



St James the Great Catholic Primary School

URN: 100825

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Most Rev. John Wilson, Archbishop of Southwark

20–21 November 2024

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

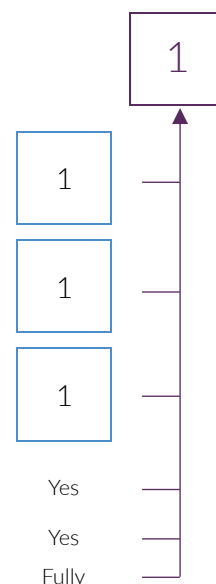
Collective worship (p.7)

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



Compliance statement

- The school is fully compliant with the general norms for religious education laid down by the Bishops' Conference Religious education is taught for a specified portion each week and constitutes at least 10% of the taught curriculum time.
- The school is fully compliant with the requirements of the Archbishop
- The areas for improvement from the previous denominational inspection have been addressed comprehensively.

What the school does well

- There is an enriched Catholic curriculum that centres on the teaching of Christ
- Staff are committed to ensure that all will achieve including the most vulnerable
- There are very high expectations of behaviour and attitudes to learning
- Pastoral care deeply reflects the teaching of Jesus that it is to children that the kingdom of heaven belongs
- Prayer is central to the life of the school permeating all areas

What the school needs to improve

- Build greater capacity among pupils' evaluation skills to make their input an integral and valued part of the school's process of self-evaluation
- In lower key stage build on the leadership and planning of prayer and liturgy very evident at Key Stage 2, so that they can take greater leadership roles in prayer and liturgy

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

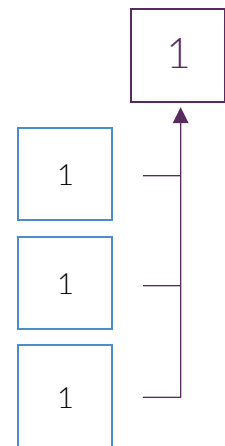
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

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 James the Great school is a community of faith centred on Christ with service of others as pivotal to its mission. Pupils describe the school as a place where 'you come to enjoy yourself with lots of different activities.' The regularly reviewed mission statement, 'to do our best for God, for other people and for ourselves' is well known and understood, and lived out within the school community. They demonstrate a deep care for those particularly with specific special needs. One pupil said he would 'like the school to have a lift to help those with disabilities to easily get to the top floors.' Pupils know and understand Catholic social teaching living out its principles through, for example, being part of a savings bank which works with the local Credit Union. They said, 'this is about looking after the poor' and 'this was to help those who do not have much money.' Pupils spoke about how the older ones support younger pupils with reading and 'explaining the meaning of words.' Pupils learn and grow as confident individuals and can articulate clearly what they have learnt. Pupils feel safe, and know to whom they should speak if they have a concern. Pupils are very involved in activities in the parish with the parish priest describing their involvement as 'the best he's seen in fifty years.'

All staff agreed that the regularly reviewed mission statement is known, lived and witnessed throughout the school community. St James the Great school is a place where Christ's presence is made visible through the welcome extended to all whatever their faith or culture in a community which accepts all especially the most vulnerable. A parent, whose child has special educational needs and disabilities stated 'even a special school would not have helped him progress so much. We are so happy.' Staff commitment is exceptional, their love for the pupils is very visible as shown in the way they care for each individual. Relationship, sex and health education (RSHE) is rooted in Church teaching using Ten:Ten resources. It is well planned, 'educating pupils as a whole,'. Staff are involved in the planning and parents' views are sought through, for example, parent workshops. The parish priest, who is fully involved in the school, spoke highly of the school's involvement in the parish and

community through, for example, Pecan, a local foodbank and describes the school as 'a good advert for the Catholic Church.' A parent stated, 'I highly recommend this Catholic school for all children and future responsible members of society.'

Christ is at the heart of the school. Catholic life and mission is seen as a core leadership responsibility, being a high priority in the school improvement plan. The co-headteachers have a very clear vision and a visible personal faith. Most parents agree the school and parish work well together regularly joining with pupils in activities both in school and in the parish Church. Resources are targeted effectively to those in greatest need and the environment shows exemplary commitment to care for our common home. Staff spoke of the 'togetherness with Church-school-home' giving such examples as the parish priest is always involved and parents involvement in the savings club and coffee mornings. New staff describe their ongoing induction as 'very supportive helping to understand what it means to teach in a Catholic school.' Through visits during which they meet with staff, do learning walks and produce consequent reports Governors engage in a process of analysis and self-challenge. Parents greatly value the school stating, 'This school cares for our children as if they were their own.'

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

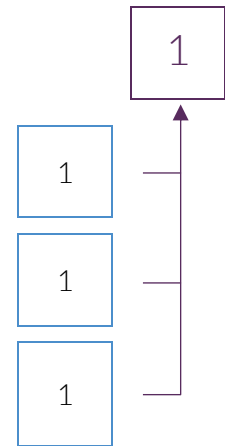
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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 very much enjoy their learning at St James the Great. They are engaged and explained that the variety of activities used, such as drama, make learning fun. A pupil said that 'if they see something unrighteous in the playground, they try to stop it because that's what Jesus would do.' Data shows a three-year trend where religious education outcomes are on a par with other core subjects with high outcomes for pupils across all groups including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Pupils speak confidently and fluently about their learning. For example pupils were able to clearly explain Ramadan and Shabbat. In one lesson a pupil explained that Christmas is when 'God came down to be with his people.' Pupils engage with their learning, have a clear understanding of how well they are doing and how to improve. Work scrutiny shows pupils consistently produce high quality work and total parity with English in coverage, marking and expectation. Work shows opportunities for emerging creativity and originality. Behaviour in lessons is exemplary and the vast majority of parents agreed their children enjoy religious education. One parent described the religious education as one of the 'greatest pillars as far as modelling my children's character.'

Overall, the quality of teaching is good, or outstanding. Teachers have a high level of confidence in their teaching based on authentic subject knowledge. They show a deep commitment to and have high expectations for religious education which they communicate effectively to the pupils. Using skilful questioning, adaptive teaching and building on prior knowledge teachers enable pupils to explore concepts at a greater depth. On Advent one pupil responded, 'Jesus says, 'my return is certain, but time is unknown.' Teachers understand deeply the impact religious education has on pupils' moral and spiritual development. In a lesson on 'Wish and Expectation' a pupil stated, 'my wish is that my fears would be overcome so that I can become more confident.' Good quality resources enhance the pupils' learning experience and they spoke about the opportunities they are given to express their learning using a wide variety of forms. One pupil said he' enjoyed acting the people in the Bible.' Teaching assistants work very well with the class teacher to ensure all pupils including those with

special educational needs and/or disabilities can access the curriculum. Pupils with specific special needs are supported in the classroom and access the same curriculum as their peers.

The subject leader for religious education has an inspirational vision for teaching and learning which builds greater expertise in colleagues impacting upon pupils having greater confidence on their learning. The school uses *Come and See* programme for religious education. Whilst this is linked to the *Religious Education Curriculum Directory*, the subject leader engages with diocesan training on the *Religious Education Directory* which is then cascaded to staff. The thoughtfully and imaginatively planned curriculum is sequential leading to greater depth of learning. This begins with Nursery and grows as pupils mature. Work scrutiny shows that religious education is integral to the school assessment policy and practice and is given the same high status as other core subjects in terms of budget and curriculum time. Lessons are well-resourced with good use of support staff, resulting in high quality learning for pupils. Governors ensure staff have access to high quality training from, for example, the diocese, local Catholic schools and specialist consultants. New teachers are well supported through induction and ongoing professional development which they value greatly. Governors monitor and evaluate through visits which included learning walks and discussions with pupils. They receive termly reports from the subject for religious education which are interrogated in detail.

Collective worship

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

Collective worship key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

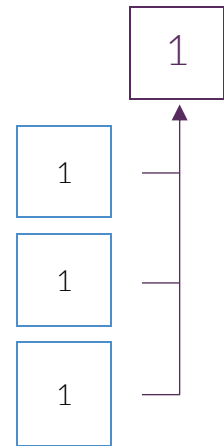
How well pupils participate in and respond to the school's collective worship

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 at St James the Great engage pupils deeply. They are very respectful and reverential in their responses and the quality of prayerful silence is excellent. Pupils sing unaccompanied very prayerfully and with great enthusiasm. Working collaboratively with others they prepare and lead engaging acts of worship which lead to moments of deep quiet reflection. The pupil Catholic life committee, comprising pupils from Years 3 to 6, plan, prepare and lead prayer and liturgy supported by staff. In a Key Stage 2 assembly on Christ the King, pupils used appropriate scripture, gave a short explanation of the scripture, provided time for reflection and spontaneous prayer. Pupils organised everything and tidied up afterwards. During morning prayer pupils in the lower years engaged with prayer and liturgy using a candle, prayer and opportunity for reflection about kindness towards each other. Using links to Catholic social teaching pupils demonstrate clearly how prayer influences the wider world. In lessons time is given for prayer which reflects the theme of the lesson, as a result pupils can think deeply about their responses. A year 6 pupil stated, 'to help others who are thinking about becoming Catholic by being inspirational.'

Prayer and liturgy are very much central to the life of St James the Great and its impact is tangible. There is a calm peaceful atmosphere around the school visible in lessons and in the way pupils interact with each other and staff around the school. Prayer is part of the rhythm of the day. For example morning prayer, before lunch and end of the day, and opportunities such as praying the rosary led by pupils. Parents commented positively stating how prayer is brought home and most parents agreed they are invited to be part of the prayer life of the school. Scripture is used well and reflects the liturgical season. For example reading from John 18 was used in an assembly about Christ the Universal King. In addition, the artistic skills of pupils and staff are used to enhance prayer and liturgy for example an image of the Sacred Heart painted by a Year 6 pupil is used as a focal point for prayer. Prayer spaces are well cared-for, reflect the liturgical season, and support pupils' prayers by being

used as focal points within the classrooms. The parish priest stated, 'the partnership with the parish is extremely strong, the best in 50 years.'

The school's policy on prayer and liturgy is well formulated, fit for purpose and most staff agreed it is easily accessible. Governors are regular visitors to the school attending prayer and other liturgical activities. They use the opportunity to talk with pupils and staff using the feedback as part of their reviewing the quality and impact of prayer and liturgy. Prayer sets the tone of meetings, and, because of its high priority, staff understand its centrality to the life of the school. A member of staff stated, 'Mission, religious education and prayer are a lived and real experience at St James the Great.' For example pupils, parents and staff inscribe in the school's Book of Remembrance the names of those who have died. Each week this is brought to the parish church as part of the Sunday Mass. Budgeting and resources ensure the centrality and high-quality experience of prayer and liturgy is maintained. Liturgical formation of staff is part of the school's professional development which, coupled with high quality resourcing leads to creating engaging liturgical experiences for pupils. Staff demonstrate a thorough familiarity with the Church's liturgical resources and are very aware of the new Lectionary beginning on Advent Sunday.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St James the Great Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	100825
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	2103399
Full postal address of the school	St James the Great Catholic Primary School, Peckham Road, St James the Great Catholic Pr, London, SE15 5LP
School phone number	02077035870
Co-headteachers	Janice Babb and Denis O'Regan
Chair of governors	Edward Toman
School Website	www.stjamesthegreat.southwark.sch.uk
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	3-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	09 th November 2017
Previous denominational inspection grade	Good

The inspection team

Stephen C Horsman
Jonathan Shields

Lead
Team

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