



St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

URN: 401645

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Archbishop of Cardiff-Menevia

15–16 October 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 is fully compliant with the norms for religious education as laid down by the Bishops' Conference.
- The school is fully compliant with the additional requirements of the diocesan bishop.
- The school has made good progress in relation to the areas of improvement identified in its last inspection.

What the school does well

- The quality of the Catholic community created by leaders and fully supported by all staff is excellent. Pupils benefit significantly as a consequence.
- The quality of pastoral care provided, particularly for those in greatest need, is excellent. This is a key factor in the creation of such a well-integrated Catholic family.
- Standards in RE attained by learners as they progress towards the end of their time at St Joseph's are particularly strong.
- The way scripture and the principles of Catholic social teaching are referenced and then linked to practical action to support the most vulnerable is a strength of the school.
- The thoroughness of leaders' annual plans for the provision of collective worship ensures that pupils have the opportunity to experience the richness of the Church's liturgical year.

What the school needs to improve

- Address the variability identified in the quality of teaching.
- Improve the quality of questioning practice to ensure that teachers effectively check for the depth of learners' understanding, and that they use this information to impact on future learning.
- Increase the breadth and quality of provision in prayer and liturgy to create greater opportunities for pupils to experience a sense of awe, wonder, and joy.

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

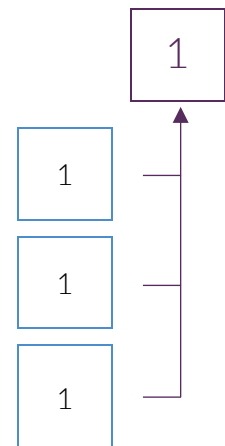
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

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 at St Joseph's participate fully in the school's Catholic life. They show a strong understanding of its Catholic identity, and they are aware of the demands placed upon them to put the school's mission statement into practice. They feel secure and happy in the knowledge that they are highly valued and cared for by a dedicated team of staff. They understand that, as young followers of Christ, they are called to action. During the inspection, for example, children were learning about the wonder of creation; they were highly articulate as they spoke of Pope Francis' encyclical *Laudato Si*. They were able to relate this to the Gospel and to the concepts of Catholic social teaching, stewardship of creation in particular, in an unusually mature and impressive manner. Pupils enthusiastically promote the common good and the dignity of all people by, for example, supporting the work of Cafod, the principle of Fairtrade, and the local foodbank in partnership with the adjacent parish of St Mark's. Pupils exhibit a deep sense of respect for themselves, their peers, and for staff; their behaviour in lessons and throughout the school is of a high order. A very impressive chaplaincy group of pupils promote a range of positive actions, and they play an active role in reviewing class assemblies, prayer areas in classrooms, and the environment more broadly. The way members of the group spoke to inspectors about their work was articulate, knowledgeable, and outstanding.

All staff show an impressive level of commitment to the implementation of the school's mission statement. The school is a very strong Catholic community, and all are enthusiastically welcomed, especially the most vulnerable. It is diverse in nature, with over twenty languages spoken by its members, who greatly benefit from the willingness of staff to 'go the extra mile' to provide the support that is needed. Staff provide strong role models for pupils, and relationships are very positive across the school. High levels of pastoral care are embedded, both formal and

informal. Those most in need benefit from targeted and dedicated support from fully trained staff using the THRIVE programme and from Emotional Literacy Support Assistants (ELSAs). Parents are very appreciative of the school's work in this area and of the positive sense of welcome that is in place. The school environment, internally and externally, effectively witnesses to its Catholic identity; the elements of Catholic social teaching and of the virtues promoted by staff enjoy a high profile. The school is well supported by the local clergy and parish links are good. The parish deacon, for example, has begun some innovative work focussing on *Lectio Divina* meditations based on Gospel texts. The school's provision of relationships and sex education is well planned, and it fulfils all diocesan expectations.

Leaders and governors are fully committed to their roles as the guardians of the school's Catholic life and mission. The recently appointed interim head teacher has worked diligently to ensure that pupils can benefit from such a strong and welcoming community with a distinct Catholic ethos. She is well supported by the leadership team. Governors are knowledgeable about the school and passionate about their role; those who spoke with inspectors exhibited a very real sense of vocation. They ensure that the school supports the vision of the archbishop, and that it takes advantage of training opportunities provided by the diocese, such as the training provision for teachers who are new to Catholic schools, for example. They strike an appropriate balance between supporting and challenging senior staff. Leaders show high levels of respect for the dignity of all who work at the school, and they are aware of their duty to promote well-being. Staff acknowledge and appreciate this. Self-evaluation work in this area is thorough and accurate.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

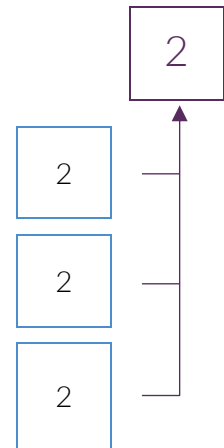
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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, including those with additional needs and with English as an additional language, make good progress in their learning. Religious literacy levels are good. Many of the older pupils are articulate and eloquent when speaking about their studies and they use subject specific vocabulary well. They can reflect spiritually in an ethical manner about their learning. During the inspection, they spoke to inspectors impressively about the message behind *Laudato Si*, for example, and about the actions that they take in their lives in response to its challenge. Overall, the quality of work produced, and its presentation, is good, with some particular strengths in the older year groups; for example, the way Year 6 pupils were able to relate the 'Feeding of the 5,000' miracle to the Sacrament of the Eucharist was excellent. There is, however, some variability in attainment across the school. Pupils' behaviour for learning is very good; most can concentrate well for extended periods of time and can focus on their studies independently. They benefit from having some choices in lessons; however, their skills of independent and creative learning are not fully developed. Pupils enjoy their religious education (RE) lessons, and they take a good level of interest in them. Learners have responded well to recent developments in feedback practice, and many are able to articulate what they need to do next in order to improve. Attainment in RE is clearly at least on a par with the other areas of the curriculum.

Teachers, throughout the school, show high levels of commitment to RE. Some teachers have impressively in-depth levels of subject knowledge. However, there is significant variability across the school. Staff have collaborated well with partner schools to devise good planning for the implementation of the new *Religious Education Directory*. It is scripture rich, and it includes many opportunities for teachers to practise at a high standard. Teachers' approach to questioning is positive in nature but it does not sufficiently check for the depth of pupil understanding or facilitate the raising of the quality of responses from learners. Staff have recently worked to

refine marking and feedback practice. This work is innovative in nature, and it allows pupils to benefit from regular opportunities to extend their learning. This practice is effective in nearly all classes. The approach of teachers and support staff develops pupils' morality and spirituality well. Staff benefit from good quality resources, and they provide pupils with a good range of ways of presenting their learning, including the good use of information technology.

Leaders and governors have worked effectively with partner schools and the diocese to implement the Directory. This has involved dealing with a range of complex challenges well. Consequently, an impressive curriculum is in place. Their work illustrates their commitment to RE, which is clearly valued as the 'core of core' subjects. The leadership group is aware of the variability in practice referenced in this report and of the need to provide the necessary programme of support, particularly in relation to induction processes for those staff who are in the very early stages of their career and who are new to teaching in a Catholic school. A good cycle of monitoring work is in place. Samples of learning and 'learning walks' feature well, and governors play an appropriate role in this work. Staff receive good feedback as a part of this work; however, the process of following up on the implementation of feedback recommendations is underdeveloped. Self-evaluation in this area makes many pertinent points and it references the inspection framework well. However, judgements made about standards attained by learners did not sufficiently take into account the variability in teaching across the school.

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

2

Leadership

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

2

2



Pupils display a positive attitude towards the prayer and liturgy provided. Nearly all are respectful at these times, and they participate in communal prayer and in singing well. They are familiar with the most common traditional prayers of the Church. They take part in daily meditation well and they regularly reflect using the Examen. One of the consequences of this is that many pupils show a good understanding of the cycle of the liturgical year. Children have good opportunities to plan and lead collective worship in which scripture consistently has a central place. Good examples were observed during the inspection, focussing on, for example, 'which is the greatest of the commandments?' and on 'being kind to all we meet'. Pupils have good opportunities to evaluate their collective worship, and the work of the pupils' chaplaincy team is particularly good in this area. Pupils, in an age-appropriate way, can link their experiences of prayer and liturgy to practical actions; the best example being the way in which Cafod's work with the most vulnerable is supported.

Well planned prayer and liturgy are central to the school's life, and the daily pattern of it reflects the rhythm of the prayer life of the Church. During the inspection, for example, well-chosen scripture contributed to celebrations of the Feast of St Teresa of Avila and St Luke. Senior staff provide a good model of appropriate practice to colleagues in relation to both leading and participating in prayer and worship. Most staff participate well, but not all do so fully. The large majority of staff use their knowledge of liturgical norms to support pupils to plan and lead class-based prayer skilfully. They offer good support to colleagues who are in the process of developing this knowledge. Most staff are able to support and prompt pupils well as they develop the skills required to take a leading role in collective worship. A small minority lack the confidence to do this but the support they have is gradually addressing this point. At least two staff members are able to significantly enhance the quality of prayer and worship by playing live

music. The available space is well used. Simple focal areas for prayer are in place in each classroom; the hall and corridors are presented in a way that is conducive to prayer. Staff are keen to involve parents, who are appreciative of the opportunities provided to attend class-led assemblies and Masses, both in school and in the parish church.

Leaders and governors have a good policy for prayer and liturgy in place, and they are committed to ensuring that pupils can benefit from an appropriate range of experiences and that they can develop age-appropriate skills as they progress through the school. Leaders have ensured that a very well-considered and constructed annual plan is in place to identify a range of collective worship experiences for pupils that fully reflect the pattern of the liturgical year. This ensures that occasions such as holy days of obligation are appropriately celebrated, and that the Sacrament of Reconciliation is available during Advent and Lent. Leaders show an accurate understanding of the current professional development needs of staff; they have a priority to support and develop inexperienced staff in this area. Leaders and governors fully appreciate the need to create high quality provision for prayer and liturgy for the benefit of pupils, and they identify resources well with this aim in mind. They regularly seek the views of pupils. This is good practice. The self-evaluation work of leaders in this area has resulted in an inflated judgement, as the school's work in relation to collective worship is clearly good.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Joseph's Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	401645
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	6813328
Full postal address of the school	St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, 204 North Road, Gabalfa, Cardiff, CF14 3BL
School phone number	02920621625
Headteacher	Helen Wheeler (acting)
Chair of governors	Matthew O'Brien
School Website	www.stjosephsprm.cardiff.sch.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	4 – 6 December 2017
Previous denominational inspection grade	AG

The inspection team

Lyndon Watkins

Julie Beaumont-Rees

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