

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

URN: 110027

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Bishop of Portsmouth

16–17 October 2024

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

3

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

3

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

3

Compliance statement

- St Joseph's is compliant with the general norms of the Bishops' Conference in relation to 10% curriculum time.
- Currently there are no additional requirements of the diocesan bishop.
- St Joseph's have fully responded to the areas for improvement from the previous inspection.

What the school does well

- The whole staff community at St Joseph's works together to support pupils, families and each other; they care about them as individuals and relationships are very strong.
- Partnership with parents is very successful: parents value the ethos and community at St Joseph's.
- The subject leaders for religious education are passionate about the subject and consequently it is given high status across the school.
- Pupils present their religious education work extremely well and take pride in the work they do.
- Teachers support for children with special needs and lower ability pupils is well-established and ensures that all pupils make progress in religious education.

What the school needs to improve

- The school must implement robust systems for self-evaluation and monitoring to ensure accurate analysis leads to continual improvement.
- Pupils need to be supported to shape the Catholic life and mission of the school so that they feel more actively involved and can understand and articulate the school's mission and their part in it.
- Training and support on prayer and liturgy should be provided so that all staff and pupils experience meaningful prayer opportunities that allow them to reflect and build their relationship with God.

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

3

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

3

3

Every day at St Joseph's begins with the whole school praying their Mission Statement together in the playground and as a result all pupils know it well. However, they struggle to understand the meaning behind it and how they put it into action within school and within their lives, beyond a very basic understanding of being kind to each other and putting them in the right mood for the day. They also find it difficult to identify what is special and unique about being part of a Catholic school, apart from the regular religious education lessons. For example, older pupils spoke of occasions where they have supported others, such as with collecting for the food bank, but were unable to explain the reasons for this without lots of guidance from staff. Pupils know that they are valued and cared for and they feel happy, confident and secure at St Joseph's, they show respect for themselves and for others and behave well. They value the chaplaincy provision within the school and participate in the opportunities it provides such as being Faith Ambassadors or part of the outreach team but there is not currently a high level of participation or autonomy for this within the school. Staff now need to develop pupil's understanding of what being part of a Catholic school means in both words and actions so that they can express the personal responsibility and aspects of the theology behind what they do and start to take a true sense of pride in what it means to be part of the universal Church.

All the staff at St Joseph's are firmly committed to the Catholic life and mission of the school: they are a real strength and a cornerstone of the community. Together with the pupils, they recently revisited and shortened the mission statement to make it more accessible and known to all the pupils and this has been successfully implemented. There is a strong sense of welcome for all, particularly those who are most vulnerable and there are some good examples of this such as providing food vouchers through the SVP and providing free childcare places for certain families.

Staff themselves are positive role models for the pupils, taking the lead in charity work such as the local Foodshare scheme. Parents spoke about the support, guidance and help that the school has offered to them and commended the high level of support offered to them from the school. In their turn, staff also feel that they are appreciated, cared for and well supported by leaders, as one staff member put it, 'we are all God's children'. The school should now carefully review their chaplaincy programme so that it provides extensive, creative and high-quality opportunities for the spiritual and moral development of all pupils and staff.

Leaders and governors recognise the principle that parents are the first educators of their children and support them in meeting the demands of this vocation. The vast majority of parents who responded to the survey said their child is happy at the school, with one commenting that 'it is such a lovely community, they all look after each other.' The parish priest is a regular visitor to the school and is highly regarded by staff and pupils for his spiritual guidance and pastoral support, as well as leading liturgies and Masses over the year. A particular highlight is the annual 'Personal Award' that he presents to a pupil voted as the best disciple of Jesus. However, despite these strengths, leadership and management requires improvement because leaders and governors do not have an accurate understanding of how well pupils are responding to and learning from the good provision that they have in place. They are therefore not able to plan and implement appropriate actions for improvement. Leaders need to ensure self-evaluation is accurate and regular and governors' roles should be clearly defined and understood by all so that they can become a key partner in this by supporting leaders and staff to be robust in their analysis and timely in their actions.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

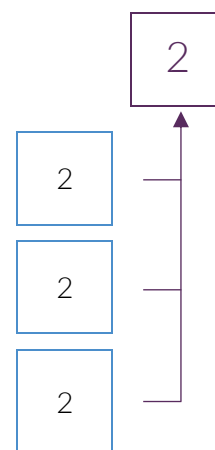
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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 developing secure knowledge, skills and understanding in religious education. They respond very well to the demands of the subject and particularly enjoy expressing their ideas through speaking and listening activities such as paired discussion, role play and group work, where they work independently and concentrate well. This was clearly observed during an engaging Year 5 lesson where pupils were asked to freeze-frame an episode from the Bible which depicts Jesus reaching out to the marginalised. Pupils' work is well-presented, with responses recorded in a variety of creative ways, such as artwork, extended writing and diagrams. They are extremely proud of their work, with one pupil commenting 'our RE books look the best because it shows how much we love God'. In some classes, pupils are given clear next steps and know how to improve their learning: where this happens either through verbal or written feedback, pupils make even better progress. Key vocabulary is an integral part of lessons with the result that pupils are confident to use such terms as selfishness, conflict and poverty within a Year 6 lesson on making a fairer world. Although pupils respond well to questions asked of them, staff should now support them to begin to ask incisive questions which will challenge their thinking and enable them to deepen their learning and understanding of the subject.

Because of their good subject knowledge, teachers have confidence in the delivery of religious education and show a commitment to its importance within the curriculum. They use questioning to check understanding of prior learning such as in a Year 3 lesson, where pupils were asked to remember 'what makes a good steward' before linking this knowledge to the parable of the sheep and the goats. Teaching is well-planned and designed to meet the age and ability of the pupils. In a very effective Reception lesson on the Good Samaritan, for example, the teacher led the children in acting out the story before they efficiently chose their own follow-up activities such as sorting pictures of the story in order, telling each other the story with puppets

or drawing 'how I can be a good Samaritan'. Adults are used effectively to optimise and support the learning for pupils with special educational needs so that they can access the same learning, using for example writing frames, word banks or pictures. Although teachers provide opportunities for learning about religion through art, drama and a range of forms of writing styles, they now need to adapt lessons so that pupils have more opportunities to demonstrate their own creativity and individuality within the topic being studied.

Leaders and governors ensure that religious education is comparable to other curriculum subjects in relation to staffing, resourcing and timetabling, for example in ensuring that teaching assistant support is available for religious education lessons. As a result, the work pupils produce is of a similar quality and quantity to that of other core subjects, and adaptations are made to ensure that pupils of all needs and abilities make good progress. The subject leaders for religious education are passionate about the subject and work hard to develop and promote their vision across the school in such ways as supporting other staff and monitoring pupils' work and progress through work scrutinies and analysis of assessment data. Governors have also visited the school in a monitoring role. However, both leaders and governors need time and professional development in order to self-evaluate more accurately and robustly: this will enable them to formulate well-targeted and appropriate actions and thereby improve the learning for all pupils.

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

3

Provision

The quality of collective worship provided by the school

3

Leadership

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

3

3

Pupils join in community prayer with confidence and sing well as seen during a whole-school celebration of World Food Day, where they sang the Harvest Samba with enjoyment. In the best prayerful experiences seen, they were allowed the time to respond to the message from scripture and consider how to take this forth into their daily life. However, many pupils struggle to make connections between prayer and liturgy and their own lives and actions. They are unable to consistently reflect on their experiences of prayer and give concrete examples of how this has led them to action. There are some opportunities for some pupils to take the lead in the prayer life of the school, such as the Faith Ambassadors, who meet regularly and plan the lunchtime prayer sessions which are very well attended. However, as many pupils are not regularly involved in planning and leading effective prayer experiences, their ability to evaluate the prayer life of the school is only at a very superficial level. Leaders should now ensure pupils regularly participate in, plan and lead a variety of ways of praying that are part of the Catholic tradition and support them to reflect on these experiences and how they link to their actions.

Opportunities for prayer and liturgy are planned throughout the school week and are part of everyday life in school. Pupils are able to demonstrate their familiarity with daily prayers, for example the end of the school day prayer. However, there are limited opportunities for pupils to pray independently or spontaneously and the planned progression in pupil-led worship is inconsistently implemented, resulting in sessions that do not always provide high-quality experiences of celebrations of the Word. Staff demonstrate varying levels of confidence and ability when delivering prayer and liturgy. In an effective Year 3 and 4 celebration of the Word, based on the Lord is my Shepherd, pupils were given time and space to participate in prayer, supported by appropriate music and images; however many celebrations of the Word observed were dominated by question and answer sessions and lacked the opportunity for pupils or staff

to reflect on scripture in a meaningful way. Leaders must now ensure that pupils and staff are exposed to a wide variety of rich and engaging prayer experiences. The school works hard to include parents in the prayer life of the school. It has a beautiful prayer booklet which is given to all families and prayer bags, containing resources to help families pray together, are sent home weekly.

Leaders, including governors, recognise the importance of prayer and liturgy for their school community and have allocated finances and resources to support this such as a recent training session on creative prayer. They have developed a comprehensive prayer and liturgy policy. However, there is a misunderstanding amongst staff as to what constitutes effective prayer and liturgy. As a result, many of the prayer opportunities observed during the inspection took on the appearance of a religious education lesson and therefore did not provide staff or pupils the opportunity to reflect and be reverent. Leaders have planned a school calendar which reflects the key times in the liturgical year, including the celebration of key feast days and holy days of obligation, such as Ash Wednesday and All Saints Day. There is an inconsistent approach to monitoring of prayer and liturgy which means that staff are insufficiently supported to understand what constitutes effective practice. Leaders and governors need to ensure that their monitoring and evaluation is rigorous and accurate so that all staff have the correct support, continuous professional development and practical resources to deliver high quality experiences of prayer and liturgy.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Joseph's Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	110027
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	8673333
Full postal address of the school	St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Gipsy Lane, Bracknell Forest, RG12 9AP
School phone number	001344425246
Headteacher	Juanita Dunlop
Chair of governors	Christine Lynch
School Website	http://www.stjosephsbracknell.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	3-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	28 November 2018
Previous denominational inspection grade	Outstanding

The inspection team

Michael Lobo
Nuala Oster

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