

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

URN: 109635

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Bishop of Northampton

07–08 November 2024

Summary of key findings

Overall effectiveness

The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school

2

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

1

The school is fully compliant with the general norms for religious education laid down by the Bishops' Conference

Yes

The school is fully compliant with any additional requirements of the diocesan bishop

Yes

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

Fully

Compliance statement

- The school is fully compliant with the general norms for religious education laid down by the Bishop's Conference.
- The school is fully compliant with any additional requirements of the diocesan bishop.
- The school has responded to the areas for improvement from the last inspection.

What the school does well

- The school environment reflects its Catholic identity with inspiring and thought provoking communal displays.
- There is a real sense of an inclusive Catholic community with strong pastoral support for families, staff and pupils.
- Pupils' religious literacy, and knowledge and understanding of scripture, is well embedded and has a clear impact on their everyday lives.
- Teachers' use of questioning to probe and deepen understanding is a strength.
- Prayer is central to school life with the community uniting in prayer at times of sorrow and in thanksgiving.

What the school needs to improve

- Adapt tasks and activities to match the needs of more able pupils.
- Embed the principles of Catholic social teaching across the whole of the taught curriculum.
- Further develop opportunities for pupils to lead prayer and liturgy.

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

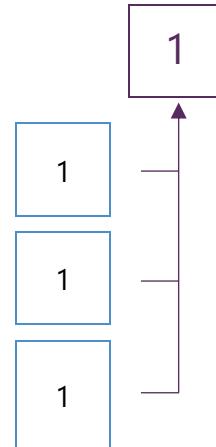
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

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



Pupils know their mission statement and clearly understand how to put it into practice in their daily lives; they relate to St Joseph as a brave, protective and hardworking figure whose example they aspire to emulate. They explain that St Joseph did not just talk, he acted upon his thoughts and prayers. Pupils gave many examples of how they demonstrate this characteristic in their everyday lives, enthusiastically supporting charities such as the local food bank, dementia café, radio Maria projects and Cafod. Pupils understand their responsibility to help others. They are happy, confident and secure. Pupils seek opportunities to grow in virtue during their 'Monday Moments' where they explore a new virtue every fortnight. When talking about other faiths pupils show a deep respect and awareness of how important it is to understand one another to live in harmony. There are many opportunities to take on leadership roles including the faith ambassadors. Pupils receive training in a local Catholic high school and value this experience greatly. They are highly motivated to become charitable role models for their peers. The behaviour of pupils in lessons and throughout the school is exemplary.

St Joseph's has a strong culture of welcome. Its Catholic identity is in evidence throughout the school. Displays are topical and inspiring. The environment is inviting and shows a community deeply rooted in the word of God. Staff embrace the mission statement. They use it in everyday situations encouraging others to 'brightly shine their own light'. The family support workers go that extra mile to support parents and families. Parents and toddlers are invited to stay and play; they receive help with uniform and associated costs if necessary. This is a community looking after its most vulnerable in a caring and respectful manner. It is a highly inclusive community where everyone feels welcomed and valued. One parent commented: 'The Family Workers and leaders have worked with us as parents and have been helpful, kind and caring in dealing with any issues when they arise'. The new parish priests and parish deacon are heavily involved in supporting the Catholic life of the school. They forge strong links with pupils by being visible in school and regularly joining them for lunch. The provision

for relationships, sex and health education is carefully planned: it meets all statutory requirements and is firmly rooted in the teaching of the Church.

Leaders and governors ensure that Christ is always at the heart of the school. They are clear about the Church's mission in education. Strong links are forged between the parish and school. The church location at the centre of both buildings is used in an inspiring way to ensure pupils have a welcoming space to develop their faith. Leaders and governors operate an open-door policy. The use of family workers empowers and supports parents in their role as the first educators of their children. Their work in this area embodies the Church's preferential option for the poor by targeting those in greatest need. Leaders and governors respect and care for those who work in St Joseph's. Catholic social teaching is explored through virtues. However, the associated themes have not yet been fully developed or embedded throughout the taught curriculum. Staff feel valued by leaders: they appreciate the genuine warmth of the school community. Governors make a highly significant contribution to the Catholic life and mission of the school. They are passionate about the school, have high levels of expertise and are extremely well-organised and thorough in their work. Their self-evaluation is honest and thorough, leading to well-planned targeted improvements to further enhance the life and mission of the school. Leaders are fully committed to staff development and as a result relationships are strong.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

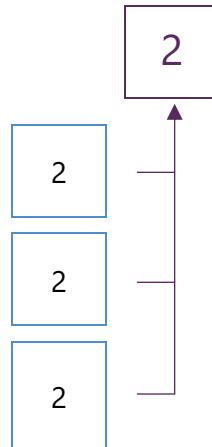
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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 are making good progress in their religious education lessons. They are accessing a well-planned curriculum that is incorporating the new *Religious Education Directory*. Pupils including disadvantaged pupils and pupils with additional needs achieve well. In Year 6 the lessons were challenging, creative and engaging for pupils. Pupils were eager to explore whether the women in the Old Testament were true protagonists in the salvation history of God's people. They demonstrated a strong knowledge of scripture and used extensive religious vocabulary. Pupils were also able to link learning in class with their everyday learning about virtues. They can speak with confidence about what they have learned in religious education. In Early Years pupils were learning about the Annunciation. They demonstrated good prior knowledge and responded well to the teachers' good questioning. The environment in Early Years is inviting and creative activities are planned to reinforce and consolidate learning. Pupils enjoy their religious education lessons and take pride in their work. Work in books does not always reflect the high-quality discussion in class as tasks are not always adapted to meet the needs of more able pupils. Pupils achieve as well in religious education as they do in other core curriculum subjects.

Teachers have strong subject knowledge and a good understanding of how pupils learn. They are committed to the value of religious education. They use anecdotes from real life situations to reinforce understanding. Questioning is a strength, and links are constantly made to the whole school virtue being explored and with prior learning. Teachers celebrate effort in a variety of ways leading to high levels of motivation from pupils. Feedback provided ensures pupils know what they must do to improve their work. Lessons have inbuilt reflection time to provide pupils with opportunities for spiritual and moral development. There is time for silence; the environment facilitates this, and pupils respond effectively. In the best lessons observed, planning facilitated group discussion, pupils demonstrated independence and used scripture as a foundation for their work. These lessons also

provided pupils with opportunities to present their learning in a variety of ways. One staff member commented, 'It is always humbling, a privilege, to hear the thoughts and views of some of the pupils during religious education lessons, showing their understanding on different levels'.

Leaders and governors have recently introduced the new *Directory* in all key stages. Their thoughtful planning and design of the curriculum is already having a positive impact on pupils' learning. Religious education is viewed as the core of the curriculum and receives comparable resourcing to other core subjects. Leaders and governors pay particular attention to professional development of staff. As a result, staff have been effectively supported in the planning and delivery of the new *Directory*. The subject leader for religious education has a clear vision for teaching and learning and a good level of expertise in securing this vision. As a result teaching is good. Leaders ensure that pupils are provided with engaging enrichment activities that enhance pupil learning. Leaders' and governors' self-evaluation of religious education is informed by thorough monitoring, analysis, and self-challenge. This results in strategic action taken by the school which lead to good outcomes.

Collective worship

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

Collective worship key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

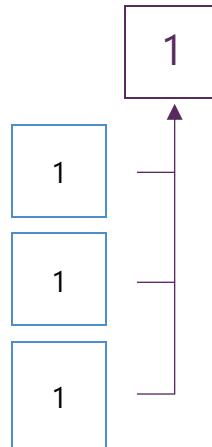
How well pupils participate in and respond to the school's collective worship

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



Pupils have a wide range of opportunities to engage deeply in prayer and liturgy. They value the school's prayer room where they can plan liturgies and pray. One pupil commented that she liked to sit and look through the books in the prayer room to help her focus on what was important in life. Pupils show a deep understanding of the importance of prayer and can provide many examples of times they prayed for members of the school community. Pupils in St Joseph's love to sing. They explain how they feel singing and prayer are spiritual experiences. Pupils know a wide variety of prayers that are part of the Catholic tradition. They pray the rosary during October and May. Pupils pray traditional prayers and particularly enjoy the five-finger prayer. Pupils know their scripture very well and can quote passages to explain why they should act in a certain way. The faith ambassadors work collaboratively to create well-constructed liturgy. This could be further developed to include all pupils. Pupils use the church at the centre of the school as a safe prayer space. Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, nativities and washing of the feet are some examples that illustrate this. Pupils pray daily and endeavour to link their prayers with action following St Joseph's example.

Prayer is central to school life. The community unites in prayer at times of sorrow and to give thanks. Staff commented on how their own prayer life has deepened and developed. One staff member reflected, 'being a member of this special community has enhanced my own spiritual formation'. The richness of Catholic prayer is celebrated and staff model this in an exemplary way. Scripture passages informed by the liturgical season are carefully chosen and are at the heart of prayer and liturgy. The talents of pupils and staff are identified and nurtured. Pupils' musical accompaniment enhances these experiences for all. The school prayer garden and prayer room are inviting, used daily and dedicated to prayer. Families regularly share in liturgy with the school community and are invited to 'stay and pray' sessions. The local parish priests and deacon are an integral part of school life. The support they

give the school community in terms of professional development and celebration of prayer has led to a secure and flourishing partnership of participation.

The school has a carefully formulated policy on prayer and liturgy. Prayer progression for pupils is clearly mapped. Leaders have thought carefully about the different levels and skills of participation that are reflective of the age and capacity of pupils. Leaders, including governors plan Masses with the parish priests and deacon. Mass is celebrated regularly at key times of the liturgical year. The Sacrament of Reconciliation is offered during Lent and Advent. There is a strong emphasis on providing opportunities to pray in the broad range of ways of praying that are part of the Catholic tradition. Leaders ensure prayer and liturgy is prioritised when setting budgets and allocating resources. The beautifully crafted cross in the hall reflects the liturgical year and the centrality of prayer. Leaders ensure prayer is enhanced with high quality focal points throughout the built environment.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Joseph's Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	109635
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	8213356
Full postal address of the school	St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Gardenia Avenue, Luton, LU3 2NS
School phone number	001582572964
Headteacher	Maureen Murphy
Chair of governors	Josephine Healy
School Website	www.stjosephsprimaryluton.co.uk
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	N/A
Phase	Primary
Type of school	Voluntary Aided School
Admissions policy	Non-selective
Age-range of pupils	5-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	5 December 2017
Previous denominational inspection grade	1

The inspection team

Evelyn Ward	Lead
Tony Hall	Team
Nick Stopps	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