

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

URN: 125204

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Diocesan Administrator of Arundel & Brighton

11 June 2026 – 12 June 2026

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

Religious education (p.5)

The quality of curriculum religious education RE

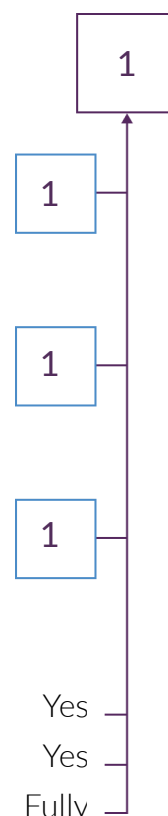
Collective worship (p.7)

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

The school is fully compliant with the general norms for religious education laid down by the Bishops' Conference

The school is fully compliant with any additional requirements of the diocesan bishop

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



What the school does well

- The pupils at St Joseph's are a product of the rich and meaningful Catholic education they have been given.
- There is a strong and committed leadership that secures a culture of welcome, care and improvement, alongside a dedicated and committed staff who are focused on the school's success.
- Prayer and liturgy are central and meaningful. Pupils are empowered to be involved in it.
- Teaching is of a high standard, and great care is taken in providing varied and meaningful experiences for the children.
- The extensive self-evaluation process carried out by all stakeholders continually drives improvement across the school.

What the school needs to improve

- To strengthen and embed wider leadership capacity in religious education so that expertise, accountability and responsibility are distributed more effectively and retained over time.
- To secure a broader and more sustainable staff capacity to lead prayer and liturgy, so that leadership of this area is informed, consistent and shared more widely 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

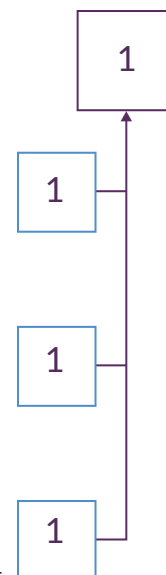
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

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



St Joseph's is an outstanding Catholic school where the mission is clearly understood and lived out by members of the community. Pupils are exceptionally happy, confident, and secure because they know they are deeply loved by God. They fully understand and embrace the school's distinctive Catholic identity and speak about it with conviction. They take pride in their school, demonstrating how the school's core values guide their daily interactions and personal choices. Pupils articulate a profound understanding of Catholic Social Teaching and explain why these principles matter, recognising that their actions are rooted in faith and God's call to serve others. Pupil-led initiatives, such as 'Fundraising Fridays', 'The Lily Squad', 'Playground Pals', and the 'Faith in Action Team', provide practical opportunities for pupils to live out Catholic Social Teaching, including through recent visits to a care home. As one pupil explained, 'We help other people because Jesus said, "love one another as I have loved you".' This deep understanding ensures that pupils are not passive participants in charitable giving, but take what they have learnt and use it in their daily lives. In this diverse and welcoming community, families are deeply valued and included. Pupils demonstrate exemplary respect for one another, recognising the unique dignity of everyone. The school's extensive chaplaincy programme is highly valued, with pupils eagerly assuming leadership roles that enrich their spiritual and personal development. Through these leadership opportunities, pupils make a significant contribution to promoting and sustaining the school's ethos and Gospel values.

Staff are deeply committed to the school's mission, bringing it to life daily through their example, care, and witness. Exceptional pastoral care is a notable strength; leaders use the school's size to great advantage, ensuring every pupil is known and valued as a unique

individual. The school environment is inspiring and meticulously maintained, featuring beautifully designed spaces for prayer and reflection that witness clearly to its Catholic identity. These prayer spaces provide frequent opportunities for spontaneous prayer, reflection and spiritual development. The curriculum for R(S)HE is carefully planned through the Ten:Ten programme. Leaders make thoughtful, responsive decisions to ensure provision is highly relevant to pupils' needs. Strategic planning for Catholic life and mission is exceptionally effective, enabling pupils across all year groups to engage deeply and meaningfully at their specific stage of development. Furthermore, pupils contribute actively to evaluating and developing the Catholic life and mission of the school through suggesting charities and helping to shape aspects of school life. As a result, pupils recognise the impact their decisions have on the whole school mission.

High levels of engagement with the diocese have fostered a strong, mutually beneficial relationship; leaders maximise diocesan training, and a leader at the school has presented at a diocesan conference. The school demonstrates a strong commitment to its partnership with the parish. Two newly appointed governors serve on parish teams, strengthening links between school and parish. Parental feedback is overwhelmingly positive. Parents praise the school's holistic guidance, with one parent commenting, 'It's a beautiful school with values and teachings above and beyond what I would expect... I could not be happier.' Staff feel equally supported within this collaborative environment. They understand the important role they play in promoting the Catholic life and mission of the school. Staff speak positively about the support they receive, with one member of staff commenting, 'This school is a real community... safe, supportive, loving, and fun.' The acting headteacher demonstrates a strong commitment to sustaining and developing the school's Catholic life and mission. Staff, parents and pupils recognise the positive contribution he makes to the school's Catholic life and mission.

Religious education

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

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

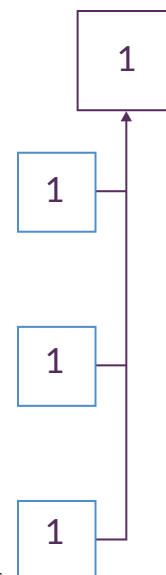
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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



The religious literacy of pupils at St Joseph's is a particular strength. Across all age groups, pupils relate current learning confidently to prior learning. Pupils recall Scripture with accuracy and understanding. They speak thoughtfully not only about the stories they encounter, but also about their deeper meaning, symbolism and the significance these have for their own lives. As one upper Key Stage 2 pupil explained, 'You can't buy spiritual riches – they are part of who you are and what you do. Unconditional love can't be broken.' All pupils, regardless of ability, are carefully included in lessons. Learning is planned thoughtfully to ensure that religious education is both accessible and appropriately challenging for all. Purple Challenges are used well to deepen pupils' thinking and extend their understanding. Behaviour for learning in all classes is exceptional. Pupils' engagement in lessons is exemplary; they are active, enthusiastic learners who are eager to contribute, participate and respond to the creative range of activities provided. Pupils speak warmly and enthusiastically about their love of learning in religious education. The quality of work in pupils' books is consistently high. Pupils attain strong standards and demonstrate secure understanding and a clear motivation to do well in religious education. They make strong progress over time, and pupils know what they need to do to improve their learning further.

Teachers have been provided with high-quality staff training, and this is reflected in lessons that are taught confidently and skilfully. As a result, learning engages pupils effectively and promotes secure understanding. Teachers demonstrate deep commitment to religious education and have high expectations for every pupil. Teachers use questioning effectively,

including the use of 'I wonder' questions, to provoke deeper reflection, encourage critical thinking, and help pupils make links with prior learning. This contributes well to pupils' growing confidence and secure understanding in religious education. The school is following diocesan guidance on assessment and leaders have a secure understanding of pupils' attainment and next steps. Religious education is well resourced, and pupils benefit directly from the resources provided. Teachers think carefully about the use of support structures, such as Widgeit symbols, and deploy teaching assistants effectively so that all pupils are able to engage fully in learning. Religious education lessons are purposeful and support pupils' active engagement in learning. Pupils are given a variety of ways to record and express their ideas and understanding. For example, pupils recorded presentations on the impact of St Francis' teachings, demonstrating both secure knowledge and thoughtful reflection.

Religious education benefits from strong and effective leadership. The religious education leader is deeply committed to ensuring that religious education remains at the heart of St Joseph's School. She has led this work skilfully, bringing staff with her so that they fully understand the important role they play in delivering high-quality religious education. Governors are fully committed to ensuring that religious education has parity with other core subjects. They are well informed about the school's strategic priorities for religious education and are able to offer both support and appropriate challenge with confidence. Leaders continually self-evaluate in order to improve. They are highly knowledgeable about where the school is on its journey in religious education, what is working well, and what the next steps for development should be. This ensures the school's strategic planning for improvement is clear, purposeful, and highly effective. As a one form entry school, leadership responsibilities are shared among a relatively small number of staff. Leaders recognise the importance of continuing to develop leadership capacity within religious education to support long-term sustainably.

Collective worship

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

Collective worship key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

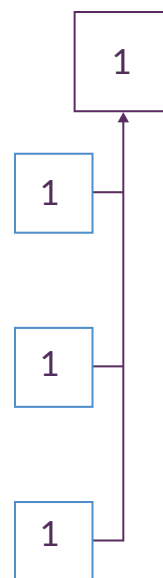
How well pupils participate in and respond to the school's collective worship

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



The experiences of prayer and liturgy provided by the school engage pupils deeply and lead them to full, active and conscious participation. Prayer and liturgy are planned carefully and are securely embedded within the life of the school. Pupils confidently share their own thoughts and prayers, using the 'spiritual sharing' symbol to indicate when they wish to contribute. A lower Key Stage 2 pupil reflected on the parable of the wise and foolish builder by asking, 'I wonder what the sand is in our lives?' Prayer and liturgy are frequently planned collaboratively are planned by pupils and adults, including Passion Plays and the Harvest Service. Across the school, pupils are trusted to undertake age-appropriate ministries, which enrich the prayer life of the whole school community. Pupils view times of prayer and liturgy as sacred and significant. Pupils influence how the prayer life of the school develops. For example, pupils' enthusiasm for liturgical dance has enabled this to become a regular and valued feature of whole school liturgies. Through self-evaluation, pupils contribute to the ongoing development of the prayer life of the school, helping to ensure that it responds meaningfully to their spiritual needs.

Scripture lies at the heart of prayer and liturgy. The careful choice of resources helps pupils to understand the significance of the Word of God and reinforces the reverence with which these moments are approached. For example, EYFS pupils confidently prepare their prayer space and hold the Bible aloft to signify its importance. The skill and commitment of staff have enabled pupils not only to know traditional prayers, but also to share their own prayer intentions confidently with others. This contributes to a prayer life that is both meaningful and inclusive. Creative planning enables pupils to engage deeply with Scripture; for example,

in a Key Stage 1 session, resources chosen for a retelling enabled pupils to understand the message of the Good Samaritan and apply it to their own lives, with one pupil commenting 'Jesus wants us to look after everyone, not just our friends.' The school makes very effective use of space to support prayer and reflection. Prayer spaces throughout the school support pupils' prayer and reflection effectively. Pupils are given ownership of these spaces, which makes them both meaningful and relevant. They are especially proud of their prayer garden. Families value the relationship between school and parish. The school continues to seek opportunities to strengthen its partnership with the parish. Parents feel that their pupils are given firm foundations to support their faith journey.

The policy for prayer and liturgy is securely embedded, clearly understood and consistently implemented by staff. The leader for prayer and liturgy has skilfully established high standards and clear expectations, resulting in high-quality experiences of prayer and liturgy from which pupils benefit greatly. As a result, staff feel confident in leading prayer and liturgy in ways that enable pupils to participate actively in ministries, both in class and across the whole school. The school's annual plan of provision for prayer and liturgy is varied and carefully structured to ensure that significant events are celebrated well. The school makes skilful use of its limited space to provide consistently high-quality and meaningful experiences for pupils. Times of prayer are purposeful and authentic, enabling pupils to reflect deeply on what they have heard and encouraging them to respond through their actions. The leader for prayer and liturgy evaluates provision carefully and continually seeks ways to improve it further. Pupil voice is used effectively to understand the impact of prayer and liturgy on pupils and to inform future development. As a result, developments in prayer and liturgy are meaningful and responsive to the pupils' needs.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Joseph's Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	125204
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	936
Full postal address of the school	Norfolk Road, Dorking, RH4 3JA
School phone number	01306 883934
Headteacher or Head of School	Sam Crome
Chair of Governors	Leslie Maruziva
School Website	www.stjosephsschooldorking.co.uk
Trusteeship	Diocesan
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	04 June 2019
Previous denominational inspection grade	Outstanding

The Inspection Team

Sarah Norville

Lead

Rosalyn Lloyd

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