



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

URN: 140528

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

Date: 25-26 May 2023

<b>Overall effectiveness</b> The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school.....	<b>1</b>
<b>Catholic life and mission (p.3)</b> How faithfully the school responds to the call to live as a Catholic community at the service of the Church's educational mission.....	1
<b>Religious education (p.5)</b> The quality of curriculum religious education.....	1
<b>Collective worship (p.7)</b> 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

- Leaders, particularly the principal, are inspirational role models for the entire community. They ensure that strategic improvements are accurately identified, based on thorough monitoring, to sustain high standards.
- Pupils' attitudes are excellent because they have a secure understanding of the mission, its meaning, and its associated behaviours.
- Pupils have well-developed levels of Catholic literacy, which they use skilfully in various contexts.
- Pupils work with high levels of independence and concentration during religious education lessons.

- Systems are in place for pupils to evaluate the prayers they plan. This ensures they have clear ideas on improving future prayer sessions, which they act upon promptly.

**What the school needs to improve:**

- Enable staff collaboration to embed Catholic Social Teaching in all curriculum areas.
- Consistently provide opportunities for pupils with higher prior attainment to make progress more rapidly in religious education lessons.

## 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 .....

1



Because the mission statement is clearly defined, regularly used, and thoroughly understood by the whole community, pupils understand how to put it into action and explain the distinctive ways in which St Joseph's is a Catholic school. They are key players in living the mission and thrive when participating in activities, such as making up food hampers and donating Christmas presents for those experiencing need. They can explain why responding to Jesus' call to follow in his footsteps is important, 'Everyone should be treated equally, so we need to give them our time and care because God loves everyone.' Pupils have a heightened awareness of what their behaviours should be because of Jesus' teachings. Consequently, they have a clear, age-appropriate understanding of human dignity and the need to treat each other with compassion and kindness. This results in pupils being extremely happy and secure at school. Furthermore, their behaviour around the school is exemplary because of the importance placed on the school's values. The Carpenter's Coins initiative is a mechanism through which senior leaders collectively reward the endeavours of classes to live out Catholic values; pupils respond enthusiastically to it. Engagement in chaplaincy provision is excellent because of the profile it is given within school. Mission team members are incredible role models and competently model Catholic values to younger pupils.

Staff wholeheartedly support the mission through their teaching of the school's values. The lived mission comes into its own when staff implement the school's behaviour management policy, describing it as 'the thread that underlies the school'. Staff are exemplary role models witnessing to Jesus' charge 'to bring the Good News to the poor'. A strong sense of community is palpable and imbued with Christ's teachings. This is evident in the quality of relationships at all levels, reflected in strong home-school relationships. Everybody is acknowledged as a creation of God, meaning families and visitors are greeted with a warm welcome from the moment they arrive. Following recent investments to improve the school's physical environment, there are many high-quality,


efficacious signs of the school's mission throughout its buildings. Catholic Social Teaching is strongly emphasised in the hall, meaning pupils are frequently exposed to the Church's priorities in social action. Consequently, their knowledge of its themes is starting to develop. The highest quality pastoral care is a strength because all staff prioritise living the school's mission; for example, using the Rainbows programme ensures excellent care for those experiencing various forms of loss, which pupils deeply value. Outstanding pastoral care is extended to the families in greatest need because of the principal's determination and drive to ensure the best interests of all pupils are always at the forefront of his work.

Leaders embrace the archbishop's vision for St Joseph's because advice from diocesan officers and requirements stipulated in his directives are enthusiastically met. Furthermore, the multi-academy company (MAC) works well with St Joseph's to grow future leaders, helping to secure the future of Catholic education. The school maintains outstanding links with the two parishes it serves. Consequently, pupils and their families are regular visitors to the church and the parish priest, and two deacons are well-known within the school community. They collaborate to enhance the provision of religious education lessons and chaplaincy activities, which significantly contribute to pupils' moral and spiritual development. Although pupils can make some links between the Church's call to action and what they learn in school, it is not yet formally mapped or embedded in different subjects, meaning these links are not yet fully understood. Governors and directors prioritise the development of the school's mission and actively monitor well-informed strategic improvement plans with accuracy.

## Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade:.....	1
<b>Pupil outcomes</b> How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education.....	1
<b>Provision</b> The quality of teaching, learning, and assessment in religious education.....	1
<b>Leadership</b> How well leaders and governors promote, monitor, and evaluate the provision for religious education.....	1



Pupils develop excellent knowledge of the curriculum because teachers are confident in delivering secure subject knowledge and use various creative approaches. Overall, most pupils make consistently good progress against the curriculum, and there is minimal variation between groups of pupils because they routinely revisit prior learning, and teachers plan to build upon it. Pupils confidently use their religious literacy skills to articulate their learning in speech and writing. This often goes beyond age-related expectations because of the clarity and consistency with which staff model it to them. Subsequently, pupils are experts in talking about the influence that following the Catholic faith has on their lives. Pupils are confident in thinking for themselves and asking incisive questions to further their learning, meaning they concentrate exceptionally well in lessons. Pupils' work is generally high quality and presented well; in the best examples, outcomes are not restricted by an overreliance on resources which limit pupils' responses. Pupils are engaged well and thoroughly enjoy religious education. Pupils have a clear idea of how they can further improve their work. Furthermore, teachers often ask questions requiring pupils to apply 'even better if' advice to their work.

Teachers communicate high expectations regarding religious education to their pupils. This and teachers' provision of a wide range of learning activities contributes significantly to pupils' engagement and enjoyment. Pupils learn very well because most teachers plan lessons that enable all pupils to remember more and do more with their knowledge. However, in some classrooms, pupils with higher prior attainment are not progressing rapidly enough because they spend too long consolidating previous learning, or because challenge is made optional. Teachers routinely celebrate the achievements of their pupils; for example, some teachers use the 'proud wall' initiative as a visible celebration of their accomplishments. Staff know the importance of religious education on pupils' moral development. Teachers frequently provide

pupils with 'I wonder' questions, enabling them to reflect individually on the issues studied. However, opportunities for spiritual growth are not routinely identified.

Leaders and governors ensure that religious education meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales and the Archbishop of Birmingham in full. Governors increased the subject's budget last year to invest in up-to-date, high-quality resources, including new Bibles. Teaching assistants are almost always used to optimise learning because they question pupils and re-shape teachers' explanations to those needing additional support. The subject leader is a committed, faith-filled role model. She uses her expertise to provide unwavering high-quality support to other staff. Because she has clearly defined the non-negotiables for teaching and learning in religious education and follows this up with personalised colleague coaching, she has secured a high standard for the subject at St Joseph's. Staff are well supported in their training, which includes utilising in-house, diocesan and MAC opportunities. Consequently, staff are up to date with best practices. Because teachers routinely expect pupils to recall prior learning, leaders ensure the curriculum is designed sequentially, enabling pupils to progress through content. The subject leader works with a local deacon and parish priest to enrich the religious education curriculum for pupils. For example, they visit classrooms to talk about pilgrimage to Lourdes, and the parish priest speaks about his vocation as a hospital chaplain. The subject leader uses diocesan guidance to inform her monitoring of provision and outcomes, meaning findings are always actioned appropriately. Senior leaders corroborate the subject leader's monitoring to produce feedback logs for staff so that everyone can be confident that leaders' evaluation is accurate. This monitoring informs development plans and future monitoring activities. All information findings are reported to governors, who subsequently work closely with the subject leader.

## 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

All pupils, including the youngest, are very reverent and engage in prayer with the deepest sincerity and levels of respect. This is because of the embedded expectations and routines surrounding worship. Their singing is particularly joyful and confident because teachers model it well. Pupils use various prayers, particularly traditional ones, displayed in every classroom. Scripture is consciously at the heart of all prayer, meaning pupils readily relate its messages to their lives. Pupils have an excellent knowledge of the Church's cycle of seasons and feasts because it is emphasised by staff. However, their confidence in discussing how the liturgical year affects prayer is less secure. Pupil-led prayer is well-established at St Joseph's. From the moment they join, they have regular opportunities to lead their peers in worship, with growing independence as they age. Because of the importance placed on prayer, and the consistent expertise with which it is modelled, pupils undertake liturgical ministries with great confidence. Particularly impressive is the expectation that future pupil leaders evaluate current provision as soon as it ends, so they have an immediate idea of successes they intend to replicate and things they would like to change when it is their turn to lead. Because of the centrality of prayer, pupils can readily and confidently articulate how it impacts their lives. They are keen to be disciples of Christ, saying, 'We want people to love one another and be followers of Christ'. Pupils are less secure in talking about how subjects of the curriculum influence their prayers.

Pupils routinely pray in various ways, such as traditional prayers, reflecting on Gospel messages using liturgical music and artwork, and liturgies, including adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and Benediction. Staff are excellent role models for pupils. They are confident in leading responses and gestures, and all join enthusiastically with singing, further motivating pupils. Most teachers are highly skilled in helping pupils plan their prayers. Some teachers do

not order prayer sessions in a way that optimises pupils' reverence and prayer atmosphere. This is because practical 'go forth' activities are inserted part-way through prayer time or resources have not been pre-prepared. Staff and pupils make imaginative use of space for prayer. For example, in Reception class, pupils moved the 'go forth' marble jar from the focal point onto the prayer table so that the challenge remains active in their minds throughout the rest of the week. Classroom prayer tables are not yet of the same outstanding quality as communal areas.

Policy on prayer is well formulated and regularly reviewed, though it does not stipulate leaders' expectations of prayer, meaning its usefulness to staff is limited. Leaders have implemented a well-mapped-out strategy for increasing the skills of participation and pupil leadership of prayer, which instils confidence amongst them. Staff formation is provided for, most recently through a staff, governor, and director retreat to Harvington Hall. This enabled personal faith development for leaders and staff in the context of God's calling of them to Catholic education. The principal is an outstanding role model and practitioner. He engages pupils well because his provision meets their needs and requires pupils to reflect on the themes he presents actively. He masterfully creates an atmosphere conducive to prayer. Self-evaluation is accurate and rigorous. Leaders' findings are followed-up, meaning improvements are continuously made, which sustains the school's outstanding provision and outcomes relating to prayer.



## Information about the school

Full name of school	St Joseph's Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	140528
Full postal address of the school	Little Sutton Lane, Sutton Coldfield, B75 6PB
School phone number	0121 354 6270
Name of head teacher or principal	Gerry O'Hara
Chair of governing board	Maria Stirrop
School Website	<a href="http://www.stjosutton.net/web">www.stjosutton.net/web</a>
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	St John Paul II Multi Academy
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy
Age-range of pupils	3 to 11
Trustees	Archdiocese of Birmingham
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	April 2016
Previous denominational inspection grade	1

## The inspection team

Ben McArdle	Lead inspector
Debbie Enstone	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