



St Joseph's Catholic Infants School

URN: 103090

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Bishop of Brentwood

27–28 March 2025

Summary of key findings

Overall effectiveness

The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school

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

2

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

2

Compliance statement

- The school is using the *Religious Education Directory* as a basis for teaching and learning and allocates at least 10% of curriculum time to the teaching of religious education.
- There are no additional requirements of the diocesan bishop.
- The school has continued to address improvements from the previous inspection strengthening teaching, assessment and staff induction.

What the school does well

- Members of the school community actively live out the mission statement, with governors, senior leaders and staff acting as excellent role models in promoting the Catholic life and mission of the school.
- Pupils enjoy coming to St Joseph's because they know they are valued and cared for, enabling them to grow in confidence and feel secure whilst at school.
- Engagement with parents is strong and the school works in partnership with them to provide nurture and support for all its pupils. Parents value what the school does for their children.
- Pupils' religious literacy is well developed and this enables them to engage fully and thoughtfully in lessons.
- Pupils' participation and singing in prayer and liturgies is joyous and uplifting.

What the school needs to improve

- Improve the quality and impact of monitoring and self-evaluation to result in strategic action and well-targeted planning, which leads to sustained improvement.
- Ensure that the use of effective questioning in religious education lessons provides challenge, maximising learning for all pupils.
- Provide regular professional development opportunities for all staff to support pupils to independently plan, lead and evaluate age-appropriate prayer and liturgy experiences.

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 fully embrace the school's mission statement, knowing it by heart, animating it through sign language and integrating it into their daily lives. Their faith is active and deeply personal, as they recognise themselves as children of God and take pride in their relationship with Him. They understand that acts of kindness bring them closer to God, and one pupil affirmed, 'God will always help and listen to us.' Rooted in faith, their behaviour is exemplary, demonstrating respect, care, and friendship. Parents affirm that the school nurtures moral development, with one noting their child's 'strong understanding of right and wrong.' Pupils are passionate about supporting others, engaging in charitable initiatives such as Macmillan coffee mornings and the Big Lent Walk. They have a secure understanding of stewardship but are still developing their ability to connect other actions to the principles of Catholic social teaching. Leadership roles foster independence and while pupils contribute actively to chaplaincy duties, decision-making remains largely guided by staff. Pupils' commitment to faith, service, and community is evident in all aspects of school life, creating an environment where they flourish spiritually, morally, and socially.

The mission statement, brought to life by the leadership team, is central to the school's identity, fostering a strong sense of community and purpose. Staff play a visible and active role, offering service to pupils and families while embodying the school's mission to help children 'learn and grow in God's love.' They take pride in their work, feeling valued and supported, with new staff particularly appreciating the welcoming culture and professional development opportunities. This ethos of inclusion extends to pupils and families, with parents warmly describing the school as an 'inclusive family.' The school's faith-filled environment ensures that every child, regardless of background, feels supported. One parent of another faith noted how

'even the smallest problem is listened to and dealt with.' Staff serve as exemplary role models, demonstrating compassion and care which is reflected in the school's outstanding pastoral support. Nurture groups provide vital emotional and social development, with parents expressing gratitude for the help offered during difficult times. The well-maintained, enriching environment features prayer spaces, reflection areas, and displays celebrating a range of themes. While chaplaincy opportunities continue to develop, the school remains fully committed to holistic pupil growth underpinned by a compliant relationships, sex, and health education programme.

A change in leadership led to the development of a new mission statement, profoundly shaping the school's Catholic life and mission. Christ is placed at the centre, with the school serving as a source of comfort, support and inspiration for families and the wider community. Strong links with the diocese ensure leaders and governors prioritise training, while the parish-school relationship flourishes; parents speak positively about how the school and parish 'operate as one.' Leaders and governors exemplify Catholic social teaching, not only integrating it across the curriculum but also demonstrating a shared commitment to the common good, providing targeted support for the most vulnerable families. The headteacher's weekly newsletter enhances communication, while parents are welcomed to and actively engage in information sessions and assemblies. Initiatives like the Peep Learning Together Programme further enhances home-school partnerships. Staff wellbeing is a priority, with clear policies and strong pastoral support in place. While governors are committed, they require clearer self-evaluation processes for greater impact. Pupil voice is actively sought but there is a need for more structured action to ensure their ideas lead to meaningful change. Ongoing professional development and a robust induction process ensure all staff fully embrace the school's Catholic mission, fostering a faith-filled and thriving community.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

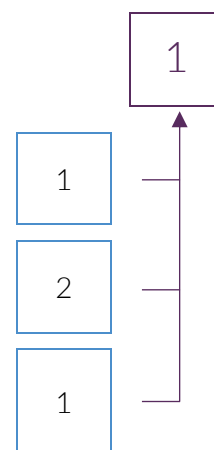
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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



Learning has been deeply influenced by the *Religious Education Directory*, with pupils demonstrating strong subject knowledge and high levels of religious literacy in both written and verbal responses. When talking about the Crucifixion on Good Friday, pupils in the Nursery class were able to recall that 'Jesus had a spiky crown' and that the people said, '...save yourself.' Adaptations such as word banks and sentence stems support all learners, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, ensuring continued progress. A strong emphasis on vocabulary development enhances pupils' understanding, while opportunities for recall enable them to build on prior learning. Pupils are curious about their faith and eager to learn more. Engaging activities, including role play, drama and singing, foster independence, high levels of participation and lead to exemplary behaviour. Pupil responses to scripture are thoughtful and expressive. Younger pupils confidently retell Bible stories, while Year 1 pupils, writing as disciples at the Last Supper, vividly convey their 'shock and confusion' at Jesus' words and actions. Work is well presented and reflects the value pupils place on their RE learning. Pupils respond well to feedback, with increasing depth in their reflections as they progress through the school.

Teachers demonstrate growing confidence in their subject knowledge, supported by effective professional development within and beyond the school. All staff are highly committed; they know the teaching expectations of the leadership team and they communicate this effectively to their pupils. The diocesan planning support documents provide a foundation for planning, with staff encouraged to collaborate and adapt lessons as needed. While formal assessment systems are still developing, planning builds on prior learning, allowing pupils to make good progress. Recall questions check prior knowledge before new learning begins. Although questioning is used effectively to address misconceptions, a greater emphasis on open-ended

questions will deepen pupils' understanding. Pupils' work is valued, with focused marking and feedback helping them to make the necessary improvements. Each lesson begins with planned periods of prayer and moments of stillness. Scripture is a central feature of all learning and this, alongside further opportunities for reflection, supports pupils to consider how their learning shapes their daily lives. Book scrutinies evidence a wide variety of learning activities, ensuring an engaging curriculum. Teachers make thoughtful adaptations to ensure accessibility for all pupils and well-deployed support staff optimise outcomes for all pupils.

The leadership team has worked diligently to implement the RED across the school, making informed decisions about the materials they choose to use to meet the pupils' needs and enhance learning. Religious education is given high priority within the school. The leadership team should now ensure that decisions made to improve attainment in other core subjects, for example raising standards in writing in Year R, are given equal consideration in religious education. The subject leader has delivered extensive staff training in a short time, attends relevant training, and shares best practices with staff. Leaders also facilitate staff participation in diocesan training to further develop their expertise. A strong vision for teaching and learning is in place, with monitoring established, though a more systematic approach is needed to drive self-evaluation and challenge. Enrichment activities, including art and drama, enhance engagement and deepen learning. A consistent approach to planning allows all pupils, regardless of faith background, to build on prior knowledge and make strong progress. The curriculum is carefully sequenced to ensure a clear progression of learning. The subject leader is highly motivated, widely respected, and has made a significant impact on religious education at St. Joseph's, with her contributions universally praised.

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

2

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

2

2

Pupils know and enjoy the prayer rituals of the school and as a result, respond well to the experiences that they are offered. During whole school liturgies, pupils sign many hymns and their singing is inspiring and joyous. Pupils show high levels of reverence and respect during prayer and liturgy, and pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage show great enthusiasm when joining in with the prayers and mission statement of the school. The Catholic traditions of praying are embedded; pupils are familiar with traditional prayers and can describe different times of the liturgical year including Lent, the feast day of St Joseph and how May and October are the months when they celebrate Mary. Pupils know the significance of prayer and how it can help them. A pupil RE ambassador stated 'when we pray, it is our time to talk to God about our worries and how we can help others.' Pupils are able to confidently formulate thank you prayers and share these with others, but they now need to be given the opportunity to learn about and create other types of prayers. Pupils are active participants when undertaking ministries and enjoy being chosen to plan their 'Celebration of the Word'. With support, they are beginning to plan and lead liturgies but need to spend more time evaluating their experiences.

Appropriately planned prayer and liturgy opportunities are central to the life of the school and because of this, significant moments in the school's life and Church's calendar are celebrated. There is a daily pattern of prayer with which all pupils engage. Scripture suitable to the season or theme of liturgy is appropriately chosen. All staff demonstrate high levels of commitment to prayer and liturgy and set a positive example as active participants. The pupils respond well to this example because they are consistently demonstrated. Staff are developing confidence when guiding pupils with their 'Celebration of the Word'. However, there is the need for further professional development to increase their skill set to ensure pupils effectively and

independently plan, lead and evaluate well-constructed prayer and liturgy. The school is well supported and has grown a strong partnership with the parish priest. Leaders carefully plan how to include families in the prayer life of the school and parents are always welcome to attend a variety of events, which are always well supported. Space is well used in classrooms; all have a focal prayer table and area. The investment in the dedicated area for the prayer garden is a wonderful addition to the school. The new prayer room is well cared for and is conducive to prayer; pupils enjoy their time in these areas.

Governors regularly visit the school, have a wealth of knowledge regarding prayer and liturgy experiences, and place a high importance on this when allocating resources. The school's policy on prayer and liturgy is available to all staff. This now needs to be further developed to ensure that it is purposeful for staff to use consistently as a reference point when planning for pupil-led prayer and liturgy. Prayer and liturgy at St Joseph's reflects the liturgical year. The school leadership and governors ensure that opportunities to celebrate the Eucharist, holy days of obligation and other significant days are prioritised. This results in a programme of worship that is matched to pupils' ages and experiences, enabling pupils to participate. There is a planned programme of professional development for staff; this now needs to focus on enhancing staff skills enabling them to confidently lead liturgies and consistently support pupils to do the same. Leaders and governors have begun to monitor prayer and liturgy through a regular schedule. However, the review of the quality and impact of prayer and liturgy, as part of the school's cycle of self-evaluation, now needs to be more robust and systematic, leading to sustained improvements. The views of pupils need to be sought and actioned as part of this process.

Information about the school

Full name of school	Click or tap here to enter text.
School unique reference number (URN)	103090
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	3203305
Full postal address of the school	St Joseph's Catholic Infants School, Marsh Lane, London, E10 7BL
School phone number	002085393000
Headteacher	Merryl D'Souza
Acting Chair of governors	Alison Doyle
School Website	http://www.stjosephsinfantleyton.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	2-7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	27 June 2018
Previous denominational inspection grade	1

The inspection team

Laura White
Isabel Quinn

Lead
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