

# Our Lady & St Joseph Catholic Primary School

URN: 100264

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Archbishop of Westminster

21–22 May 2025

## Summary of key findings

### Overall effectiveness

The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school

#### 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

1

## 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

- Our Lady and St Joseph's is a very welcoming and highly inclusive school; all are valued and nurtured with the highest levels of care and respect.
- Leaders ensure pupils, including the most vulnerable, have opportunities to avail of high-quality enrichment activities which allow them to flourish and develop their God given qualities.
- Well planned prayer and liturgy are at the centre of school life, helping both staff and pupils to grow in their faith.
- The expertise and talents of leaders and governors are fully utilised to create a vibrant and joyful school.
- Pupils really appreciate the fact that their voice matters - the school listens to and acts upon their views.

## What the school needs to improve

- Improve the quality and consistency of teacher feedback to accelerate learning.
- Develop a retreat programme that provides opportunities for the spiritual and moral development of older pupils.
- Train pupils to evaluate prayer and liturgy so that they are able to identify how their leadership in this area can be enhanced.

## 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

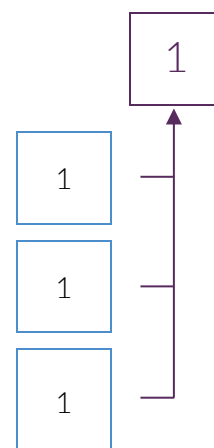
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

#### 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 demonstrate a real love for this inclusive school. Their motto, 'Shine with love, kindness and respect', is known and lived by all. Pupils display a joy for learning whilst behaviour in lessons, at worship and at play is exemplary. Their relationships with each other and staff show a clear understanding that they are all made in the image and likeness of God. This was reinforced by a parent saying, 'The rich tapestry of experience and the many opportunities to demonstrate Catholic values, but also to the extent that they become normal behaviour, is what makes the school truly special'. Pupils really appreciate the fact that their voice matters, they are listened to, and the school responds to their requests. A member of staff noted, 'Pupils are at the heart of creating new initiatives'. Their understanding of Catholic social teaching is impressive, and they take great pride in explaining that their awareness and respect for the biodiversity within the school is part of their care for God's creation. Pupil groups gladly embrace their personal responsibility to pursue the common good and serve those in need through fundraising events such as: Operation Elf which enables prisoners to provide presents for their children at Christmas; harvest liturgy donations to the London Catholic worker; Advent/Lent appeals to the Catholic Children's Society and world porridge day for Mary's Meals.

The lived sense of community can be felt by all stakeholders. A parent commented, 'It is one of the most nurturing, warm and caring environments I have ever had the pleasure of being in. I feel so privileged that my son attends school here'. There is a tangible sense of unity and support within the school and pupils are very conscious of this and one stated, 'The best thing is the teachers; kind, understanding and they make life better for me'. Parents are invited into school for a wide range of events and the pride they have for their children's achievements was plain to see during the cultural diversity day. Celebrations incorporated music, dance and national

costumes worn by pupils, staff and parents. The high standard of displays in classrooms, communal areas and corridors effectively witness to the school's Catholic identity and rich cultural diversity, with presentations of pupils' prayers written in many languages, a display of the holy family from across the world, the principles of Catholic social teaching and how they relate to the school. The chaplaincy provision is a central and celebrated aspect of the life and mission of the school. A staff member summed it up saying, 'The chaplaincy team has been so valuable in supporting the progression of our religious education practices and coming up with ideas to help the school flourish'. The provision for R(S)HE is strong and fulfils diocesan guidelines.

The development of the Catholic life and mission of the school is embraced by leaders and governors as a core responsibility. A staff member commented, 'The strong Catholic values upheld by our headteacher enable her to lead the school fairly and effectively'. The governors show a passion for the whole school community and have a clear understanding of the school's mission. They fulfil their role of challenge and support to great effect. Leaders work hard to ensure a flourishing partnership between the school and the local parish, thus ensuring all are supported in their faith journey. The parish priest is fully invested in the school, celebrating Mass for pupils and parents on a regular basis. Parents have a thorough understanding of the school's mission and are highly supportive of it. Leaders and governors are inspirational in their respect for the dignity of workers and there is a genuine commitment to both the physical and mental well-being of staff. Consequently, staff feel valued, appreciated and supported. A parent summed this up saying, 'I love how kindness and respect, ... the main rules of our faith, are explained, taught and lived by the whole school community'.

## Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

### Religious education key judgement grade

#### Pupil outcomes

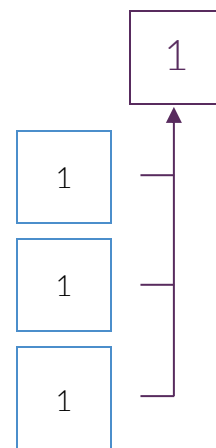
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

#### 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 are developing excellent knowledge in religious education, beginning in Reception where they confidently acted out the Ascension and Pentecost through role play. The youngest children receive a secure start to their school life in this happy, nurturing, well-resourced environment. Pupils are fully engaged in lessons and because of their positive attitude, make significant progress from their starting points. Religious literacy is outstanding, and pupils can speak confidently about what they have learnt. Pupils were able to ask incisive questions, indicating an innate curiosity and a desire to deepen their learning. This was perfectly exemplified during a Year 5 lesson on the Ten Commandments when a pupil queried whether Moses had already broken the sixth commandment earlier in his life. Attainment in religious education is very strong across the school and compares favourably with other core subjects. However, not all students have a clear understanding of how well they are doing and what they need to improve. More detailed feedback would further enhance progress.

Staff are enthusiastic about teaching religious education; it is given a high priority and this leads to strong attitudes and behaviour from pupils. A parent stated, 'the importance placed on religious education is one of the many reasons we are so happy with the education Our Lady and St Joseph's school provides'. Teachers are well supported by the religious education lead and the school also utilises diocesan resources effectively to continually develop the subject knowledge of teachers. Teachers' planning is linked to pupils' current assessment ensuring they consolidate the learning. However, more opportunities to challenge the pupils, particularly in Key Stage 2 are required to accelerate progress. Lessons are appropriately scaffolded to ensure all pupils can access the learning, including those with special educational needs. The celebration of achievement is evident in books and pupils are motivated to receive rewards for their efforts. However, praising pupils' work needs to be backed up with reasons so that pupils fully

understand what they have done well. The school provides a wealth of opportunities for pupils to express themselves through role play, dance, art and, in particular, music which is a growing strength of the school.

Leaders have planned the implementation of the new *Religious Education Directory* to ensure that any gaps and learning are addressed as pupils follow a higher level of sequential curriculum. Leaders and governors ensure religious education has parity with other core subjects in relation to resourcing and professional development. However, the timetabling of religious education in the afternoon for both lessons in some classes does not acknowledge the subject to be the 'core of the core'. The school needs to review the timetable for next year so that at least one lesson is taught in the morning in every class. Staff speak very highly of the ongoing support given by the religious education lead with one commenting, 'the religious education lead has been incredibly approachable, holds regular meetings and helps with book looks'. There is a strong sense of common purpose. Teachers who are early in their career commented on the support, professional development and the collegiate approach which allows them to flourish. Governors are committed to the development of the subject and take part in book looks and learning walks. Enrichment activities include visits to a local synagogue and mosque as part of their study of world faiths. A parent noted, 'I think the religious education is very inclusive of all faiths while being informative and respectful of Catholicism'. During Ramadan a member of staff spoke to pupils about her Muslim faith as well as the similarities between Lent and Ramadan.

## Collective worship

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

### Collective worship key judgement grade

#### Pupil outcomes

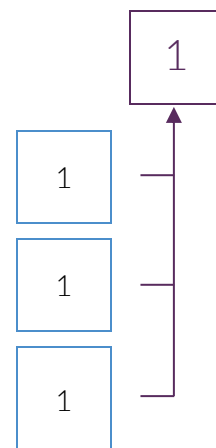
How well pupils participate in and respond to the school's collective worship

#### Provision

The quality of collective worship provided by the school

#### Leadership

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



Staff, including senior leaders, are inspiring role models of exemplary practice, as participants in and leaders of prayer and liturgy. Children from early years upwards are actively engaged in all aspects of worship, responding well and singing with enthusiasm. A Year 5 presentation included a hymn which pupils also signed to. Pupils spoke with confidence and were clearly used to leading collective worship. In a Year 3 lesson, pupil leaders asked the class what it feels like to be loved by God and pupils responded with a variety of answers including, 'When I feel overwhelmed with doing something, I pray to God and then I know everything will be OK and that I am loved'. However, to ensure all pupils are engaged from the start, the theme should be clearly displayed on the board. The chaplaincy team create their own slide presentations and are able to evaluate what went well but now need to reflect on what can be improved so that their leadership can be enhanced even further. The Caritas Ambassadors explained how their experience of prayer and liturgy shapes their views regarding Catholic social teaching. An example of this was a letter they wrote to their local MP regarding the dignity of workers and the need to buy more Fairtrade goods. The impact of this resulted in the school adopting a policy of buying only Fairtrade tea and coffee.

Prayer and liturgy are central to the life of the school. Moments of joy are celebrated, and times of sadness are recognised in the prayer life of the school, with the whole community, including parents and parishioners, coming together to offer prayers and support to those in need. The breadth and richness of the Catholic tradition are fully explored with the rosary recited weekly in the prayer garden during May and October and services of reconciliation during Advent and Lent along with the opportunity to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Prayers can be traditional, spontaneous or reflective, and opportunities are provided for silent prayer. Staff are highly skilled in helping pupils to plan and lead prayer and liturgy. Younger pupils develop an

understanding of biblical stories through the use of puppets while Godly Play equipment also enables staff to make scripture accessible to all. Older pupils have been trained to support younger classes with the celebration of the word. Music and drama are imaginatively used to enhance the experience for both younger and older pupils. The participation and support of parents is evident in their attendance at Masses and services both at school and church.

School leaders have outstanding knowledge of how to plan and deliver high quality worship. Staff training and monitoring around prayer and liturgy, led by the religious education lead, has enabled prayer to become an integral part of each class, led by the pupils. The chaplaincy team are excellent role models for younger pupils and wonderful ambassadors for the school. They plan and set homework tasks every half term which relate to the Catholic identity of the school, monitor classroom prayer tables and displays, and plan and deliver prayer and liturgy presentations. The variety of leadership opportunities within the school is outstanding. There are numerous occasions for pupils, staff and parents to attend Mass at school and church. It is not a tick box exercise at Our Lady and St Joseph's but rather a genuine commitment to celebrate the Eucharist in a range of different settings. A parent commented, 'I love that they go to church often and that prayers are actively part of their daily routine'. Leaders are highly effective in facilitating others to plan and lead prayer and liturgy. Consequently, pupils and staff provide worship which is engaging and meaningful. This provision would be further enhanced by the inclusion of retreats for older pupils.



## Information about the school

Full name of school	Our Lady & St Joseph Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	100264
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	2043371
Full postal address of the school	Our Lady & St Joseph Catholic Primary School, Buckingham Road, Hackney, London, N1 4JB
School phone number	02072547353
Headteacher	Aoife O'Grady
Chair of Governors	Mari-Anne Chiromo
School Website	<a href="http://www.olsjschool.net/">http://www.olsjschool.net/</a>
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	4-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	June 2018
Previous denominational inspection grade	Outstanding

## The inspection team

Dermot O'Neil  
Yvonne Rutherford

Lead  
Team

## Key to grade judgements

Grade	England	Wales
<b>1</b>	Outstanding	Excellent
<b>2</b>	Good	Good
<b>3</b>	Requires improvement	Adequate and requires improvement
<b>4</b>	Inadequate	Unsatisfactory and in need of urgent improvement