



St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

URN: 401419

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Archbishop of Cardiff-Menevia

07 May 2026 – 08 May 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

2

2

2

2

Yes

Yes

Fully

What the school does well

- St Joseph's is a welcoming and inclusive school with a strong Catholic ethos; pupils feel valued and thrive.
- The commitment to Catholic education at St Joseph's shown by the head teacher, governors, and all staff is commendable, and leaders' sustained work has made significant improvements.
- Relationships and sexuality education (RSE) is very well taught and enriches the curriculum provision for pupils.
- Progress has been made in worship and is continuing to develop.
- Religious education (RE) teaching uses varied strategies so that pupils learn effectively.

What the school needs to improve

- Strengthen the quality, consistency, and prayerfulness of pupil-led worship across the school.
- Develop assessment further so that it enables the school to evaluate the quality of RE more effectively.
- Use teacher feedback to deepen pupils' understanding in RE.

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

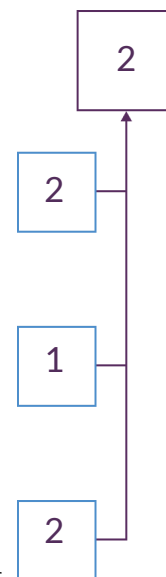
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

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 understand and value the school's mission: 'With Christ at the centre, we are a happy, safe and caring school. As a family, we follow the example of Jesus, to love one another as he loved us.' This is well known and central to all aspects of school life. The pupil-produced school magazine includes an RE page on the mission statement, virtues, and Mass times, promoting the school's life and mission. Mini Vinnies meet every Friday afternoon and are at the start of their journey. They are enthusiastic and full of ideas, and would benefit from greater autonomy to develop the school's mission further and identify opportunities to support those in need locally, nationally, and globally. Pupils already support many charities; examples include the sponsorship of children at an orphanage at the Premananda Centre in India and a 'Wear Yellow for Hospice of the Valleys' day. They also seek opportunities to serve others, for example, through the choir singing at the annual Christmas Mass (with other schools in the cluster) and at a local residential home for the elderly on St David's Day. Pupils spoke positively about developing a school prayer and song to strengthen the identity of St Joseph's further. Pupils value the parish priest's support for the school.

The mission statement is a deeply embedded and inspiring expression of the Church's mission in Education, shaping every aspect of school life. It influences the attitudes, relationships, and decision-making of pupils and staff. Pupils articulate the school's mission with confidence. Responses from parent/carer questionnaires were overwhelmingly positive; for example: 'The school helps deepen understanding of faith and values and supports spiritual growth in a positive and meaningful way.' Staff promote the mission consistently, and pupils reference it when planning collective class worship. This helps children understand that

Christ is at the heart of the school and their lives. Provision for well-being is a clear strength, underpinned by a strong sense of community and a culture of welcome. This was recognised in the Estyn inspection, which described St Joseph's as 'a welcoming school where staff place pupils' well-being at the heart of everything they do'. Families are welcomed through events such as Macmillan coffee mornings and picnic sessions. The culture of welcome extends to all, including those from other cultures and beliefs. Clear policies ensure high-quality pastoral care, supported by nurture provision and effective links with outside agencies. Staff demonstrate a strong commitment to the most vulnerable; for example, they work with the 'Jesus Cares' project in Newport to provide food parcels. The school environment is a strong witness to its identity and mission. Displays celebrate Catholic character and support pupils' understanding, including a display for Pope Leo and a model of the Vatican. Bible quotes and religious images, such as portraits of St Joseph, are visible throughout the school. Prayer areas are central to spiritual life, and prayer chairs, in particular, provide meaningful spaces for personal response, reflection, and encounter with God. Pupils use these spaces naturally and confidently, strengthening the prayerful ethos of the school. Provision for relationships and sexuality education (RSE) is excellent. The RSE co-ordinator has completed curriculum mapping, and strong evidence is maintained through class portfolios. The school has been asked to present this as best practice by the diocese.

Leaders and governors are deeply committed to the Church's mission in education and to the Catholic life of the school. They work closely with the diocese to promote the Archbishop's vision. Governors monitor and evaluate Catholic life and mission effectively; the chair and link governor for religion work closely with leaders and make a significant contribution. The head teacher is supported by staff and the Catholic life governors' committee, which meets regularly with the RE lead, including updates on the Catholic self-evaluation document (CSED). Strong home-school-parish links, and close collaboration with the local parish priest, further support this work. The parish priest is ambitious for the future of the school. Leaders implement diocesan policies and training strategically, and prioritise staff well-being through an annual 'Health and Wellbeing' day and weekly confidential drop-ins. As a result, staff report feeling valued; they understand their role in Catholic life, model the school's ethos, and engage in formation. The RE team attends diocesan training and has been asked to share best practice in RSE.

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

2

2

Pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, are supported well by teachers and other adults and make good progress over time. Nearly all pupils have positive attitudes and engage well in RE; their behaviour supports learning and pupils apply themselves confidently to tasks. In the best lessons observed, pupils worked independently, took initiative and built on prior learning to deepen their understanding. The creative approach supports learning and helps pupils express their understanding in different ways. For example, Year 5 and 6 pupils visited the teacher-made Holy Spirit art gallery in the school hall, expressing and explaining a preference for an artist, listening to different points of view, and giving their own reasons for their preferences. Younger children took part in religious-themed continuous provision that fostered independence and curiosity. Pupils speak confidently about their learning; for example, in Year 1 and 2 pupils role-played Pentecost and produced artwork linked to Pentecost independently. Scrutiny of pupils' work indicates good progress from starting points and shows that pupils are developing appropriate religious vocabulary and understanding for their age. Monitoring and work scrutiny indicate that standards in RE are comparable with literacy. Teachers' questioning supports pupils to think more deeply; however, feedback is not yet consistently sharp enough to help pupils understand how well they are doing and what they need to do next.

The quality of teaching, learning, and assessment in RE is good and supports pupils to learn well over time. Teachers demonstrate secure subject knowledge, which they communicate clearly and accurately. Planning is informed by the Magister scheme and the *Religious*

Education Directory, ensuring appropriate coverage and progression across split-age classes, with additional resources used where needed. The school has developed an assessment tracker, which is being refined as new procedures are implemented. This provides a sound basis for identifying progress and next steps, but will need further work to be more robust. Work scrutiny shows that pupils present their learning in a range of ways and that tasks support engagement and understanding; for example, portfolios in younger classes include art, IT, and cookery activities linked to RE themes. In Years 1 and 2, the outdoor classroom, role play, and construction activities (such as making the room for the apostles during Pentecost) support a creative curriculum that enables pupils to access learning. In lessons observed, teachers and support staff used effective questioning and made links to prior knowledge. Resources, including the contribution of other adults, are used well to support learning and inclusion; however, leaders should ensure that feedback and assessment information are used consistently to help pupils improve their work and deepen understanding.

Leaders and governors ensure that the RE curriculum meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference in every aspect and that RE has an appropriate profile within the life of the school. The head teacher and deputy head teacher promote RE as a key contributor to pupils' moral and spiritual development. The subject leader, senior leaders, and link governor monitor teaching and pupils' work to check consistency, standards, and the equitable application of policies. Staff questionnaires indicate that the subject leader provides effective guidance and professional development to strengthen subject knowledge and practice, supported by diocesan training. Leaders ensure that learning experiences are engaging and that the creative approach supports pupils to access and express their learning. Leaders and governors evaluate provision and use this to inform strategic planning; resourcing, staffing, and professional development for RE have parity with other core subjects. The CSED provides an accurate evaluation and identifies clear priorities for further improvement, particularly in strengthening the consistency and impact of feedback and next-step guidance.

Collective worship

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

Collective worship key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

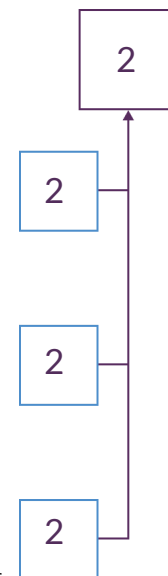
How well pupils participate in and respond to the school's collective worship

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



St Joseph's provides a wide range of opportunities for prayer and liturgy, and pupils respond positively. A variety of forms of worship were observed. Mass is celebrated regularly in school, with pupils participating through readings and enthusiastic hymn singing. Daily prayer is well established and Prayer Leaders lead Ten Ten prayers each morning using a range of approaches. The morning offering begins the day, meditation follows lunch, and the Examen concludes the day. Assemblies are planned across the week and are led by staff. During the inspection, the head teacher's assembly, 'How can we search for God?', successfully engaged pupils; the Ten Ten crew supported the head teacher and pupils undertook ministries with enthusiasm. In Years 5 and 6, pupils use the class worship template and take turns in small groups to plan and lead worship for their class, with preparation time provided at the start of each half term. Pupils show ownership and responsibility, working collaboratively to select the mission and response elements and to identify and proclaim the Gospel of the day. This approach now needs to be modelled and developed consistently across the whole school. Reflection is at an early stage, and evaluation of pupil-led worship by peers needs to become more purposeful and have a clear impact. Pupils of all ages are confident to pray; more opportunities for spontaneous prayer would strengthen this further.

Appropriately planned prayer and liturgy are central to the life of the school. Staff lead worship on designated days, and daily classroom prayer includes the morning offering, Ten Ten daily prayers, meditation, and the Examen. The school also marks significant moments in prayer, for example, with an assembly following the death of Pope Francis. The school hall is used effectively for Mass and whole-school worship, and for class worship on a regular basis.

Each classroom has a prayer area as a clear focal point; prayer chairs support pupils to focus, reflect, and pray. An outdoor prayer space is also available for quiet reflection during breaktimes and lunchtimes. When pupils plan and lead class worship, they can choose an appropriate setting (classroom, hall, or outdoors). Prayer Leaders in each class help to ensure that prayer areas are well cared for and reflect the RE unit and the liturgical year through appropriate colours and displays. Classes also display the virtues for the half term. The school works closely with families and the parish to support First Holy Communion preparation. The parish priest celebrates Mass in school each half term, and school Masses in church are scheduled throughout the year. The school is also developing its work with parents and the parish to deepen engagement with the Church, including using the church noticeboard to celebrate pupils' work, and the RSE lead running a playgroup in the school hall during the summer term. Pupil-led worship would benefit from further development to increase pupil input and creativity.

The school has an up-to-date prayer and liturgy policy that is accessible to all staff and supports a consistent approach. Leaders have identified the need for ongoing training and have provided professional development for areas including prayer and liturgy. The leadership team and staff act as positive role models for pupils in classrooms, whole-school liturgies, and throughout the day. Leaders, including governors, prioritise prayer and liturgy through budget planning and the allocation of resources. For example, materials to support pupil-led collective worship (such as feathers, pebbles, and other natural objects) have been purchased to provide a more interactive focus for prayer and reflection; this has increased pupils' engagement and enthusiasm. The RE lead has also produced class worship files for each teacher, containing resources for 'Gather', 'Word', 'Response' and 'Mission', so that pupils can access everything they need in one place. Additional resources, including the Magister package, have been purchased to support this work. The quality and impact of prayer and liturgy are reviewed; however, pupils' views are not yet gathered consistently across the school. Strengthening pupil voice, alongside more systematic modelling of pupil-led worship and more effective reflection and evaluation, would help to develop worship further.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Joseph's Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	401419
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	6773316
Full postal address of the school	Ashvale, TREDEGAR, NP22 3RU
School phone number	01495 369739
Headteacher or Head of School	John McMorrow
Chair of Governors	Robin Davies
School Website	www.stjosephs.cymru
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Phase	Primary
Type of school	Voluntary Aided School
Admissions policy	Non Selective
Age-range of pupils	3 - 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	11 January 2018
Previous denominational inspection grade	Adequate and requires improvement

The Inspection Team

Juliet Stack Lead

Elizabeth Rogers

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