CATHOLIC SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

THE NATIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE INSPECTION OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS, COLLEGES AND ACADEMIES

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

URN: 141580

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Archbishop of Southwark

14 October 2026 – 15 October 2026

Summary of key findings

Overall effectiveness — 2

The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school

Catholic life and mission (p.3) — 1

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) — 1

The quality of curriculum religious education

Collective worship (p.7) — 2

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	Yes
The school is fully compliant with diocesan directives	Yes
The school has responded to the areas for improvement from the last inspection	Fully

This Catholic Schools Inspectorate inspection was carried out under canons 804 & 806 of the code of canon law. For maintained schools and academies in England it fulfils the statutory requirements of s.48 of the Education Act 2005. For maintained schools and academies in Wales it fulfils the statutory requirements of s.50 of the Education Act 2005.

What the school does well

- The wellbeing of all in the school community is exceptional.
- Catholic social teaching is a huge strength impacting the whole of the curriculum meaning the curriculum centres on the teaching of Christ.
- Very high expectations of behaviour and attitudes to learning.
- St Joseph's has a very strong Local Governing Committee who challenge and support the leadership team.
- St Joseph's is a very inclusive community that welcomes all, especially the most vulnerable.

What the school needs to improve

- Cascade the excellent practice involving pupils in Year 6 in the planning, preparation, and leadership of prayer and liturgy so that all pupils can create creative and well-constructed experiences of prayer and liturgy.
- Ensure marking and assessment is consistent so that pupils know where they are and how to improve.
- Build on the partnership between the school and the parish so that it becomes central to the mission of 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

1

Pupil outcomes

1

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

Provision

1

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

Leadership

1

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

St Joseph's is visibly a Catholic school with a mission which pupils know and understand. Pupils clearly express their feelings of being valued and the impact of the Catholic life is exemplified by a pupil stating that it helps one build 'a strong relationship with God' while another commented, 'We try to follow his footsteps.' This demonstrates pupils' understanding of, and commitment to, following the teachings of Jesus. Catholic social teaching is a real strength. Pupils speak with clarity about Catholic social teaching and are clear that it is how 'we put faith into action.' Pupils take a leading role in putting its principles into practice, for example visiting the local care home, speaking and playing games with the residents. They actively raise funds for charities such as CAFOD and collect clothes for a local clothes bank. Pupils demonstrate respect for those of other faiths and none, and understand the importance of putting the school's values into practice. The Mini Vinnies are a real asset to the school. A parent stated, 'The Mini Vinnies are a real success for the school, and their work is being translated into their secondary schools.'

The school mission statement, an acrostic using 'St Joseph', is a clear and inspiring reflection of the Church's mission for education. It is well known and the vast majority of staff agree it is witnessed throughout the community. Images and displays around the school clearly demonstrate its Catholic identity. There is a lived sense of community, evident in the quality of the relationships between pupils and staff and among pupils themselves. New staff describe the school as a 'very welcoming community' where they feel supported and nurtured, and speak highly of their induction programme into Catholic education. Staff are positive role models for pupils and the love and care they show for the pupils bears witness to the school's

Catholic life and mission. Most parents agree, one of whom stated, the moral and values of Catholic life are, 'Along with what I want for my child.' Catholic social teaching is mapped across all the curriculum and is evident around the school. Pastoral care is a real strength as exemplified by the Hub; a place where pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive the care and support they need. The Ten:Ten programme is used to deliver relationships, sex, and health education and is in line with Church teaching and statutory guidance.

Leaders and Governors articulate clearly the Church's mission for education and are enthusiastic in exercising their duty as guardians of the Catholic life and mission of St Joseph's. Christ is at the heart of this school, and governors demonstrate a clear understanding of its strengths and areas of development. Minutes show regular visits are undertaken, with reports shared at governor meetings, outcomes of which then inform strategic planning. Governors maintain strong links with the local parish, including through their service as readers and Eucharistic ministers. Most parents recognise the school's commitment to working in partnership with the parish. As one parent commented, 'The school works hard to engage the parish in school. Governors recognise, however, that there is a need to develop an even closer relationship. There is a clear commitment to the physical and mental wellbeing of staff. Governors speak with school staff and feedback from surveys is considered at governor meetings. As a result, well-being activities and formation sessions are provided by the trust. Governors are very supportive of Catholic social teaching, meeting with pupils to explore their work on this. A link governor to professional development provides feedback from meetings with staff, which informs strategic planning.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

1

Pupil outcomes

1

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

Provision

2

The quality of teaching, learning, and assessment in religious education

Leadership

1

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for religious education

Pupils demonstrate excellent knowledge and understanding of the learning required by the *Religious Education Directory*. They describe the world as 'our common home where everyone lives' and understand the message in Laudato Si' is that we 'should take care of our world.' They also demonstrate an understanding of the beliefs and practices of other faiths, for example, explaining the significance of the turban in Sikhism. Pupils draw on their knowledge of scripture to support their explanations and demonstrate their developing religious literacy. A parent commented, 'Their awareness of the Bible is amazing.' Pupils make consistently good progress, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Three-year trend data shows attainment in religious education is on a par with that of other core subjects. Pupils are religiously literate, engaged and confident. They can reflect spiritually and theologically and show how their learning impacts upon demands of commitment in everyday life. A pupil stated, 'You get to talk about God and how to care for the poor.' Pupils ask deep questions about their learning and demonstrate some independence, producing work of a high quality with good presentation. Pupils are well motivated, engaged in their lessons and really do enjoy their learning. One pupil stated, 'I love it!' As a result, behaviour in lessons is exemplary. However, pupils are not clear about targets in religious education.

The quality of teaching is consistently good, with some outstanding practice. Most teachers have a high level of subject knowledge and demonstrate a deep commitment to religious education. Teachers use a range of approaches, with effective questioning helping pupils deepen their understanding and make progress. For example, pupils in Year 3 created an

animal to illustrate an aspect of Catholic social teaching and gave a written explanation of their creation. Staff recognise the impact religious education has on the moral and spiritual development of pupils, giving them opportunities to reflect on how their learning influences the way they respond to the world. In learning about caring for God's world, a pupil remarked, 'Our amazing God has an amazing effect on our lives.' Teachers plan and use good-quality resources to enhance learning. For example, when exploring the theme of 'Our Common Home,' a teacher created an image of the world to illustrate the damage caused by rubbish, and how it can be addressed , leading to excellent outcomes for the pupils. Other adults are used very effectively to optimise learning for all pupils especially the most vulnerable. Work in books is of a high-quality and is age appropriate. However, marking is inconsistent, and opportunities to deepen their learning are not always provided.

Leaders and governors ensure that the school curriculum for religious education is a faithful expression of the *Religious Education Directory* using the *Lighting the Path* scheme which is embedded in early years and Key Stage 1 and has been introduced at Key Stage 2. The curriculum is carefully planned and sequenced to support pupils' learning and deepen their understanding. Leaders ensure that provision takes account of pupils' needs across each key stage. Monitoring is carried out through regular visits, including learning walks and lesson observations. Governor meeting minutes demonstrate that they scrutinise and challenge information about the subject. They also ensure that practitioners have access to high-quality professional development in both subject knowledge and pedagogical approaches. Religious education has parity with other core subjects in terms of resourcing and budget, although timetabling currently reflects Religious education lessons timetabled predominantly in the afternoon. The new subject leader has made a very positive impact upon pupils. She has a dynamic, inspiring vision for teaching and learning, inclusive of all pupils, particularly the most vulnerable. She communicates this vision through professional development, sharing good practice and monitoring. Pupils describe enrichment opportunities linked to their learning, including visits to a Sikh temple and opportunities to hear pupils of other faiths share their beliefs. Self-evaluation is informed through thorough monitoring, analysis and self-challenge to identify areas for improvement.

Collective worship

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

Collective worship key judgement grade

2

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

1

Pupils at St Joseph's respond well to prayer and liturgy and participate reverentially, such as when praying the rosary. Liturgical music includes hymns such as *Give me Joy* and *Servant King*. Pupils contribute to planning with teachers, although some say the teachers direct and make choices such as the choice of hymn. Year 6 pupils demonstrate their ability to plan, organise and lead prayer and liturgy independently, taking responsibility when the teacher hands the process over to them. This was evident in the Harvest Assembly, where pupils participate enthusiastically, reflect on the theme of generosity and contribute confidently to the singing. However, this level of pupil responsibility is not yet evident consistently across the school. Pupils undertake ministries willingly such as altar servers and older pupils are readers. Pupils complete prayer and liturgy evaluation forms. They confidently explain how these experiences influence their behaviour in school and the wider world. For example, pupils created prayers relating to the CAFOD animals. Pupils understand a variety of ways of prayer, giving examples of traditional prayers such as the rosary and the sign of the cross, as well as spontaneous prayer. One pupil explained, 'We pray our own prayers about Mary, Jesus and God.'

Prayer and liturgy are central to life of the school, forming part of the daily routine throughout the day. Parents recognise the impact of prayer and liturgy on family life. One parent stated, 'It still amazes me how my child will come home and tell me the prayers.' Another commented, 'They bring their prayer habits home.' Whilst some parents expressed concern that weekly prayers are no longer sent home, they are invited to contribute to future developments through questionnaires. Prayer spaces in classrooms are well-designed and

cared for and reflect the liturgical season, but pupils do not yet take sufficient ownership of them. Outdoor prayer spaces include a beautiful place for the Stations of the Cross, which the pupils use for their own reflections, and a prayer garden. The school celebrates key liturgical dates, such as the feast of its patron saint, St Joseph. Mass is celebrated in the Church or school, followed by activities which help pupils learn about St Joseph. Over half of parents agree that they are invited to participate in prayer and liturgy. This indicates that parental participation is not yet experienced consistently by all families.

The school's policy on prayer and liturgy is carefully formulated, regularly reviewed and fit for purpose. It is accessible to relevant staff, who use it consistently as a reference point when preparing prayer and liturgy. Leaders, including governors, plan the school calendar to include holy days of obligation, the patronal feast of St Joseph and events such as the Crowning of Our Lady. Opportunities are made available to celebrate the Eucharist; the Sacrament of Reconciliation is offered during Advent and Lent, as well as at other times of the year. The link governor for staff professional development reports to the local governing committee on staff formation, with follow-up demonstrating the high priority given to the liturgical formation of all staff. Professional development draws on both diocesan and Trust resources, and staff can request professional development in specific areas such as prayer. Governors give a high priority to prayer and liturgy within school planning and it is prioritised when setting budgets and allocating resources, such as time, staffing and facilities. The altar in the hall is very well cared for providing a focal point for prayer and liturgy. Leaders, including governors, regularly review the quality and impact of prayer and liturgy through learning walks, discussions with pupils and summaries of pupil evaluations. These findings inform the school's cycle of self-evaluation and planned improvements.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Joseph's Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	141580
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	8865222
Full postal address of the school	Springhead Road, Northfleet, DA11 9QZ
School phone number	01474 533515
Headteacher or Head of School	Mrs L Owen, Mrs M Sparkes
Chair of Governors	Abbie Omole
School Website	www.st-josephs-northfleet.kent.sch.uk
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	Kent Catholic Schools' Partnership
Phase	Primary
Type of school	Academy
Admissions policy	Non Selective
Age-range of pupils	5 - 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	15 January 2020
Previous denominational inspection grade	Outstanding

The Inspection Team

Stephen Christopher Horsman	Lead
Lisa Maria D'Agostini	

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