CATHOLIC SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

THE NATIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE INSPECTION OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS, COLLEGES AND ACADEMIES

St Joseph's Catholic Academy

URN: 139346

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Bishop of Hallam

12–13 March 2025

Summary of key findings

Overall effectiveness

The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school

2

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

2

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

Compliance statement

- The school's religious education programme ensures that at least 10% of the timetable is dedicated to teaching and learning in the subject.
- The school follows the guidance of the diocesan bishop in all matters.
- The school has fully responded to all action points from the previous inspection.

This Catholic Schools Inspectorate inspection was carried out under canons 804 & 806 of the code of canon law. For maintained schools and academies in England it fulfils the statutory requirements of s.48 of the Education Act 2005. For maintained schools and academies in Wales it fulfils the statutory requirements of s.50 of the Education Act 2005.

What the school does well

- Leaders and governors have a clear understanding of the Catholic life and mission of the school and view this as a core responsibility.
- Pastoral care for pupils, particularly the most vulnerable, is excellent.
- There is a strong sense of community, evident in the mission of the school, the quality of relationships and the culture of welcome.
- Support from the parish is outstanding. The school engages proactively with the parish which benefits the whole community.
- Early career teachers and staff new to the school are well supported in developing religious education and collective worship. The induction programme offered ensures everyone is valued and welcomed into this Catholic community.

What the school needs to improve

- Ensure that all religious education lessons are effectively planned to meet the needs of different groups of pupils, particularly high-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND).
- Leaders should ensure that in religious education lessons there is more use of open-ended learning tasks and teacher questioning, with a focus on developing pupils' full potential and greater independence.
- Extend opportunities for all pupils to plan, deliver and evaluate high-quality prayer and liturgy sessions throughout the school year.

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

Due to the strong relationships and caring nature, pupils at St Joseph's are confident and feel safe. They are proud to be part of the St Joseph's family where their motto 'We Live, We Love, We Learn, We Share' is lived out to the full and where they participate fully in the opportunities to celebrate their faith. This means they are happy and know that they are valued, cared for, and loved by God. Pupils can explain practical ways to be good stewards of creation and understand how their efforts make a positive difference. They embrace the opportunity to help raise funds for charities. They know how their actions can make a positive difference to others, for example, through their contributions and support of local foodbank projects, Macmillan, CAFOD, and Bluebell Wood Hospice. There are lots of opportunities for pupil voice such as the well-established school council and the school liturgy leaders' group. Pupils were able to articulate their roles but were unable to articulate the theology underpinning their actions. Pupils actively participate in and contribute to opportunities provided by the school.

The sense of community is strong at this school. Parents, carers, pupils, and staff are united through this welcoming culture and share a deep commitment to the school's mission. This is evident in the parental responses, for example, 'the school provides the children with an excellent faith education.' Pastoral care is prioritised: the care provided is well-matched to the needs of pupils and families. Strong relationships are established, fostered, and maintained. Staff are committed to implementing the school's mission statement, striving to ensure that the school is Christ-centred. Staff are positive role models for pupils and treat them respectfully and kindly. The strong, personal faith of the senior leaders permeates this whole community. As a consequence, pupils are provided with a wealth of experiences and high-quality opportunities

to enhance their personal faith journey, such as visits from the Franciscan sisters, and visits to the Cathedral.

Leaders and governors are ambitious for the school and believe that the Catholic life and mission is of the utmost importance. Leaders and governors are committed to staff formation and positively engage with training provided by the diocese. Parish links are outstanding. Leaders work closely with the parish priest and other parishioners to ensure the school plays an active role in parish life. The school is highly effective at engaging with parents. They understand and strongly support the school's mission. The school truly embrace that parents are the first faith educators of their children. Leaders and governors constantly seek ways to involve them in the school's Catholic life so that they understand that the Catholic faith is the root of all the school's work, including its pastoral care. The school provides parents with information on various online platforms that showcase the wonderful work undertaken. The parish priest regularly provides liturgical and moral support for leaders, staff, and pupils. Leaders and governors are inspirational leaders as role models, demonstrating a strong commitment as part of a faith community being at the service of others. The school employs a learning mentor who the pupils and parents hold in the highest esteem. The early career teachers in school feel extremely well supported and talk about the 'open-door culture' within the school.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

2

Pupil outcomes

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

2

Provision

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

2

Leadership

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

2

Pupils effectively recall, and are beginning to apply, the knowledge and skills taught in religious education. They are becoming confident in this knowledge and understanding within their lessons and make good contributions, showing an awareness of key concepts. Many of them are remembering more and applying this to new learning. Pupils are keen to develop their religious literacy skills and become competent learners. In some lessons, pupils do not benefit from enough opportunities to work independently and use their initiative. Pupils' work is not always neatly presented. Pupils are mostly engaged in lessons, particularly where the teaching is precisely matched to their needs and uses a range of interesting approaches to help them know more and remember more. Although pupils are mainly attentive in lessons, some low-level behaviour can be distracting to other learners. Teachers' over-reliance on worksheets has resulted in too few opportunities to extend their writing, resulting in lower expectations. Pupils are articulate when it comes to answering questions regarding key concepts and scripture. However, questioning is not always planned to develop pupils' thinking and understanding further, and there are too few opportunities for pupils to generate questions related to their learning, limiting their opportunity to explore their curiosity. Deeper questioning underpinned by secure subject knowledge that would develop pupils' thinking skills and improve outcomes and progress, especially for the more-able pupils, is not yet regularly in place.

Despite some inconsistencies, teaching is secure across the school and teachers are clear about how pupils learn, appropriate to the phase they are teaching. Planned activities are not always monitored carefully, to ensure that pupils of all abilities are being challenged in their learning. In lessons, there is some effective deployment of other adults which optimises learning for most. Some teachers make good use of feedback which pupils act upon to improve their work and understanding. This is not yet completely consistent or effective in every class. Some pupils,

including the most able, and those with special educational needs and disabilities, do not have work adapted to support their learning. Considerable work has been done around the newly introduced *Religious Education Directory*. As a result, pupils' knowledge of scripture has greatly improved. In the best lessons, activities to record learning was imaginative and the teacher's subject knowledge and explanations created an exciting learning environment as seen in their enthusiasm and engagement, asking questions and showing links with previous learning.

Leaders and governors ensure that religious education programmes and resources deliver the curriculum aims set out in the *Religious Education Directory*. The religious education subject leader and head teacher both have a good understanding of the teaching and learning across the school. Visits to support and monitor religious education is not yet systematically or forensically rigorous enough to support strategic action to lead to outstanding outcomes. The subject leader is very responsive to the needs of staff and provides informal, regular support when it is required. This, alongside internal training for staff, has been very highly valued especially for those new to catholic education. Staff value this support, which helps them to improve their pedagogical knowledge in religious education. Leaders and governors do not yet have sufficiently developed systems for listening to and acting upon feedback from pupils and parents. The school has adopted a specific scheme to support the delivery of the new religious education programme and this has given staff the start in providing opportunities for learners to progress sequentially through the content.

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 recognise the variety of ways to pray that are part of the Catholic tradition and respond well to the experiences of liturgy and worship offered by the school. Most pupils are reverent during class celebrations of the word and assembly, listening attentively and making an active contribution. Occasions for prayer and reflection are provided, but not all pupils are able to articulate how and why we are called to put our faith in action. Pupils' knowledge of the liturgical year is secure and they understand how these seasons influence the prayer life of the school and help them to grow deeper in the faith. Pupils enjoy opportunities to prepare and lead acts of worship, using the liturgy structure of 'gather, listen, respond and go forth'. Pupils work well with each other sometimes leading prayers that focus on celebrations of the word: at these times, there is some evidence of pupils taking a central role in leading worship, reading scripture and talking without adult intervention. However, there is less evidence of pupils taking complete ownership, being creative on these occasions, or increasing the type of independence that grows and develops as pupils move up through the school. Pupils clearly state that prayer and worship are important to them and positively impact their lives.

Appropriately planned prayer and liturgy are central to the life of the school and form part of routine gatherings. Staff speak confidently about how the centrality of worship and prayer have a positive impact on pupils and the school community. The experience of living in a faithful community supports the moral and spiritual development of pupils. Staff have a good understanding of the structure of prayer celebrations: planning assemblies and assisting pupils to plan and lead class prayer. An over-reliance on TEN:TEN resources has limited creativity in some acts of worship. There was no evidence of pupils using a Bible to read the Gospel and enable pupils to understand this as a sacred text. Seasonally appropriate passages are chosen and the message of deliberately selected scripture is explained well by staff. Senior leaders and

staff are models of good practice to pupils, as participants in and leaders of prayer and liturgy. Planned prayer and liturgy are prominent features of school life corresponding with the liturgical year. The standard of prayer provision is consistent, but there is variability in the quality of more structured liturgical provision. The daily pattern of prayer is well established and reflects the seasons of the Church.

Diocesan training, at every level, is accessed and these resources are used to improve prayer and liturgy provision. The school calendar includes opportunities for regular liturgical celebrations, which link directly to the Church's seasons. Leaders and governors prioritise the celebration of Mass, not only on holy days or special occasions but throughout the year. For example, Key Stage 2 rotate attendance at mass on a weekly basis. Parishioners highly value the children's presence within the church community and the links to the parish support this inclusive community. In-school coaching is provided for staff by the subject leader and head teacher, including the modelling of prayer services. Although central to school life, the school does not have a well formulated policy on prayer and liturgy to support pupils' progressive participation. The staff appreciate the support offered by the head teacher and subject leader and speak very positively of this. Leaders offer regular opportunities for the professional development of all staff, which incorporates liturgical formation. Parents are supportive towards the school and they value highly the contribution it makes to the spiritual formation of their children.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Joseph's Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	139346
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	3735203
Full postal address of the school	St Joseph's Catholic Academy, St Joseph's Road, Handsworth, Sheffield, S13 9AT
School phone number	001142692773
Headteacher	Debra McFarlane
Chair of governors	Simon Hegarty
School Website	www.st-josephs.sheffield.sch.uk/
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	St Joseph's Primary School, A Catholic Voluntary Academy
Phase	Primary
Type of school	Academy
Admissions policy	Non-selective
Age-range of pupils	3-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	June 2018
Previous denominational inspection grade	Good

The inspection team

Bernadette Nesbit	Lead
Lucy Saxton	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