

St Joseph's Catholic Junior School

URN: 401023

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Bishop of Menevia

28–29 September 2023

Summary of key findings

Overall effectiveness

The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school

2

Catholic life and mission (p.**Error! Bookmark not defined.**)

How faithfully the school responds to the call to live as a Catholic community at the service of the Church's educational mission

2

Religious education (p.**Error! Bookmark not defined.**)

The quality of curriculum religious education

2

Collective worship (p.**Error! Bookmark not defined.**)

The quality and range of liturgy and prayer provided by the school

2

The school is fully compliant with the curriculum requirements laid down by the Bishops' Conference

Yes

The school is fully compliant with all requirements of the diocesan bishop

Yes

The school has responded to the areas for improvement from the last inspection

Fully

What the school does well

- Senior leaders are positive role models who have created a successful, inclusive Catholic community through their commitment to the prioritisation of Catholic life and mission.
- Leaders provide a welcoming and supportive environment where gospel values are celebrated in the physical environment and lived out in the relationships among pupils and staff and between school, parents and parish.
- School staff work together as a team. Their knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith is strong. They communicate the importance of religious education to pupils well.

- Most pupils have positive attitudes towards religious education. They are kind, considerate and keen to put their faith into action through their support for those in need.
- This is an inclusive school community where all feel welcome. Prayer and liturgy are central to the life of the school.

What the school needs to improve

- Further develop processes and systems for the effective implementation of the *Religious Education Directory* including developing the role of pupils as “spiritual leaders.”
- To ensure that tasks and activities in religious education meet the needs of all learners.
- Develop current practice in marking religious education by including diagnostic next steps, peer and self-assessment as consistent practice across the school.

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

2

Provision

The quality of provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school

2

Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school

2

2

Pupils at St Joseph's recognise that they are members of a Christ - centred community of love. They appreciate, and actively participate in the Catholic life and mission of the school.

Understanding that that they are valued and cared for as unique persons made in the image and likeness of God most pupils show respect for one another. They are polite, friendly and behave well in lessons.

Pupils respect the Catholic traditions of the school. They are proud of the close links with the Parish participating in the weekly "live stream" celebration of Mass and attend weekend family Mass. They express pride in their own religious and cultural identity and show respect for other faiths.

Pupils respond well to Catholic social teaching suggesting ways in which they can become stewards of the planet by removing plastic from the seas and planting trees. They follow in Jesus' footsteps supporting people locally through foodbank donations and globally by fundraising for Bishop Giovanni's Mission in Peru and taking part in the Cafod Big Lenten walk.

Building positive relationships in an inclusive community based on gospel values is at the heart of Saint Joseph's School and is articulated clearly by pupils, staff and governors. The mission statement, "An education for life of the highest standards rooted in the teachings of Jesus Christ and of the Church." clearly expresses the educational mission of the Church. Staff are positive role models, they understand their responsibility in developing the Catholic life of the school, are active in parish life and participate fully in activities reflecting the school's mission.

Emotional literacy support assistants, clear policies and links with outside agencies ensure provision for pupil wellbeing is effective.

The Catholic identity is clear in the importance given to prayer and worship and the many celebrations of liturgical feasts and seasons, often involving Monsignor Joe. It is also evident through the environment displays of pupils' work, reminding others to: "Follow in the footsteps of Jesus" and to celebrate the Saints as "heavenly role models." Images of Mary, pupils' artwork and prayers adorn prayer areas where pupils lead class prayers. The Spiritual Leaders group, although enthusiastic in approach is yet to have impact on the prayer life of the school.

Provision for Relationships and Sex Education programmes (RSE) reflect Catholic teaching and principles.

Leaders are committed to the Church's mission in education and to the Catholic life of the school. They aim to provide an education that develops the God given gifts of the whole person. They embrace the values of the Gospel and Catholic Social Teaching and work with the diocese to actively promote the bishop's vision for education. Strong links with parishes exist, particularly with St Joseph's. The staff are fully committed to Catholic education, and questionnaire responses mention "a lot of people comment on the ethos of the school – this makes us feel proud." Teaching and learning in religious education is a regular feature of the school's continuous professional development programme.

Parents are consistently impressed and reassured by the overall Catholic ethos in the school and how it has instilled a love for Christian values... "He has improved tremendously in his spiritual growth, personal life and academically."

Governors are passionately committed to the school as a Catholic learning community. They are frequent visitors to the school. The chair of governors who is also the link governor for religious education is involved with school leaders, monitoring and evaluating Catholic life and mission. The self-evaluation is a concise document but descriptive rather than impact driven.

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

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

2

Pupils are engaged in and enjoy their religious education. Most make expected progress and are becoming religiously literate young people. Pupils can explore the attributes of solidarity, distributive justice and human dignity in the life of Oscar Romero. Younger pupils use scripture to explore themes of stewardship, reflect on the canticle of creation and show their commitment to the sustainability of the planet, suggesting necessary changes to protect God's creation. Pupils across the school respond well to opportunities provided to reflect spiritually, ethically and theologically and to consider the implications of religious commitment in everyday life.

In lessons observed, pupils are making good progress with their knowledge, understanding and skills in religious education. They respond well to teacher questioning, incorporate key words into their written responses, using IT and art effectively to explore their learning creatively.

Pupils behave well in lessons, they listen attentively, however at times lose concentration and become passive learners due to over long teacher exposition. Pupils experience too few opportunities for independent learning and books indicate that planned activities do not always meet the needs of all learners, especially the more able or those with additional needs. Peer and self-assessment is inconsistent across the school as is presentation.

Teachers are confident in their subject knowledge and have a good understanding of how pupils learn. They are fully committed to the value of religious education and communicate its importance effectively to pupils.

Teaching follows the religious education directory, trialling *Creation and Covenant*, the first branch of the model curriculum.

Where teachers use open ended questions pupils were able to articulate their learning well and answers showed greater depth of thinking and increasing maturity. Opportunities to think spiritually and reflect through the use of media enhance pupil learning. Collaborative working on topics such as removing plastic pollution from water enables pupils to apply their faith to life. Thinking skills are used to good effect, encouraging pupils to draw on their knowledge to respond to the question: The answer is God, what is the question? However, inconsistencies in the planning and progression of tasks were observed, with a few lessons lacking appropriate pace and challenge.

Teaching assistants work with individuals and groups of pupils and support more creative approaches to learning. However, in a few classes, long teacher explanations prevented teaching assistants from working with pupils.

Teachers' marking is positive but only a few provide effective feedback that enables learners to know what they need to move forward.

Leaders and governors are committed to ensuring that the religious education curriculum meets the 10% requirement of the Bishops' Conference. Budgets are in line with other core areas of learning and experience and staff access regular professional development.

The leader for religious education has a clear vision for religious education and is committed to school improvement. She leads and monitors learning, undertakes classroom observation and book scrutiny and knows the strengths and areas for development. Together with the headteacher she uses the information to inform the Catholic self-evaluation and religious education priority on the school improvement plan.

Leaders aim to implement the new *Religious Education Directory* by 2025. They are aware of the need to further develop planning to ensure that teaching and learning in religious education is effectively meeting the needs of all learners. Leaders also understand the need to upskill staff in this new approach to religious education.

The headteacher reports regularly to the governing body and the chair of governors who is also the link governor is a regular visitor to the school. She visits classrooms, is involved in the monitoring process and together with other members of the governing body regularly participates in school celebrations.

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

Collective worship is an integral part of the Catholic life and mission of the school. Pupils respond positively to class prayer and whole school assemblies. They act with reverence and are keen to participate. Whole school assembly displayed pupils praying, singing joyfully and actively taking part in assembly. Pupils are knowledgeable about their class saint and house saint.

Pupils regularly plan and lead worship. The school follows the gather, listen, respond, and go forth model, each part supported with a symbolic action. Pupils confidently speak about the liturgical Year and participate in weekend family Masses. Classes visit the church for Mass and enjoy participating in weekly "live stream Mass."

Pupils are familiar with traditional prayers and also understand how to pray spontaneously. Pupils' prayers displayed across the school are thoughtful and further enhance the Catholic ethos.

Pupils access a range and variety of artefacts to support their prayer life. They plan thoughtful going forth messages. In one class observed, pebbles were given to each child to think of the joy that could be spread during the day. Opportunities exist for pupils to become spiritual leaders, the recently formed group is in the early stages of development.

The quality of prayer and liturgy provided by the school is good. There is a clear policy for collective worship which is adhered to by all. Prayer and liturgy is included in all school celebrations. It is a central part of school life at St Joseph's. Praying together is part of the daily experience for pupils and staff. Pupils were able to participate in moments of silent reflection and traditional prayers of the Church and were very proud of their school prayer. Prayer areas such as Capel Mair were inviting and attractive. The spaces were used for individual children if needed or used to plan collective worship.

Staff have good subject knowledge and are able to guide pupils when planning engaging experiences of prayer and liturgy. Throughout the year all pupils had the opportunity to lead prayer. Class prayers reflect the curriculum for religious education, for example in Year 4/5 the learning about virtues, and focused on the virtue of love. Year 3 pupils were learning about creation and the pupils read scripture from Genesis. Pupils responded by writing a message on how to save God's world. All holy days of obligation and other significant days are recognised in the school's calendar. Pupils attend parish Mass on Wednesday or participate via live streaming. The school works well with the local parish. All observed collective worship had a clear message and purpose based on Catholic teachings and gospel values.

School leaders are committed to developing the prayer life of the school and have worked hard to establish routines. Children are supported by staff to plan worship collaboratively. The school website emphasises the importance of the liturgical year informing parents of celebrations for the parish Mass.

Pupils and staff talk enthusiastically about visits from Monsignor Joe and their links with his brother Fr Giovanni in Peru. They are keen to share their experience of Mass and the impact this has on their prayer life of the school. As a result, pupils have a secure understanding of the importance of Mass celebration in their Catholic faith.

School staff actively support sacramental preparation programmes, attending First Holy Communion celebrations. As one parent commented "staff are present in the parishes every weekend."

Leaders and governors monitor the effectiveness of collective worship and use the findings to plan future training for staff. Governors recognise the importance of prayer and liturgy when setting budgets and allocating resources. Together with staff and pupils they speak confidently of the Catholic life and mission of the school. The pride in being part of St Joseph's Catholic family shines through.

Information about the school

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| Full name of school | St Joseph's Catholic Junior School |
| School unique reference number (URN) | 401023 |
| School DfE Number (LAESTAB) | 6713316 |
| Full postal address of the school | St Joseph's Catholic Junior School, Nobel Avenue, Port Talbot, SA12 6YN |
| School phone number | 01639769743 |
| Headteacher | Mrs Caroline May |
| Chair of Governors/Trustees | Mrs Katrina Heery |
| School Website | https://st-josephs-catholic-junior-school2.j2bloggy.com |
| Trusteeship | Diocese of Menevia |
| Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable) | N/A |
| Phase | Junior |
| Type of school | Voluntary Aided School |
| Admissions policy | N/A |
| Age-range of pupils | 7 - 11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Date of last denominational inspection | 8-10 October 2012 |
| Previous denominational inspection grade | Good |

The inspection team

Catherine Power

Elizabeth Richards

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 |

End of Report