



St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

URN: 100041

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Archbishop of Westminster

06–07 November 2025

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 is fully compliant with the general norms for religious education laid down by the Bishops' Conference.
- The school is fully compliant with the additional requirements of the diocesan bishop.
- All areas for improvement outlined in the previous diocesan inspection have been addressed in full.

What the school does well

- Leadership at all levels demonstrates a clear and strategic Catholic vision, with a strong understanding of strengths and areas for development, which are effectively addressed through high-quality training and professional development opportunities.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons is exemplary, creating a calm and purposeful atmosphere in every classroom that enables all to flourish academically and spiritually.
- Catholic social teaching is deeply embedded in both religious education and the wider curriculum lived in the daily life of the school, shaping pupils' values, choices and actions.
- Pupils experience and confidently engage in a range of ways of praying across the school, including silence, meditation and spontaneous prayer, which deepens their spiritual growth and relationship with God.
- There is a strong link between the school, parish and parents, and this ensures all are supported on their faith journey.

What the school needs to improve

- Design open-ended tasks that encourage greater pupil independence and enhance the depth and quality of their learning outcomes.
- Develop pupils' independence in the planning of experiences of prayer and liturgy, enabling them to take an active role in the preparation of prayer and liturgy according to their age and capacity.
- Provide pupils with increased leadership opportunities beyond the pupil chaplaincy team, enabling them to apply their knowledge of Catholic social teaching to lead initiatives and actively put their faith into practice within the wider community.

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

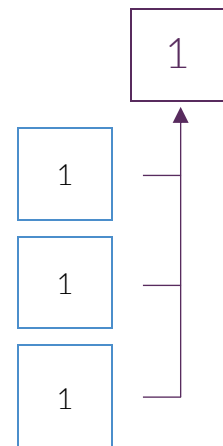
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

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 Catholic School embrace and articulate the school's distinctive Catholic identity, charism and mission, '*Go shine in the World and live as Jesus did*'. In Nursery, self-portraits reflect their individuality, and pupils recognise their God-given dignity, knowing they are valued as unique persons made in God's image. They are happy, confident and morally grounded through the equality curriculum and their engagement with Catholic social teaching. Pupils take active, thoughtful roles in living out Catholic social teaching, clearly explaining the theology behind their actions and showing genuine commitment. They demonstrate deep respect and inclusivity toward people of all faiths; for example, Key Stage 2 pupils linked days of worship to mosque attendance, expressing appreciation for diverse religious practices. As one pupil noted, 'We treat everyone equally regardless of their faith.' The school's chaplaincy team is highly valued, with pupils taking on leadership roles and participating wholeheartedly in service opportunities. Their outreach spans local, national, and global communities, from donating to the Camden Foodbank and fundraising for the homeless through St Vincent de Paul and New Ways, to forming partnerships with a school in Kenya and working with Plan International UK to sponsor vulnerable children.

The school's mission is deeply rooted in the Word of God, with staff fully embracing and modelling it through active participation in liturgical and community life and strong pastoral care, especially for the most vulnerable. Relationships are inclusive and nurturing, with Christ clearly at the centre. One parent commented, 'The school and staff are great! My child has been at the school for seven years and we feel lucky to be there. It feels like home.' A culture of welcome embraces all families, celebrating diverse cultural and faith traditions with respect and sensitivity. The school environment strongly reflects its Catholic identity through displays such as classroom prayer and liturgy areas, the celebration of the Word displays, the acts of kindness display and the gallery of diverse saints in the playground. Dedicated spaces like *International Connections* promote spiritual growth, community diversity and care for creation. The chaplaincy

provision is a key strength, offering rich opportunities for worship, reflection and service. Staff actively nurture pupil chaplaincy leadership, encouraging children to serve the common good. The school effectively delivers relationships, sex and health education, fully meeting diocesan requirements and enhances this provision through a partnership with local police, offering workshops such as *Growing Against Violence* for the school's inner London community.

As soon as you enter St Joseph's, its deep roots in Catholic tradition are immediately evident. Senior leaders and governors share a clear, unified vision that places Catholic life at the heart of the school community. Parish priests play an active role, regularly visiting classes to support pupils and staff. Leaders and governors are passionate about immersing pupils in the Catholic faith and the warm, positive relationships throughout the school reflect this shared mission. The most vulnerable members of the community are well supported, with leaders visible at the school gates each day to identify needs and provide timely help and intervention. Pupil leadership is strong, particularly through the chaplaincy team, where children understand their responsibility to care for others. However, pupils require greater opportunities to apply their understanding of Catholic social teaching through leading new initiatives. St Joseph serves as a model of Catholic social teaching rooted in scripture. The headteacher exemplifies dignity and compassion; as one staff member noted, 'She sees us as human beings, is approachable and creates a family culture.' Parents, valued as their children's first educators, are deeply involved in the school's Catholic life. One parent shared, 'Everyone feels really close here. There's a true sense of belonging.'

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

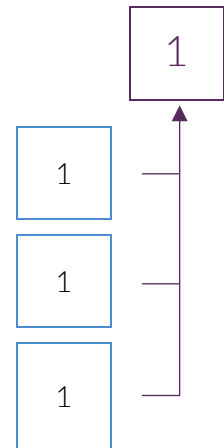
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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 at St Joseph’s demonstrate excellent knowledge, understanding and skills fully aligned with the *Religious Education Directory*. They make strong progress across the curriculum, including disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Pupils display outstanding religious literacy, confidently using subject-specific vocabulary to reflect ethically and morally. For example, a Year 6 pupil explained how Hannah’s persistent prayer inspires us, ‘Prayer encourages us to have patience - hold on to our faith.’ Pupils’ books show high-quality work, with thoughtful, reflective responses and strong use of key concepts. Pupils make meaningful links in their learning, demonstrating natural curiosity and a desire to deepen their understanding. Lessons are enhanced by collaboration, creativity and mutual respect, with shared enthusiasm supporting engagement and achievement. High-quality presentations and creative work are celebrated, inspiring peers to strive for excellence. Pupils are reflective, self-motivated learners who understand their progress and how to improve. While most tasks support achievement, some scaffolds occasionally limit the depth of response. Attainment in religious education is broadly in line with other core subjects; to further develop this, religious education outcomes in lower year groups should be consistently aligned with writing outcomes.

Teachers at St Joseph’s demonstrate a high level of confidence and strong subject knowledge in religious education, coupled with deep commitment and high expectations, enabling them to deliver engaging lessons that inspire pupils to participate meaningfully. Planning is carefully structured, with lessons consolidating prior learning and extending knowledge, ensuring pupils learn extremely well. Strategies such as retrieval practice, defining new vocabulary and connecting learning to real-life experiences, such as linking the Biblical census when Mary and Joseph travelled to Bethlehem with the school register, support this approach. Teachers use questioning effectively to assess understanding, adapting explanations to increase knowledge. Partner talk, dual-coded key vocabulary word banks and targeted extension tasks provide valuable scaffolding, although in some cases task design limits opportunities for deeper

responses. Celebration of effort is embedded across lessons, in assemblies, *work of the week* displays and newsletters, and across the school through initiatives such as *person of the week*, *learning hero* certificates, head of school special mentions and *smiles*, fostering high motivation. Pupils, particularly in Key Stage 2, receive specific, actionable feedback that clearly guides them to make progress and deepen understanding. There is strong consistency across the school in lesson design, ensuring clear routines, scaffolded support and opportunities to link prior learning, define vocabulary and make real-life connections. Lessons also provide pupils with extensive opportunities to present learning creatively through drama, silent acting, art and poetry. High-quality resources, including support from other adults, are used effectively to optimise learning for all pupils.

The leadership team at St Joseph's demonstrates a deep commitment to ensuring high-quality religious education for all pupils, placing it firmly at the heart of the curriculum. Religious education is given full parity with other core subjects, particularly in terms of time allocation, professional development and resourcing. The newly implemented religious education curriculum is a faithful expression of the *Directory*, with leaders drawing effectively on the support of the Diocesan Education Service and the expertise of leaders across the partnership. The passionate subject leader for religious education, alongside senior leaders and governors, have a clear and ambitious vision for teaching and learning. This vision is brought to life through a well-sequenced curriculum, detailed medium-term planning and high-quality in-house staff training. Regular and rigorous monitoring, feedback and coaching have strengthened both staff confidence and subject expertise across the school. Leaders and governors have a robust tracking system in place for assessment, which now needs to be further developed to include and link explicitly to the assessment of the *Directory*.

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

Pupils at St Joseph engage reverently in a full and active prayer life, participating deeply in the school's rich experiences of prayer and liturgy. They experience a wide range of prayer forms, including guided Christian meditation, silence, spontaneous prayer and personal prayer, further enriched by carefully chosen scripture and hymns that strengthen their spiritual connection. Pupils work collaboratively with teachers and peers to plan, prepare and deliver well-structured prayer and liturgy experiences, ensuring a clear golden thread, such as thanksgiving, hope and peace. They perform their ministries with confidence and reverence, demonstrating a profound respect for the sacred. Pupils have also developed the capacity to evaluate the prayer life of the school, reflecting on the clarity, impact and spiritual depth of each celebration. Moving forward, they should be given further opportunities, appropriate to their age, to take greater independence in planning and leading worship. Pupils articulate how these prayer experiences inspire action in their daily lives and mission. For example, in lower Key Stage 2, when asked how they could be more like the widow, a pupil responded, 'donate time to someone who needs it,' demonstrating love and self-giving in line with the Gospel. Pupils also engage with global initiatives, such as supporting children's education through Plan International, embodying the school's motto and mission in action.

The centrality of prayer and liturgy is evident from the moment you enter St Joseph's, with displays such as '*St Joseph*', '*God Loves Me*' paintings and '*People We Love*' reflecting a community rooted in faith. Prayer and liturgy are integral to all gatherings of pupils, staff and leaders, marking moments of joy and sorrow with respect and reflection. A daily rhythm of prayer, naturally embedded across the school, reflects the life of the Church. Traditional prayers are prominently displayed in classrooms, alongside a creative balance of routine and innovation, including guided meditation and periods of stillness, fostering deep spiritual engagement. Well-chosen scripture passages, thoughtfully linked to the liturgical season, form the heart of prayer and liturgy, enabling children to participate fully and actively. All staff, including senior leaders, model exemplary practice in leading and participating in prayer and liturgy. Pupils are skilfully

supported to plan and lead prayer experiences, ensuring each experience of prayer and liturgy has a clear and meaningful theme. These are further enhanced through music, art, poetry and drama, with carefully selected hymns enhancing personal prayer and spiritual connection. Imaginative use of classroom and communal spaces, including the Early Years prayer space and the hall's prayer tree, fosters community and dignity. Families are warmly invited to participate in the prayer life of the school, enriching pupils' spiritual development, while strong partnerships with local parishes further support pupils' active participation in liturgy and connection to the wider Church.

The leadership team at St Joseph's demonstrates a clear and ambitious vision for prayer and liturgy, ensuring it is central to school life and fully aligned with the liturgical calendar. The school's prayer and liturgy policy is well formulated and is now being refined to reflect the language and guidance of the new *Prayer and Liturgy Directory*. Leaders provide a comprehensive plan of worship opportunities, including holy days of obligation, the new school year Mass, class Masses and key sacramental celebrations such as the Sacrament of Reconciliation during Advent and Lent. Year 6 pupils celebrate a special Mass for school leavers during the summer term, fostering a strong sense of belonging and spiritual reflection. Professional development for staff in prayer and liturgy is prioritised, with in-house training and diocesan support contributing significantly to staff confidence and expertise. The parish priests actively support leaders and staff to ensure all worship opportunities are engaging and consistently of high quality. Leaders and governors prioritise prayer and liturgy when setting budgets and allocating resources. Pupil voice is integral to planning and evaluation, feeding into the school's self-evaluation cycle and ensuring that prayer and liturgy continue to be dynamic, relevant and inspiring for all members of the community.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Joseph's Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	100041
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	2023482
Full postal address of the school	Macklin Street, Covent Garden, London, WC2B 5NA
School phone number	02072427712
Executive headteacher	Moya Richardson
Headteacher	Natalie O'Donovan
Chair of governors	Margaret Harvey
School Website	http://www.stjosephs.camden.sch.uk
Trusteeship	Diocesan
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	June 2019
Previous denominational inspection grade	2

The inspection team

Cynthia Ni Loingsigh
Mary Ainger

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