In addition, they enjoy fundraising for those in need.

Outcomes for pupils in curriculum religious education are good. Pupil workbooks reflect their hard work and thoughtful approach to lessons. Teaching is good across the whole school, and pupils are developing good religious literacy.

Support for the most vulnerable children and their families is a priority in supporting the school's inclusive ethos. There is evidence of staff accessing professional development opportunities both within the school and through external provision. This has recently included support for using the scheme for curriculum religious education. Leaders recognise the need to continue to provide these opportunities so that all staff have the knowledge and skills required when delivering and assessing the religious education curriculum to ensure it is linked to age-related standards.

The school operates in an old building that is well kept with space being well utilised. This reflects pride in the internal and external environments that pupils respect. Immediately upon entering the school, its Catholic nature is evident. Parents overwhelmingly support the school, as evidenced by the parental questionnaires and a meeting with a group of them.

WHAT DOES THE SCHOOL NEED TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- The subject leader and school leadership team should now ensure that the school's best practice in assessment for learning and feedback to pupils is consistent in religious education across all classes.
- Good religious education practice should be disseminated to ensure all pupils are challenged through opportunities to actively participate in lessons using a broader range of teaching strategies that also encompass pupil-led research and learning.



- Further develop the role of the pupil Faith Council to increase its impact on the Catholic life of the school.

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Overall Effectiveness

How effective the school is in providing Catholic Education.

2

Catholic Life

2

The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school.

2

The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school.

2

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school.

2

Religious Education

2

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education.

2

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education.

2

How well do leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education?

2

Collective Worship

2

How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship.

2

The quality of provision for Collective Worship.

2

How well do leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship?

2

CATHOLIC LIFE

2

The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school is good.

Inspection finds that the extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life of the school is good. Pupils actively seek to demonstrate gospel values through their interactions with each other, staff, and school visitors. They make visitors feel welcome in school and treat each other with care and love, demonstrating an understanding of the importance of forgiveness. One pupil told inspectors, *"We follow the example of Jesus by being kind and helpful to each other"*. Pupils speak confidently about how they contribute to the Catholic life of the school. They are given opportunities to take on responsibilities demonstrating pride in being members of groups such as Peer Mediators, Buddies, the Eco Council, Student Faith Council and the School Council. Whilst these roles are at an early stage of development, pupils speak with confidence about how they, as individuals, can contribute to the life of the school and how their councils will make choices about the charities they want to support and make a difference to their school. The school has a strong record of supporting a broad range of local, national and worldwide charities and plans to involve pupils more in selecting these charities. Overall, pupil participation in, and leadership of, the prayer and liturgical life of the school is good. Most pupils show reverence and respect during times of worship. By Year 4, pupils are gaining confidence to lead their own prayers in class. However, there are some inconsistencies across the school. Leaders should ensure that identified best practice is shared across all year groups so that the content of prayer for all pupils is both catechetical and spiritual.

The quality of provision of the Catholic Life of the school is good.

St Joseph's has undergone significant changes in leadership over the recent past and is clearly on a journey to consolidate and build on its current strengths. The current leadership has been in place since September 2022. It is commendable how well prepared the school was in a relatively short space of time for this inspection. This reflects not only the symbiotic partnership of this new team but also that of the staff, who are well-led and conscious of the school's expectations in tandem with the needs of the pupils they serve. The school's self-evaluation form for this inspection showed clarity and understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development, now being incorporated into the school's whole school development plan. The document would benefit from including these areas in a summary at the end of each section to make it a more usable. Whilst many developments underway are at an early stage, they are already having an impact. Pupil behaviour is of a high standard. Pupils fully engage in lessons and are respectful of their teachers and each other. Pupils are encouraged to take on a range of leadership roles which they do with care and enthusiasm, and there are now further opportunities for pupils to lead rather than be led. Through this engagement, pupils will gain confidence and be better able to articulate their understanding and views.



The learning environment reflects the Catholic identity of the school. The whole school displays and focal areas for prayer in each classroom link to learning topics. The school accesses a variety of diocesan training opportunities to enhance and support the development of the Catholic life of the school.

Pastoral care is a real strength of the school. Pupils display care and concern for their fellow pupils, and staff are prepared to go the extra mile to ensure that the children are well-supported and have access to various support strategies. This has seen Pupil Premium funding used to assist families, to secure additional staff, intervention groups and enrichment activities. In addition, the school operates a free breakfast club for pupils. It is hoped in the future to develop affordable after-school opportunities to provide viable quality extended day-care. The school actively promotes high standards of behaviour. This is strongly linked to Gospel values of forgiveness: 'hating the sin but loving the sinner'. As a result, all members of the school community act in harmony, and children are very clear about the differences between right and wrong.

The school follows the 'Come and See' religious education programme and utilises 'Ten-Ten' resources to support the teaching of relationships, sex and health education in line with diocesan guidance and statutory requirements.

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school is good.

Leaders and managers, including the governing body, support the Church's mission in education and endeavour to follow the guidance of the diocese when seeking to develop the Catholic life of the school. Governors are regular visitors to the school and take on specific visits. The commitment of senior leaders, including the head of school, who is currently the religious education leader, provide suitable role models for their school community. Plans are in hand to widen staff participation in religious education leadership to facilitate a more team-based approach to managing this curriculum area and to support succession planning.

The chair of governors is highly effective. He knows the school well and speaks passionately about its potential and securing its future. He summed up the school's mission by stating, *"Catholic Social Teaching is its ultimate mission"*. With an excellent executive headteacher appointment to support the recently appointed head of school, there is a clear drive to move the school forward. There is an evident clarity of direction for St. Joseph's to enable it to achieve its ambition to provide the very best education and pastoral provision for every pupil. Staff are beginning to monitor the impact of Catholic life in the school and this will inform precise improvement planning. Leaders are identifying the school's strengths and priorities for development concerning its Catholic character and have plans to improve this further. This is evidenced in the school development plan, which has been agreed upon by governors and is focused on raising standards through the development of the whole child, including spiritual and moral development, Catholic ethos and gospel values.



The school works well with parents and carers, and they are invited to an increasing range of school liturgies and Masses. High-quality support is offered together with the parish, for parents of children involved in parish-based sacramental preparation for their First Holy Communion.

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RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

2

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education is good.

From a low baseline on entry into Reception, outcomes for pupils in religious education are broadly comparable with those in literacy. This results from the monitoring and support of teaching that has established greater consistency across the school. Pupils enjoy their learning in religious education. During the lessons observed by inspectors, pupils were engaged with activities that were interesting and relevant to their own lives and pitched to ensure that they made progress. Pupils respond well to their teacher's questions, which could now be extended to provide more time and opportunities for them to think and discuss in pairs and groups. This will enable them to gain experience and confidence from working collaboratively. As indicated by teacher assessment records and book scrutiny, levels of attainment are good across the key stages. Pupils seek to produce their best work at all times, applying themselves to their learning tasks with enthusiasm and interest. They enjoy the progress they are making.

The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education is good.

Teaching throughout the school is consistently good, as evidenced by observations, monitoring records and pupils' workbooks. Teachers set expectations which challenge pupils through activities, questioning, feedback on pupil responses and the marking of recorded work. The teaching of other faiths is well covered, and parents commented that they appreciate the school's work in this area.

In the best lessons observed, teachers provided more challenging tasks. They used assessment for learning opportunities and feedback mechanisms to structure questioning so that progress within the class for all groups of learners was at a good pace. This was particularly evident in a key stage two lesson on the topic of 'The Sermon on the Mount' that set a task for pupils to write their own sermons. The use of scripture, the development of religious vocabulary and classroom management in the lessons observed were generally strengths. In an early year's lesson, a candle was lit at the start, and pupils identified that this reflected 'Jesus being the Light of the World'.

Assessment has been aligned with the school's assessment tool for all curriculum areas. This enables the religious education lead to monitor and identify the progress of individual pupils and discuss this with teachers through regular pupil progress meetings. This has impacted attainment levels which are on an upward trajectory. In lessons observed, numerous examples of good cross-curricular links were established.



Lessons would benefit from a greater pace and broader opportunities for pupils to undertake research. Teaching assistants were generally used well to ensure impact for key individuals or groups of pupils throughout the lesson. In the best lessons observed, teaching was more innovative and engaging, with a faster pace, resulting in better progress for all groups of learners.

The religious education subject leader and school leadership should now ensure that the school's best practice in assessment for learning and feedback to pupils is consistent across all classes.

Teachers say they are well supported in their understanding of the religious education curriculum. They have received formal and informal support from the religious education subject leader and can ask questions to improve their knowledge. This reflects that all teachers are not Catholic but demonstrate confidence in teaching the religious education curriculum.

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education is good.

The changes the school has experienced have been well managed to minimise any negative impact on pupils. The school is now in a strong and stable position to build successfully on the firm foundations that have been laid. Religious education is at the heart of the school. It is viewed as a core subject and is a priority for development in the school development plan. The use of drama, art and ICT within the religious education curriculum is developing, and pupils were clear that they learnt and remembered more through these approaches, *"as it makes us enjoy our religious education lessons"*.

The religious education leader is enthusiastic and keen to move the subject forward. The key issues identified in the previous inspection as areas for improvement have been addressed, and good progress is being made to embed these improvements. This has seen cross-referencing aspects of personal, social, cultural and health Education (PSCHE) with the religious education programme, and the formulation of a policy for this area is in line with diocesan guidelines. It is well complemented through the use of Ten-Ten resources. Parents expressed their strong satisfaction with this programme. Governors have effectively monitored the Catholic life of the school and are aware of its strengths and weaknesses. They also commented on how well they felt the school leaders communicated with them. There is now an opportunity to review the religious education section of the school's website for parental communication and to celebrate the school's religious life.

School governors are well-organised and knowledgeable. They attend training, monitor their performance, and regularly visit the school. They hold the school's new leadership team in high regard, attribute the school's increasing popularity to their hard work and efforts, and hold them to account. They have a nominated governor for religious education who has a good grasp on the progress of this curriculum area and keeps the governing body regularly updated.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship and Prayer Life is good.

Collective worship is central to the life of the school, and praying together is part of the daily experience for pupils and staff. Pupils act with reverence and are keen to join in collective worship. They sing and respond to prayers with confidence during collective worship contributing to the overall prayerful experience of the celebration.

Pupils use a variety of approaches to prayer; formal and informal, private and communal and they are encouraged to be still and to listen to God. Prayer could now be usefully enhanced by the greater use of drama, music and art.

Each class has a visible religious focal point that provides opportunities for reflection and prayer. There is an opportunity now to develop more effective use of these as a resource.

Collective worship is increasingly prioritised in terms of expansion, planning, evaluating and resourcing. Collective worship is timetabled daily. The student faith council are learning to lead collective worship, and there are plans to develop this further over the academic year. There are regular Masses held in school and the parish church.

Staff have a good understanding of the Church's liturgical year and ensure pupils are familiar with its themes and have good experiences of the Church's liturgical life.

The quality of provision for Collective Worship and Prayer Life is good.

Collective worship is developing well and is increasingly celebratory and engaging. There is an awareness that there have been gaps in pupils' liturgical experiences over the past two years, and the school is actively planning additional opportunities to address this. This has begun with work with pupils to revise and learn Mass responses. All community members feel valued, included and engaged in this aspect of school life.

Classes are named after Saints about whom pupils were aware and had a part in choosing. Parents and parishioners are invited to attend collective worship in church and school. Parents commented that they appreciated the opportunities to attend and participate in such celebrations, would like more and are always made to feel very welcome.



Pupils are introduced to prayer in various ways, including formal prayers and their own prayers in class. They pray in class and as a whole school community, coming together during assemblies and value the contribution of prayer to their daily lives.

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship and Prayer Life is good.

Leaders and governors are good at promoting, monitoring and evaluating the provision for collective worship. Themes are shared to give worship a suitable direction. They have a very good understanding of the Church's liturgical year, seasons and feasts and make these accessible to the pupils in a contemporary context.

Leaders of collective worship within the school are very good models of practice for members of staff and pupils. They offer support to those less experienced or less confident teachers. Leaders and governors recognise the value and importance of collective worship to the life of the school and are committed to delivering high-quality provision to the school community.

Plans are underway to broaden the variety of collective worship planned throughout the year and ensure worship always has a clear message and purpose. Monitoring and evaluation of collective worship follow the school's annual monitoring schedule. It is anticipated that leaders will increasingly offer staff the opportunity to develop their understanding of liturgy by involving them in the planning and evaluation of collective worship. This was evidenced by the assembly led by the school's English leader where there was good use of Scripture using the parable of Zaccheus.

The parish priest is supportive of the leadership team's desire to secure the school as an integral part of the parish. There is already collaboration and a plan to raise the profile of the home, school, and parish partnership through a revision of school and parish-linked liturgies and Masses. The whole school community highly values and appreciates his input in these developments.