



# St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

URN: 140147

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Archbishop of Birmingham

28–29 November 2024

## Summary of key findings

### Overall effectiveness

The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school

1

#### 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

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 fully complies with the general religious education norms laid down by the Bishops' Conference.
- The school is fully compliant with any additional requirements of His Grace.
- The school has fully addressed all previous areas for improvement.

## What the school does well

- Teachers' effective questioning in religious education lessons results in high-quality responses in which pupils articulate their knowledge and understanding well.
- Investment in staff formation and training results in their deep commitment to the school's mission.
- Training is fruitful at all levels. Because of this, staff feel empowered, supported, and believed in. They articulate the impact of the ongoing and deep-rooted support they receive.
- Investment in enhancing an exceptional Catholic physical environment enriches the faith life of all.
- The inclusivity at St Joseph's is awe-inspiring; all are welcomed as equals, nothing is too much trouble, and no one is left out.

## What the school needs to improve

- Plan and provide prayer and liturgy utilising a wide range of styles, allowing pupils to showcase their leadership skills.
- Use targeted feedback, which helps pupils recognise what they need to do to improve in religious education.

## 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

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

1

Teaching and learning are rooted in Catholic social teaching, empowering all pupils to serve those less fortunate than themselves. Pupils embrace opportunities to put their faith into action. Each class supports a charity they have identified, including Cafod, Water Aid, and Cancer Research. Pupil leadership groups within the school accurately speak about the theology underpinning their work. As a result, the Mission team, Mini Vinnies, and Creation Guardians live out their faith, know their purpose, and inspire others. Subsequently, Catholic social teaching is understood by all pupils. They know that care for the common home and human dignity are the bedrock of their charitable pursuits. Pupils know they are cared for, listened to, and belong, instilling confidence in their active participation in a community where 'Nothing bad really happens and everyone makes friends.' Pupils are happy with who they are and are fully welcoming of others because they embrace diversity and respect each other; consequently, their behaviour is exemplary. All pupils understand what is expected of them and know that if things go wrong, staff will sort it out. Relationships within the school are based on trust, compassion, and understanding. Because of a focus on such values, pupils' ability to articulate meaning from Bible stories and how they impact their lives is substantial.

St Joseph's is a family in which all are welcome. Following Jesus's example is woven into all that happens in the school; its mission is its core foundation. Staff are exceptional role models who show the love of Jesus in 'Simple yet profoundly impactful ways.' They are deeply committed to the school, understanding the needs of the community they serve. St Joseph's is 'an oasis' where the care for pupils and each other is authentically Catholic. Parents sincerely appreciate their children's care and recognise that within the ever-changing world, St Joseph's provides a real sense of home for the whole family. The parent 'Trinity Group' is well-received. It provides a time

for tea, toast, and talk, a time for support, typical of how the school goes the extra mile to serve the community. The physical environment is a living and breathing testimony to the school's Catholic identity; every aspect is well cared for. Pupils continue to be actively involved in its development and are rightly proud. Pupils are taught relationships, sex, and health education (RSHE) using material which fully meets His Grace's directive.

Governors and leaders have a transparent monitoring and evaluation process for Catholic life and mission, which directly informs school improvement and in which all are involved. Catholic life is at the heart of St Joseph's, permeating all aspects of its work. Governors are regular visitors to the school and are strong strategic partners, offering rigorous challenge to leaders, resulting in high standards. Governors and leaders embrace all initiatives to grow faith and relentlessly develop long-standing relationships with the parish. The parish priest regularly visits the school and holds the staff in high regard for the extent of their commitment and involvement in preparing pupils for school and parish events. Sacramental preparation is handled with care, helping the children appreciate the significance of these unique signs of God's grace in their faith journey. Due to the strength of the principal's leadership, the school is a beacon of excellence and impacts standards beyond its own setting. Investment in staff well-being is prioritised, leading to their exceptional commitment and good retention levels. Leadership is supportive; help is given to all staff without judgement. The quality of training and subsequent advice provides a rich Catholic curriculum that responds to the community's needs. The passion and drive of the principal also ensure that all staff receive the most effective induction to the school.

## Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

### Religious education key judgement grade

#### Pupil outcomes

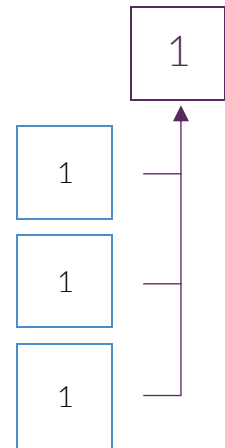
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

#### 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



By the end of Key Stage 2, the pupils acquire sound knowledge and understanding in religious education. Their ability to reference Bible stories in their explanations is inspiring. Pupils' religious literacy is strong; their responses use prior knowledge to explain ideas using technical vocabulary with precision. This is strongest with older pupils, who confidently speak about scripture and its application to life. Pupils' presentation in their exercise books is exemplary. Pupils love learning in religious education and concentrate well. Consequently, pupils are committed to doing their best and cherish the subject extensively. Therefore, they are actively engaged in learning, typically demonstrated by their desire to ask and answer questions. Behaviour in lessons is excellent; they know what is expected of them and therefore listen respectfully to their teachers and each other. Pupils like the calm of their lessons, giving them appropriate time to reflect on and pray about the issues they study. They feel it is special and say, 'It is like Jesus is teaching us.' Whilst feedback does not consistently support pupils in understanding what they need to do to improve, outcomes are strong.

The quality of teaching at St Joseph's demonstrates teachers' secure subject knowledge that is deployed imaginatively to ensure pupils are given opportunities to respond innovatively. A commitment to high expectations for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), results in work of the highest standard, both in content and presentation. Teachers' planning evidences their secure understanding of the progression of learning, and good use is made of assessment, resulting in a relentless drive to ensure pupils know and remember more. Highly effective questioning leads to detailed and relevant answers. They promote deep thinking, demonstrated by pupils' in-depth answers. Lesson design strongly focuses on moral and spiritual development, resulting in an appreciation that 'Religious education is a lesson like no other'. The resources used promote various learning approaches,

further contributing to pupils' passion for the exciting ways they learn in lessons. While teachers plan for all pupils' needs, there is some inconsistency in how other adults are deployed in classrooms, resulting in varying degrees of success in their contribution to pupils' progress.

Leadership is strong and contributes significantly to the subject's success. Relevant training opportunities are planned, which enhances the school's teaching and learning and supports the cycle of strategic subject improvement work. A culture of expertise is fostered so all staff feel empowered to contribute to the subject's further improvement. Training needs are identified accurately, and training is provided to drive up standards effectively. Leaders and governors have a firm understanding of the impact of their actions. The attention given to the monitoring of standards in religious education reflects their passion and drive to improve. Governors are fully invested in the self-evaluation process, successfully working with the primary school improvement leader from the multi-academy company (MAC). The subject leaders invest in staff, resulting in a partnership of trust and deep respect where everyone lives out a passion for learning. Together, they provide a rigorous leadership which achieves excellent outcomes, nurtured by an 'open door' approach to supporting teachers' practice. They clearly understand the processes in place to drive standards and are passionate about their need for pupils to know more and remember more. Leaders track the progress of pupil groups effectively, ensuring they provide a curriculum which meets their needs in full.

## 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

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

1

The school environment contributes significantly to the pupils' understanding of the liturgical year. Pupils talk about the types of prayer they use and confidently relate them to the Church's cycle of seasons and feasts, such as praying the Rosary in May and October and the eternal rest prayer in the month of the Holy Souls. There is a rhythm within the school celebrating various aspects of Catholic prayer traditions. Pupils are fully active in all acts of prayer and liturgy. They listen attentively, resulting in spontaneous, relevant responses reflecting their mature understanding. An atmosphere conducive to prayer and listening to scripture results in reverent and sincere experiences for all pupils. Although this is not as strongly developed in prayer sessions led by pupils in their classrooms, pupils always use God's word effectively to communicate messages clearly. They are confident in their understanding of them. Pupils confidently use the processes of planning and evaluating prayer at St Joseph's and consequently have ideas for improving the services they lead. Furthermore, pupils are provided with the opportunity to reflect on the weekly Mass and gospel-based prayer and liturgy. The quality of pupils' regular reflections on Mass directly impacts their planning and delivery of prayer.

Varied and relevant experiences of prayer are planned across the school. Consequently, there is a recognised and much-valued daily pattern of worship. St Joseph's is always looking for ways to extend, challenge, and develop liturgy within the beating heart of Catholic tradition. Relevant scripture is used and modelled well, and pupils can subsequently effectively plan and deliver prayer centred on the Bible. However, their ability to pray creativity is limited, which does not allow them to showcase their full capabilities. Staff and pupils are supported to use their gifts and talents when delivering liturgy. Pupils speak with passion and pride about the prayer spaces around the school. As a result of strong leadership and modelling, staff plan and lead liturgy very well during staff gatherings. Staff provide pupils with regular support concerning the weekly

delivery of pupil-led prayers, making them confident in selecting appropriate sacramentals, images, and liturgical music. Pupils' capacity to choose prayer styles attuned to the message of their services is still developing.

A prayer and liturgy policy is in place and accessible to staff, enabling them to know the progression map for developing pupils' skills in evaluating and delivering prayer and liturgy. The school's liturgical life is vibrant and powerful; time is prioritised weekly for pupils to experience being part of Mass, which is used prominently to celebrate key times in the school and liturgical year, including remembrance, harvest, St Francis of Assisi's feast day and Our Lady's birthday. Training is ongoing and well-established, empowering all staff to plan and deliver prayer competently. Rigorous leadership ensures training is of the highest standard and progresses the school's provision and practices. This takes place from a MAC-wide perspective as well as in-house, where the impact of strong leadership supports staff skill development. The strength of the principal and religious education lead is endorsed and appreciated by all staff, who thrive because of the high standard of worship delivered. High-quality resources are available and used by staff and pupils alike to support their planning and delivery of prayer and liturgy. For example, a Year 5 pupil enriched her delivery by providing a box for the 'balloon prayer', demonstrating her sense of ownership and responsibility. There is a rigour around monitoring both by governors and the MAC, resulting in an ongoing culture of improvement centred around pupils, who are integral in developing the school's prayer life.



## Information about the school

Full name of school	St Joseph's Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	140147
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	332 3302
Full postal address of the school	Hillcrest Road, Dudley, DY2 7PW
School phone number	01384 889424
Headteacher	Samantha Chapman
Chair of governing board	Philip Hancox
School Website	<a href="http://www.st-jo-dud.dudley.sch.uk">www.st-jo-dud.dudley.sch.uk</a>
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	St John Bosco Catholic Academy
Phase	Primary
Type of school	Academy
Admissions policy	Non-selective
Age-range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	September 2018
Previous denominational inspection grade	1

## The inspection team

Louise Bury  
Tamsin Davis

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