



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

URN: 146300

Carried out on behalf of the Right Rev. Alan Williams, sm, Bishop of Brentwood on:

Date: 6 – 7 December 2023

Overall effectiveness The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school.....	3
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.....	2
Religious education (p.5) The quality of curriculum religious education.....	3
Collective worship (p.7) The quality and range of liturgy and prayer provided by the school.....	2
The school is fully compliant with the curriculum requirements laid down by the Bishops' Conference	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
The school is fully compliant with all requirements of the diocesan bishop	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
The school has responded to the areas for improvement from the last inspection	Fully

Summary of key findings

What the school does well

- Pupils are proud of their school and are happy here. They have excellent relationships with each other and with staff.
- The school plays a clear role as part of the wider Catholic Community and supports its local parish well.
- Staff appreciate the care leaders show for their well-being.
- Parents are welcome members of the school's prayer community, whether in school or in the parish church.
- There are many opportunities for older pupils to take leadership roles, preparing them for the next stage in their school lives.

What the school needs to improve:

- Develop the pupils' understanding of how Catholic Social Teaching shapes their daily actions in the school and wider community.
- RE leaders to ensure that staff are supported in their planning, delivery, and assessment to ensure that pupils make as much progress as possible from their various starting points.
- Opportunities to be developed to allow pupils to take a greater part in the preparation and delivery of prayer and liturgy in its many forms across the school.

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:.....

2

Pupil outcomes

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

2

Provision

The quality of provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school

2

Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor, and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school

2



Pupils are happy in school and respond well to the opportunities they are given for prayer. They form good relationships with each other, and with school staff. One said the school helps them have, “more faith.” They show respect in their relationships and are able to explain that they behave this way because of the teachings of Jesus. They behave well in lessons and listen to each other’s points of view. The school commemorates founders of the school, the Sisters of Mercy, recently adopting their foundress as patron of one of the classes. They show a developing understanding of Catholic Social Teaching and have supported those in need through collections for a local food bank and a cookie sale to raise funds for the current CAFOD appeal. These works are often linked to the lives and works of the class patron saints.

The school mission statement is well known and is displayed around the school, and the pupils show that they are “working together” in all aspects of school life. Displays around the school reflect the liturgical season and the school patron saint. Each class has a prayer leader who makes sure the class display is up to date. Parents talk with pride about the many generations who have been part of “St Joe’s” and praise the support given by staff at difficult times, such as bereavement, in their lives. Many offers of support are made to families who may be vulnerable, such as help with applications to secondary schools and access to second-hand uniform. Pupils from other faiths are welcomed into the school community and are able to contribute their personal experiences when their peers learn about their faith. The school follows an RSHE scheme which meets both statutory and diocesan requirements. The school has recently taken over the preparation of pupils for the Sacrament of First Holy Communion in order to make it more available to more pupils, who have previously had to travel to a different parish. The course takes place after school and is run by the head teacher, a teacher

and a member of the governing body. Parents say that this has made a significant contribution to the Catholic community in the area and reinforces the link between school and parish.

Leaders recognise that parents are the first educators of their children and encourage parents to attend school Masses in the church. They have recently re-introduced “stay and pray” when parents can join their children for their class prayers. Parents appreciate this and appreciate the fact that the school is communicating more clearly with them. The school has a plan in place to develop the Catholic life and mission of the school and makes sure that it is regularly updated. They have recently reviewed the school Improvement plan to make sure that it also reflects the Catholic life and mission of the school and are in the process of ensuring that the plan reflects more than only the current year. The parish priest is a foundation governor and the RE link governor and has made monitoring visits to the classes. School leaders have begun to respond to feedback from parents by including more details about the Catholic life and mission of the school in the weekly newsletter. Leaders work closely with the diocesan link advisor and with the network of RE leaders across the Trust.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade:.....

3

Pupil outcomes

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

3

Provision

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

3

Leadership

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

3

Pupils behave well in RE lessons and say that they enjoy them. They listen respectfully to each other and the staff and offer contributions when they are invited to. When given the opportunity to participate in class debates or activities such as “hot seating” they respond enthusiastically. Lessons are not always planned to develop previous learning, and this makes it harder for pupils to make links with knowledge they have previously acquired and recognise the progression of ideas through the curriculum. They would benefit from clearer direction on how to improve their work or how to deepen their understanding, especially when dealing with more difficult theological concepts. When given clear instructions for, or examples of what is expected in a task, the children show that they are able to use their knowledge and understanding and achieve better outcomes. Pupils must be given more opportunities to work independently during lessons, as this would help them to explore concepts more thoroughly and develop their own questioning skills.

The school has provided subject specific professional development training for its staff, but the large number of new staff means that not all have sufficient depth to their own understanding in order to be confident when developing that in the pupils. Their questioning is often not targeted to specific groups of pupils and opportunities are missed to develop points raised by pupils, or to deal with misconceptions. Heavy reliance on the scheme means that planning is not always accurately pitched at the correct level for the pupils which means that opportunities to maximise progress and deepen understanding are missed. It also means that lessons can very often be similar, with little scope for those with different learning needs. Tasks do not always match the learning intention, making accurate assessment more difficult. In the better lessons, staff model the work they expect from the pupils and direct specific groups to specific tasks, showing that the needs of the pupils are met by the work. Much of

the feedback for pupils is through “real time” marking and group discussions, but this leaves little evidence in the books for pupils, especially the older ones, to reflect on after the lesson.

Leaders have identified that subject knowledge for staff in RE is a priority issue. They took the decision to change the way RE was planned and delivered after half a term as it was not meeting the needs of the pupils and staff, but this has meant another big change for the staff which has not yet become embedded. Monitoring of RE is not robust enough. It needs to feed directly into a subject plan and the school development plan whilst providing clear instructions to staff as to how they can improve their practice. It must also ensure that lessons meet the needs of the whole range of abilities in each class, ensuring that each pupil makes as much progress as possible. The school development plan needs to take a long-term strategic approach to developing the subject. School leaders and governors have identified that assessment is the next area to be implemented and is looking to begin moderation between school staff and across the Christus Catholic Trust.

Collective worship

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

Collective worship key judgement grade:.....

2

Pupil outcomes

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

2

Provision

The quality of collective worship provided by the school

2

Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for collective worship

2

Pupils respond well to the prayer experiences they are offered. They show great respect and join in at the appropriate moments; the parish priest reports that their singing fills the church. They are able to describe how prayer helps them in their daily living. One said, "Prayer makes me feel good." The school has appointed prayer leaders in the KS2 classes who oversee the daily prayers in class and ensure the prayer areas are up to date. Pupils use the traditional prayers of the Church and school prayers but are less confident to use private prayer and reflection in times of quietness and intercession. They enjoy the opportunities they have to make up their own prayers. Parents report that their children talk about their prayers at home. There is scope to extend the opportunities offered to ensure that pupils develop a full experience of the wide range of prayer and reflection available in the Church and evidence that the pupils would respond well to this.

The school has a clear pattern of daily prayer which is led by the pupil prayer monitors in the older classes. A recent development has been the sharing with parents of year-group-appropriate prayer books via the website. Classes have regular prayer times which they plan and lead, based on the format of the whole-school assemblies. These are planned together with staff, and the next step will be for the pupils to take more ownership of these times. Pupils show that they are able to draw on the knowledge they gain of scripture from their RE lessons to choose texts for these worship sessions, or they may use a text from the Sunday Gospel reading. They also choose appropriate music. The school makes full use of its proximity to the parish church to celebrate Masses for feast days and special occasions, such as First Holy Communion. Significant moments through the year are also marked; recently, for example, classes made wreaths for Remembrance Day which were then displayed on the school fence for the whole community to see.

There are strong links between the governing body and the parish through the parish Priest who acts as both a foundation governor and Link governor for RE. The pupils are all aware of the parish priest and enjoy participating in the Masses at the parish church. School leaders ensure that the school calendar marks all the major feasts in the liturgical year, even when they fall outside of school time; for example, the school celebrated the feast of “Christ the King” on the Friday before so that the pupils had the chance to understand its importance. Arrangements are made for pupils to participate in the Sacrament of Reconciliation at least once a year. Staff have received training in how to support children in leading prayer and liturgy and leaders and governors are aware that this is an area which needs to be revisited in order to help develop pupil-led worship further. Each class has appropriate resources to support collective worship including Bibles, artefacts, and age-appropriate resources such as role-play materials in the Foundation Stage.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Joseph's Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	146300
Full postal address of the school	Scratton Road, Stanford-le-Hope SS17 0PA
School phone number	01375 672217
Name of head teacher or principal	Ruth Saul
Chair of governing board	Stephen Foster
School Website	www.stjosephscatholicprimaryschool.co.uk
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	Christus Catholic Trust
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy
Age-range of pupils	3-11
Trustees	Christus Catholic Trust
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	9 May 2017
Previous denominational inspection grade	Good

The inspection team

Catherine McMahon

Lead inspector

Angela O' Hara

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