



## St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

URN: 142158

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Bishop of Hallam

25 February 2026 – 26 February 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

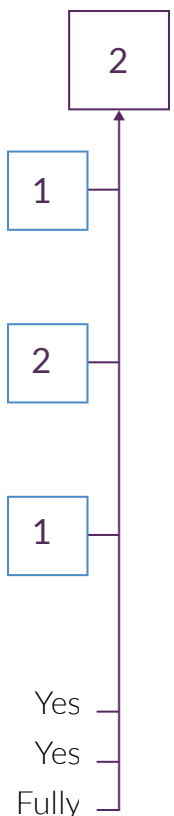
#### Collective worship (p.7)

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

- Leaders and governors work in strong partnership to ensure that Catholic life and mission remain central to the school, resulting in pupils who leave St Joseph's as well-rounded individuals equipped to contribute positively to society.
- Pupils are happy, confident, and sing with great joy. They are proud of their school and always treat others with kindness and respect.
- Teachers and support staff have a deep commitment to the school's mission, living it out authentically through their practice and relationships, which creates a community firmly rooted in Gospel values.
- The school fosters an inclusive community where every pupil is equally valued, treated with dignity, and guided to develop academically, spiritually, and morally so that all flourish as unique children of God.
- The Early Years provides children with an excellent foundation in their understanding and knowledge of religious education and prayer and liturgy.

## What the school needs to improve

- Enable pupils to confidently articulate how Catholic social teaching shapes their actions, using scripture to explain and justify their choices.
- Provide pupils with regular, structured opportunities to orally explain what they know and remember during lessons, strengthening teachers' ongoing assessment of progress.
- Develop pupils' confidence and ability to engage in a wide range of creative prayer forms as they progress through 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

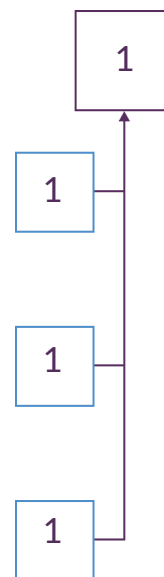
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

#### 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 a happy school where pupils are confident and secure, knowing they are unique and created in the image and likeness of God. The mission motto, 'Be the best they can be', is lived daily by all members of the community. Pupils can articulate what this means in practice, describing themselves as a family following St Joseph's example of having faith and trust in God even in challenging moments. One pupil linked this to the gospel story of the disciples casting their nets out again despite earlier failure. Relationships across school are characterised by warmth, trust, and mutual respect. Pupils feel valued, nurtured and supported by the adults who accompany them each day. As a result, pupils recognise the dignity of every person and celebrate the belief that we are all created equal. Pupils respond actively to Catholic social teaching showing a commitment to the common good. While they engage wholeheartedly in charitable initiatives and practical actions such as litter picking, they are not yet consistently able to articulate how Christ's teachings and scripture underpin the choices they make. Pupils are proud to belong to the Mini Vinnies and Prayer Chaplains, recognising their responsibility as positive role models.

St Joseph's lives out its mission to 'welcome one another just as Christ has welcomed you', a commitment that parents consistently recognise and value in the daily life of the school. Staff fully embrace the mission, speaking of feeling valued, supported, and encouraged through all of life's experiences. Pastoral care is a significant strength; this is a school that knows its families well. As one member of staff noted, the school is 'at the heart of the community' and

has developed a strong reputation for supporting the most vulnerable and meeting a wide range of needs. Families strongly affirm this view and recognise the inclusiveness of the community. The school environment clearly reflects its Catholic identity. Catholic life is further enriched by the dedicated involvement of the parish priest who is a warmly welcomed and valued presence in the school. The chapel and well-maintained grounds offer calm, sacred spaces for reflection, the hall displays and classroom prayer tables are of a high standard. Pupil-led prayer focuses are used meaningfully. Leadership of relationships, sex and health education is perceptive to pupils' needs and meets diocesan expectations through *Life to the Full*. Pupils engage positively with the St Francis Catholic Multi-Academy Trust's age-appropriate books, which draw effectively on 10:10 resources.

Governors and leaders are united in a clear and ambitious vision for St Joseph's. Governors' deeply rooted connection to the school strengthens their strategic oversight and ensures decisions are firmly grounded in the school's Catholic identity. Leadership is further enriched by the effective support and guidance offered by the diocese and by the St Francis Trust. Leaders engage fully in the professional development provided and actively contribute by sharing effective practice with other schools. This outward-facing approach enhances the quality of provision within St Joseph's. The parish priest's active presence strengthens the relationship between parish and school so that, as he reflects, both communities genuinely "walk together in faith." This mutually supportive partnership ensures that parishioners, pupils and staff benefit from shared worship and a strong sense of belonging to one faith family. The close connection with the parish St Vincent de Paul Society (SVP) provides pupils with a lived example of faith in action. Engagement with parents is highly effective. Regular newsletters, class Dojo communication, and invites to prayer and liturgy ensure families feel well-informed, welcomed and valued as partners in their children's formation. New staff benefit from a thorough and well-structured induction, enabling them to understand and confidently uphold the school's ethos.

## 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

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

1

2

The school is implementing the new *Religious Education Directory* through the Magister resources, ensuring that pupils make good progress in their religious learning as they move through the school. Pupils with additional needs are well supported by skilled teaching assistants, allowing them to access learning confidently. Children in the early years receive a strong foundation in religious education, developing early religious literacy through high-quality interactions, story and practical experiences. Nursery pupils illustrate this beautifully through the symbolic act of burying the Alleluia until Easter, showing that even the youngest children are beginning to grasp the rhythms and meaning of the liturgical year. Parents affirm the view that pupils enjoy religious education. Across the school, pupils work with pride and interest on a variety of creative and written tasks. Teaching is consistent across the school and enables pupils to make secure progress; however, an over-reliance on worksheets, particularly for older pupils, can limit independence, creativity and the depth of challenge. Most pupils can recall previous learning, but they do not have sufficient regular opportunities in lessons to orally demonstrate what they know and remember, enabling them to deepen their religious vocabulary and secure their understanding of scriptural links. Behaviour for learning is good.

Teaching in religious education is consistently good, with examples of highly effective practice evident across the school. This is underpinned by the knowledgeable and purposeful leadership of the subject lead. Her strategic preparation for the introduction of the new

curriculum has ensured that staff are well supported and confident in its delivery. Planning is consistent and rooted in the Magister materials, giving pupils a secure and coherent learning journey which is linked to the wider curriculum. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution, supporting pupils in an unobtrusive and effective way. Pupils' effort is celebrated, and they engage positively with a wide range of creative tasks that support their enjoyment of religious education. Parents recognise the strong impact of this teaching, noting that the school promotes respect, good moral judgement and an appreciation of other faiths. Some activities are overly structured and can unintentionally limit pupils' creativity or reduce opportunities for them to demonstrate independently what they know and remember, particularly when making precise and meaningful connections between scripture, Church teaching and daily life. Regular opportunities for pupils to articulate their thinking orally during lessons, supporting teachers in assessing progress and helping pupils embed key concepts more securely, are not fully utilised.

Leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for religious education with clarity, purpose and a deeply shared sense of mission. The headteacher and subject leader form an exceptionally strong partnership, modelling a visible commitment to pupils, families and the wider school community which is acknowledged by governors and parents. Their high expectations are reflected in pupils' progress and in the systems used to monitor teaching, learning and assessment. Governors are well informed through regular reporting and frequent visits to school, enabling them to offer robust challenges and highly effective support. They share leaders' vision wholeheartedly and ensure that religious education maintains full parity with other core subjects in curriculum time, resourcing and communication with parents. Leaders have designed a carefully sequenced curriculum that reflects the demands of the *Religious Education Directory* while making meaningful links with the wider curriculum. They place a strong emphasis on professional development, ensuring that all staff access high-quality training, drawing on diocesan and trust expertise as well as school-based strengths. Staff value this investment, and its impact is evident in pupils' confidence, engagement and outcomes. The leadership team has established excellent links with the parish and wider community, enriching pupils' lived experience of faith.

## Collective worship

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

### Collective worship key judgement grade

#### Pupil outcomes

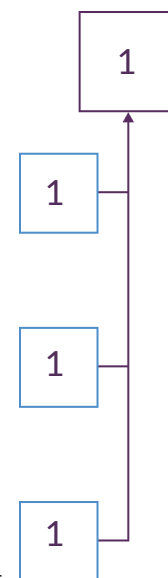
How well pupils participate in and respond to the school's collective worship

#### 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



Pupils speak with genuine warmth and enthusiasm about collective worship. During the whole school worship led by Year 5, pupils entered with deep reverence, listened attentively and engaged fully, with their joyful singing enriching the prayerful atmosphere. Pupils understand that prayer is a conversation with God and can articulate its different purposes, including praise, thanksgiving, forgiveness and intercession. They engage meaningfully in moments of silent reflection, using these opportunities to deepen their relationship with God and to consider how faith shapes their daily lives. Pupils demonstrate a secure understanding of the liturgical year and, in age-appropriate ways, explain the different forms of prayer associated with it, such as praying the rosary in May and October and the 'eternal rest' in November. As pupils progress through the school, they take increasing responsibility for planning, leading and evaluating prayer and liturgy. By upper Key Stage 2, pupils are very confident and secure in their understanding of the four-part structure of celebration of the word. Although prayer journals have been introduced, pupils have a restricted range of spiritual and contemplative prayer experiences.

Prayer is central to the life of the school and is embedded in its daily rhythm. Pupils are proud to be Prayer Chaplains. Voluntary prayer opportunities, led by them in the school chapel during breaktimes and Wednesday lunchtimes, further deepen the school's prayer life and develop confident pupil leadership. Staff are inspiring models of prayerful practice, and their commitment nurtures a culture where prayer is valued and embraced. The school makes

effective use of its environment to support worship, with prayer tables, reflective corridors, the chapel and the prayer garden providing peaceful spaces for spiritual growth. The strong partnership between the Mini Vinnies and the parish SVP significantly deepens the school's relationship with the parish community. Parents speak highly of the way this collaboration is lived out through class Masses, whole-school liturgies and shared acts of service, all of which nurture a vibrant, faith-filled community rooted in Gospel witness. The introduction of high-quality resources, many designed by the religious education lead such as prayer boxes, travelling cribs, Lent bags and school prayer books, has greatly enriched prayer both in school and at home. Families are especially eager to receive these resources, recognising the way they support and strengthen prayerful family life.

Leaders and governors articulate a clear, shared vision for the ongoing development of prayer and liturgy, ensuring it remains central to the life of the school. The prayer and liturgy policy is thoughtfully constructed and fully understood by staff, who implement it with confidence and reverence. Governors monitor its implementation and impact through focused visits. Through the example of the strong personal faith of leaders, staff recognise the importance of nurturing their own spirituality. The Friday morning staff prayers have become a cherished moment of unity, and reflection. As one staff member shared, 'it grounds her', capturing the impact these opportunities have on staff wellbeing and spiritual formation. This commitment to personal formation strengthens the quality of collective worship offered to pupils and deepens the school's shared spiritual identity. Leaders work closely with the parish priest to plan the liturgical calendar, ensuring that the seasons of the Church's year are celebrated meaningfully and marked with appropriate opportunities for prayer, reflection and sacramental life. Pupils benefit from regular opportunities for reconciliation and shared parish celebrations nurture a lived experience of faith and ensure that pupils see themselves as valued members of a vibrant worshipping community

## Information about the school

Full name of school	St Joseph's Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	142158
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	8913710
Full postal address of the school	Babworth Road, Retford, DN22 7BP
School phone number	01777 702850
Headteacher or Head of School	Mr Richard Hilton
Chair of Governors	Mrs Elizabeth Meacher
School Website	<a href="http://www.st-josephs.notts.sch.uk">www.st-josephs.notts.sch.uk</a>
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	St Francis CMAT
Phase	Primary
Type of school	Academy
Admissions policy	Non Selective
Age-range of pupils	3 - 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	14 February 2019
Previous denominational inspection grade	Outstanding

## The Inspection Team

Angela Mary Phillips Lead

Tracy Lane

## 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