



DENOMINATIONAL INSPECTION REPORT

incorporating Section 48 and Canonical Inspection under Canon 806 on
behalf of the Archbishop of Southwark

URN 141580

St Joseph's Catholic Primary school

Springhead Road

Northfleet

Kent

DA11 9QZ

Inspection date: 15th January 2020

Chair of Governors: Mr Andrew Brett

Headteacher: Mrs Karen Wheeler

Inspectors: Mr Stephen Beck

Ms Frances Honis

EDUCATION COMMISSION

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Director of Education: Dr Simon Hughes



Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding	Grade 3	Requires improvement
Grade 2	Good	Grade 4	Inadequate

FULL REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Joseph's School is an academy school in membership of the Kent Catholic Schools Partnership. It is situated in the Gravesend deanery of the Archdiocese of Southwark and is in the North Kent Local Authority. The principal parish which the school serves is Our Lady of the Assumption, Northfleet although a number of pupils reside in the neighbouring parishes of St Peter and St Paul, Swanscombe (17%), St Vincent's, Dartford (3%) and St Mary the Virgin, Stone, Greenhithe (3%). The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholics is 93%. The average weekly proportion of curriculum time given to Religious Education is 10% in Key Stage 1 and 10% in Key Stage 2.

The school takes pupils from 4 to 11 years. Due to demand for places, the school has one 'bulge' class. The number of pupils currently on roll is 240. The attainment of pupils on entering the school is below average. Around 12.9% of pupils receive extra support in class and 3(1.25%)pupils have Education and Health Care (EHC) plans. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils from ethnic minorities is higher than the national average. They are drawn from a broad range of backgrounds, with the largest group being of Black African origin. The proportion of pupils from homes where English is an additional language is 37% and is significantly above the national average.

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SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

St Joseph's is an Outstanding Catholic school because:

- The Catholic life of the school is outstanding. St Joseph's is a happy and inclusive Catholic community. Pupils and staff work hard to ensure its stated mission, 'to nurture all individuals to be the best they can in the Light of God's love, encouraging them to strive for excellence in every aspect of their lives', is woven into the life of the school. The life of the school is driven by the Gospel values on which it is founded. Under the strong leadership of the headteacher, along with that of the senior leadership team and governing body, all staff ensure that the welfare of each and every pupil is paramount. Pupils love coming to school. They behave well and treat one another with kindness and respect. Their aspirations are ignited as a result of consistently excellent teaching and a rich tapestry of experiences well beyond the normal experiences of the pupils.
- Parents value the high standard of education their children receive at St Joseph's. They feel that they are listened to and that the school responds to their needs. Transition to school is effective in settling the children in quickly. Parents feel that the school's Catholic ethos is clearly lived out in the care it gives to pupils with special educational needs and and/or a disability.
- The school provides a varied programme of collective worship with a number of outstanding elements. The lives of the pupils are enriched by these carefully planned acts of worship and a rich prayer life. Pupils are valued and make a significant contribution to all aspects of school life. They grow into responsible and caring citizens who work hard and use their skills and talents for the service of others.
- Teaching and learning in Religious Education is outstanding. Pupils are fully engaged through activities that are carefully planned to meet the learning needs of all groups of pupils at the appropriate level of challenge. Questioning is of a high standard and teachers deepen pupils' level of understanding through developing their responses to questions. Ongoing mentoring of new teachers in the classroom, where proven outstanding practitioners model good practice and make timely interventions, is a key strength. It enables new teachers to learn from their expertise and ensures that pupils do not miss out as new teachers develop their skills.

WHAT DOES THE SCHOOL NEED TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER

- Review the Religious Education self-evaluation form to align it with the current inspection framework. Develop the document into a working document that clearly identifies strengths and areas for development, incorporating these into the Religious Education and whole school improvement plans showing accountability and timelines.
- As the school embeds its excellent development of assessment in Religious Education, it should ensure greater consistency in recording pupil comments and the inclusion of reflective marking.



Overall Effectiveness

How effective the school is in providing Catholic Education.	1
Catholic Life	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school.	1
The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school.	1
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school.	1
Religious Education	1
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education.	1
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education.	1
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education.	1
Collective Worship	1
How well pupils respond to and participate in the schools' Collective Worship.	2
The quality of provision for Collective Worship.	1
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship.	1

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CATHOLIC LIFE

1

The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school is outstanding

- Pupils make an outstanding contribution to the Catholic Life of the school and benefit greatly from it. They take full advantage of the many and varied opportunities offered to them and can articulate how the school is helping them to become better people.
- They respect the Catholic tradition of the school and its links with the parish community and are active participants in parish celebrations and activities. Pupils are proud of their religious backgrounds and beliefs and have a strong sense of personal worth. They treat others with a high level of respect and build relationships with people from all walks of life.
- Pupils take their responsibilities seriously, for example seeing their roles as buddies, peer mentors, food councillors and fundraisers, as important, because 'It is about looking after people as Jesus asked us to do'. The establishment of a pupil Citizen Council has extended these roles and there is potential to build on this good range of pupil leadership roles to offer more formal opportunities for the expression of pupil voice.
- They express their own views and feelings with confidence and demonstrate a deep understanding of how important it is to forgive and be forgiven. They are also quick to congratulate others, to take responsibility for their actions and show a keen interest in spiritual, moral and ethical issues.
- Exemplary behaviour is underpinned by outstanding moral, social and cultural development with the development of pupils' self-confidence being recognised by inspectors and parents as a strength of the school.
- The school is on a journey moving to the new assessment framework, which is progressing extremely well. Work in pupils' books has begun to show evidence of evaluation, analysis and interpretation – as set out in the frameworks. Staff professional development (CPD) evidences the school's commitment to this and the high priority it is giving to assessment.
- The school undertakes a broad range of charitable activities about which pupils enthuse. Each month a class is responsible for raising food for a local foodbank. Pupils also raise funds for Missio and CAFOD. CAFOD is invited to talk to the pupils on a regular basis and the school has taken part in their workshops. Other funding has been raised for Southwark Crisis Fund, Marie Curie, the parish and NSPCC. Individual pupils raised funds for Sickle Cell, Tree of Hope and Cancer Research. Pupils are particularly encouraged to raise funds for charities recognised by the Catholic Church.
- The impact of these activities sees pupils being encouraged to serve one another and they were able to link this to scripture and to their work in the community during Lent. They have undertaken cleaning of the church and main road (Springhead Road), cards for the school's neighbours for Lent and afternoon tea for parishioners served by the pupils. The school has an aim to prepare pupils to be active Catholic 21st century citizens based on the teachings of Christ and the Gospel and this is bearing fruit.



The quality of provision of the Catholic Life of the school is outstanding

- The impact of the school's motto, 'Striving for excellence in the Light of God', is evident in the joyful and harmonious relationships throughout the school. Pupils know it and understand its meaning. All staff are fully committed to its implementation, as confirmed by pupils who spoke warmly of the support, praise and encouragement they receive.
- The school is distinctly Catholic. Pupils value and understand this and the range of religious images and scriptural quotations that reflect the deeply spiritual nature of the school.
- It is evident in the daily routine in the life of the school that staff are driven by a shared desire to provide the best possible care and education for pupils. They model Christian behaviour that reflects the shared vision of the school to serve. They successfully create a warm, supportive and prayerful school.
- The school is an excellent example of faith in action. Pastoral care is a significant strength. Clear policies explicitly provide the highest levels of pastoral care to staff and pupils. The impact of policies is evident in pupil behaviour and strong relationships throughout the community. There is a tangible sense that the faith is the bedrock of everything the school strives to achieve. Testimony from pupils and parents shows that people genuinely care for each other.
- The curriculum, both in its academic and wider sense, reflects the school mission to enable everyone to be proud of who they are as individuals and of each other and of their school. The dignity of each person is at the heart of everything the school does. It provides extensive opportunities for the moral and spiritual development of all pupils and staff.
- It is commendable that St Joseph's has been awarded the Emotional Resilience and Wellbeing mark by Kent in recognition of the school's work to support pupils and their families to overcome personal, social and emotional issues. The school also provides workshops for parents to support their children academically as well as personally.

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school is outstanding.

- Governors are outstanding in fulfilling their responsibilities. They have effectively helped shape the direction of the school through regular visits, extensive communication, joint initiatives and shared celebrations and this is reflected in the school's mission statement, motto and core values. Governors and the school are also well supported by a knowledgeable, dedicated and hardworking Chair of Governors who uses his long association with the school to provide appropriate levels of challenge and support.
- Leadership at all levels respects difference, values diversity and ensures equal opportunities for all and this is reflected in the school's prayer, worship and liturgical life with a range of opportunities for spiritual and moral development being provided for staff and pupils.
- It is notable how well the school operates in an early 1900's building. An excellent learning environment has been established that maximises the use of all areas and has seen creative use of space, including an indoor quiet room for reflection and prayer.



- A beautiful prayer garden has been established in a quadrangle at the centre of the school that provides a daily focus for the spiritual life of the school. It includes a stone path created using painted stones left each year by Year 6 leavers.
- The self- evaluation document provides evidence of the school's monitoring, analysis and self-challenge. The analysis provides a basis to celebrate the school's strengths. It would now benefit from a revision to bring it in line with the current inspection framework and linking the document to the Religious Education and whole school improvement plans, showing accountability and timelines, would see it as a real working document.
- There are positive relationships at every level within the school. There is real team spirit where all are mutually supported. Parents are consulted regularly and involved in a variety of ways in the life of the school, for example through newsletters, questionnaires, invitations to services and celebrations.
- It is commendable how this strong partnership has supported the school over an extended period of time in maintaining both Ofsted and Section 48 inspection recognition as an outstanding school and this has been achieved through a sustained self-belief, awareness of succession planning, good management of change and how St Joseph's is valued by its community.
- The parish priest who is the link governor for Religious Education is a regular visitor to school. He supports the Religious Education subject leader and teachers in regard to Catholic practice, symbolism, sacraments and visits to the church. He works with teachers to deliver some learning activities. The impact of this is seen in the teaching and work by the pupils and in their relationship with him in school. His contributions to the life of the school make a real difference and are valued by the whole school community.

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RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

1

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education is outstanding.

- Pupils enjoy and understand the value of Religious Education, demonstrating passion and commitment in their learning. Behaviour for learning is excellent and classroom management is of a high order. Pupils concentrate well and display very positive attitudes to their learning.
- The high expectations of teachers ensure pupils make excellent progress across a range of skills and develop well in their knowledge and understanding. They demonstrate strong prior knowledge and are able to use this effectively in their new learning.
- Outcomes for pupils are very good overall. From below average starting points, pupils in the early years foundation stage (EYFS) make good progress and this continues through Key Stage 1. Momentum continues throughout Key Stage 2 and books evidence a very good standard of work, with data showing that a majority of pupils achieve expectations and an increasing number exceed these.
- Inspection findings and evidence presented by the school shows no notable differences between groups of learners. Pupils identified as having special educational needs make good progress, not least because of the quality of targeted support from skilled staff.
- Pupils speak about their lessons being creative and providing opportunities for them to 'understand God's teaching and how he wants us to live our lives'.
- Pupils have a good understanding of where they are in their learning journey and what they need to do to improve. They are very keen to achieve their targets and know what they need to do to succeed.
- Pupils have great pride in their work which is evidenced in well-presented books. There is thoughtful dialogue with teachers, ensuring interest and wonder is maintained.

The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education is outstanding.

- The school uses 'The Way, The Truth and the Life' as its core Religious Education scheme and is in transition to the new framework, recognising it will take time to embed.
- Lessons observed during the course of the inspection were never less than good with the majority being outstanding. They were marked by a strong learning 'buzz'. Pupils were fully engaged in tasks, with cooperative working providing opportunities for excellent discussion and self-challenge which pupils utilised. They demonstrated a strength of knowledge of religious terminology and maturity.
- In lessons pupils are set challenging tasks that are well matched to the learning objective to promote good learning. Activities are consistently matched to pupils' abilities to engage all groups of learners and to enable them to work independently. Teachers demonstrate high expectations of behaviour and engagement and as a result pupils concentrate well.



- Relationships between staff and pupils are very positive and are a real strength of the school. Support staff are skilled and very enthusiastic. They are used very effectively to reinforce learning and to support and extend pupils of different abilities.
- Assessments are regular and the school has developed a rigorous tracking system. The assessment of pupils' work is consistently accurate as teachers are confident making these assessments. The school is in a good position to move forward with the embedding of age-related standards in Religious Education and to further develop a range of moderation strategies.
- Teachers deliver well planned activities through a range of teaching strategies which help pupils to develop and extend their knowledge and foster curiosity and enthusiasm for learning. They make good use of time to maximise learning and develop a range of skills, interpreting signs and symbols, asking significant questions and engaging with religious ideas. Very good questioning further enhances learning. The use of scripture is likewise a very strong element in supporting learning with pupils demonstrating an ability to independently navigate the Bible.
- The standard of marking and feedback is very good. There are some excellent examples of focused marking. Written comments by teachers on steps to improve learning are being used consistently throughout the school. Pupils are given opportunities to respond to teacher comments which is contributing to enhanced learning. This would benefit now from a greater consistency in recording pupil comments to capture examples of deeper learning and reflective marking, in line with the school's new marking policy.

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education is outstanding.

- The curriculum meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference and contributes very effectively to the pupils' spiritual and moral development. Leaders and governors have been proactive in maintaining the development of Religious Education to ensure its ongoing status as a core subject.
- Professional development is important and given high priority in many ways. Not only do staff attend diocesan courses, they share good practice within the school community.
- The headteacher is fully committed and passionate about promoting the profile of Religious Education amongst staff, pupils, parents and the parish. She is well supported by a subject leader of Religious Education who is very committed, knowledgeable, and enthusiastic. She is well informed about current developments and has high expectations which are communicated effectively to staff on a regular basis during dedicated meetings.
- Parents receive regular updates and newsletters about Religious Education, and formal reports on the achievements of their children. There is also a wealth of information on the school's informative website.



COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship and Prayer Life is good.

- Pupils participate reverently in a varied programme of collective worship and process into whole school worship demonstrating reverence and respect.
- Pupils join in singing with enthusiasm, especially favourite traditional hymns and prayers, readily and confidently.
- Pupils demonstrate a good understanding of the religious seasons and feasts. In their whole school acts of collective worship, they share the Sunday gospels, helping them to understand the liturgical year.
- There is a deep sense of respect for different faiths. The school should consider visits to places of worship such as a mosque and synagogue to develop the pupils' understanding further. The school is a place of mutual tolerance and respect.
- Based on CPD teachers have begun to use art and music to promote enriched interpretation of Religious Education, for example David and Goliath and the hymn 'Here I am Lord'. The school purchased CAFOD's 'Come and See' scheme to enhance the teaching and learning of other faiths.
- Each week pupils are taught about scripture in an assembly led by Year 6 children. Year 5 pupils work with a member of the senior leadership team to analyse, interpret and evaluate the following Sunday's gospel. During the Monday gospel assembly, the Year 5 pupils present their evaluation of scripture to the whole school.
- The school teaches the liturgical year through feast day celebrations; Mass and special lunches – some designed by pupils and with prayers written by individual classes focusing on the liturgical calendar and supported by the Religious Education newsletter. Extra activities are implemented to enhance liturgical education; remembrance book and candle for November, rosaries provided for all pupils by the school and rosary said every morning in October, a school service for the month of Mary and a school service for the sacrament of Holy Communion.

The quality of provision for Collective Worship and Prayer Life is outstanding.

- The quality of collective worship provided by the school is outstanding.
- Collective worship is central to the life of the school and forms the heart of every school celebration. Praying together is part of the daily experience for pupils and staff.
- Collective worship has a clear purpose, message and direction. The themes chosen for worship reflect a deep understanding of the liturgical seasons and the Church's mission in education.
- Collective worship is given the highest possible priority in terms of planning, evaluating and resourcing. As a result, experiences of collective worship are of high quality and are cherished by every member of the community.
- Relevant staff have an excellent understanding of the Church's liturgical year, seasons and feasts, and ensure pupils have high quality experiences throughout the year.



- The parish priest is fully active in the prayer life of the school. On the day of inspection, the parish priest expressed his focus on worship with the children and whole school community.
- The parish priest celebrates a variety of liturgical events for the school community, for example, Advent and Lent services, feast days and school Masses.
- Staff are highly skilled in helping pupils to plan and deliver quality worship, when appropriate. They have a thorough and comprehensive understanding of the purpose of collective worship and a wide variety of methods and styles of prayer.
- The establishment of a Gospel group has seen Year 5 pupils formulate and lead a weekly assembly based on the Gospel reading for the coming Sunday. They articulated that they were doing a valuable job and are growing in independence in this role. Class based liturgies are also led by pupils and the school is increasingly facilitating pupils to be independent in leading worship.
- St Joseph's takes every opportunity to attract and facilitate attendance by parents and carers associated with the pupils. They have Stay and Play sessions, plus other activities such as curriculum workshops, learning galleries and events such as international food day to encourage and welcome more parents and carers from the community to be a part of their welcoming and prayerful environment. The school also have Adoration sessions for parents every Thursday morning in their dedicated prayer area.

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship and Prayer Life is outstanding.

- Leaders and governors are fully committed to the key role played by prayer and worship in the life of the school community, which is routinely reviewed.
- The headteacher leads by example and sets very high standards for collective worship. Through her inspirational leadership she ensures that pupils and staff develop a deepening appreciation of the Church's traditions, seasons, rites and symbols.
- The headteacher's passionate promotion of collective worship ensures that liturgical and spiritual development are priorities in school and that time is devoted to them.
- The headteacher and Religious Education subject leader are models of outstanding practice for both staff and pupils. They work closely together and with colleagues across school and in the wider diocesan family to provide the very best opportunities for collective worship.
- The senior leadership team have a clear understanding of the strengths and areas for development in collective worship, as a result of monitoring. Effective evaluation of staff strengths has resulted in well-targeted training for staff new to Catholic education.
- The governors are a visible presence at many acts of collective worship; this helps them to have a clear understanding of the many strengths and areas for development in collective worship.
- Leaders strive for continuous improvement and regularly seek the views of pupils, staff and parents regarding the quality and significance of collective worship in school and are quick to respond to these findings in a systematic and thorough way.
- They promote pupils' planning and leading collective worship in an age appropriate manner.