



ST JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC INFANT SCHOOL

PROSPECTUS 2023-2024



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INTRODUCTION

St Joseph's is a Catholic Infant School for children aged 2-7 years and has been part of the St Thomas Catholic Academies Trust since 2021. The school was opened in 1971 and is owned by the Diocese of Northampton. The school capacity is 180 pupils. The school also has an on-site Pre-School with a separate admission procedure to the school.

Parents, teachers and priests work together to ensure that our Mission Statement is a reality.

**“We will be a happy, welcoming school with Christ
at the centre, where everyone is recognised as special.”**

Area served by the school

St Joseph's primarily serves the town of Aylesbury. It also includes surrounding villages such as Stone, Hartwell, Stoke Mandeville, Weston Turville and Aston Clinton. Catholics have priority in admission to our school but not all children who attend are Catholic. Who attends our school depends on the number of people applying under each admission criteria and this varies greatly year on year.



Accommodation, Accessibility & Setting

The school is located at the end of a residential cul-de-sac and is set in spacious and attractive grounds. There are six classrooms, an assembly hall, an ICT area, catering room a shared music area and library area, and the Care Club room in the cabin building. Each classroom has an outdoor learning area. There are also two Pre-School rooms with outdoor learning areas. The school is on a split level site and has steps to access some areas. There is an access footpath, ramps to two classrooms and the front door, and handrails for use with steps inside the school.

Valuing People

St Joseph's places a high value on all members of our school community and the school's commitment to staff training for the further development of the children in its care. This is an achievement of which we are very proud. The way the whole school, including the Care Clubs and Pre-School, works as a team is one of our strengths. The school is very welcoming and its strong values truly drive the culture of the school and this is very much reflected in the responses of parents in the annual questionnaires.

“St Joseph's provides more than education to children... I think it offers my children the best start in their education”

I am special in God's eyes

We will be a happy, welcoming school with Christ at the centre, where everyone is recognised as special.

“Do not be afraid for I have redeemed you; I have called you by your name, you are mine. Because you are precious in my eyes, because you are honoured and I love you.”

Isaiah 43:2 – 5



AIMS

We are concerned with every aspect of our pupils' education, both for the present and the future and our aims are simple and direct:

- to ensure the spiritual development of each child, through the active experience of our Catholic faith
- to reach the highest level of academic achievement, according to individual ability
- to develop self-confidence and independence
- to develop responsible social behaviour that reflects a caring Christian attitude
- to create an environment and provide experiences which will foster the physical, social and moral development of each child

OBJECTIVES

To achieve these aims staff, parents and governors will:

- foster an atmosphere of mutual respect and trust between children and adults so that all are valued
- build upon existing links between home, school and parish
- maintain regular communication through newsletters, website, school communications, parents' evenings and meetings
- develop and foster Gospel values of respect, honesty, caring and truth when presenting the curriculum

Ofsted Report – Full Inspection May 2016 ‘Good’ Interim Inspection Section 8 November 2019 – ‘Good’

‘Parents go out of their way to bring their child to St Joseph’s. They are absolutely right to feel their child is happy, safe and well cared for. Pupils confirm they feel safe and enjoy learning.’

The school was inspected in May 2016 and the full report can be accessed via the Ofsted or school website. Children learn well at our school. The report recognised that attainment by the time the children leave the school is above average. Virtually every pupil reaches the expected level for their age and the proportions reaching the higher levels are markedly better than seen nationally.

The report also noted that in Early Years children develop well because teaching is good. Staff know children’s individual needs well, providing extra support and challenge to boost or stretch them. Adults support learning well in both focused teaching sessions and when children have opportunities to choose what they do.

The report comments on the good behaviour we have at St Joseph’s. Pupils are sensible, respectful and caring as they move around school, eat their lunch and play with one another. Developing pupils’ social, moral, spiritual and cultural skills and understanding is at the heart of day-to-day life in school. Pupils are well behaved, confident, caring and respectful. ‘Year 1 and 2 pupils’ behaviour in the Ascension Day assembly was exemplary.’

In November 2019, a Section 8 inspection confirmed that the school was still a ‘Good’ school and that children do well in our school. The inspector commented:

‘This is a happy school. The headteacher emphasises the importance of positivity and praise. This runs like a connecting thread through the school. Pupils respond well to this ethos. They thrive and grow in confidence.’

‘Parents and staff are confident that pupils are safe at school. Staff know pupils well and are quick to spot if all is not as it should be. They ensure that pupils learn how to keep themselves safe, including e-safety.’

‘Teachers have high expectations of pupils. Pupils respond well to these. They work carefully and industriously. They listen to their teachers and are keen to do well. Pupils make good progress so that, by the end of Year 2, they are well prepared for their next schools.’

We were pleased that the inspector recognised the work we do to develop the whole child and their well-being.

RE Inspection Reports– October 2021 “Good”

‘The school is welcoming with a nurturing purposeful environment. Relationships are very good; staff work well together; the staff show respect to the children and for each other; the children know they are safe and loved.’

Our RE inspection confirmed that St Joseph’s continues to be a good school. The Catholic life of the school and its wider community is reflected in the quality of Collective Worship, displays throughout the school and in the relationship between staff and children and between the children themselves. Children make good progress in RE and ‘attainment in RE is very much in line with other curriculum subjects’.

‘Pupils respond with reverence to collective worship and sang joyfully during hymn practice’.

ADMISSIONS

The Local Authority is responsible for coordinating admissions in to the Reception year and any in-year admissions.

Parents wishing to apply for a place for their child in our Reception class **must** apply through the Buckinghamshire Council online application process, and submit a completed Supplementary Information Form for Buckinghamshire Catholic Schools along with the child's original Baptism certificate (as appropriate) to support the application on faith grounds. Supplementary Forms are available online. The application process normally commences in November for children due to start in Reception.

Parents wishing to apply for a place in any other year group should contact Buckinghamshire Council to register their interest for a place at our school. Your child may be placed on a waiting list until a place becomes available.

All potential applicants are ranked according to the schools Admission Policy.

For full information, please refer to the school's full Admission Policy available on the school website.

(Parents will need to apply to a Junior school for entry to Year 3. The majority of our children apply to St Edward's Catholic Junior School situated on the same site. Transfer is not automatic).

OUR SCHOOL

THE CATHOLIC NATURE OF THE SCHOOL

The Catholic faith is central to our school and permeates all that we do. We aim to provide all the children with an environment and a programme of Religious Education, which will help the children to become aware of God's presence in their lives. The environment of the school helps children to develop their relationship with God, to experience Christian community, and to develop their own sense of belonging and community.



Mass is celebrated in school at least once a term by Fr. Beirne (Parish Priest for St Joseph's Church) and sets the seal on the special Catholic atmosphere of the school. In addition, there are many other opportunities for special liturgical celebrations led by the children.

Staff are provided the opportunity to pray together and support for parents is available for praying with their children at home – 'Helping your Child to Know God – A Handbook for Parents'.



A SINGING SCHOOL

The school sees singing as a large part of our school life and worship. Pupils enjoy singing, and the songs we learn build links between school, home and the wider community.



A HEALTHY SCHOOL

At St Joseph's we encourage and promote healthy living. Children have daily access to outdoor spaces and take part in mile a day around our extensive grounds. We have invested in a range of

equipment such as climbing frames, balance tracks, football courts and basketball nets to encourage active outdoor play.

We have a very active PE curriculum and children have the opportunity to take part in additional activities such as the Mile a Day program, Bollywood dancing, Multi Sports and Tennis.

We engage with a wide range of visitors who help us promote healthy lifestyles and we have hosted Paralympic athletes and Bollywood dancers, as well as more regular sports coaches who join us for lunchtime activities and lessons.

The school provides a choice of hot and nutritious meals to all pupils as part of the Universal Infant Free School Meals scheme. There is a range of meal options, which support children with specific dietary needs.



The school takes part in a government scheme which provides each child with a piece of fruit every day which can be eaten at break time. We encourage children and staff to drink water throughout the day.

Our school provides a milk scheme that is available to all pupils through our school milk provider, Cool Milk. Milk is provided free for children under five years of age and can be purchased for a nominal charge for children over the age of five.

We understand the needs of children with allergies – how to keep them as safe as possible and how to help them grow in confidence and independence.

We want our children to grow up healthily in mind and body and know how to stay healthy.



As well as physical health, we look after the mental health of our pupils. We run nurture groups and appoint a key adult when children need some extra support emotionally. The school will also look to arrange support when necessary from professionals such as play therapists or CAMHS. Small work areas are available for group work, interventions and personal prayer.

A CARING SCHOOL



Travel Planning - At St Joseph's we are always keen to promote healthier and more environmentally friendly journeys to and from our school.

Our school has been awarded the Bronze level accreditation with the Modeshift STARS (School Travel Accredited and Recognised) scheme. This aims to reduce car use and encourage walking, cycling and using public transport amongst pupils, families and staff.

At St Joseph's we support a number of travel initiatives which include a 10-minute Walking Map, Walk to School month, Road Safety week. Walk once a Week (WoW) reward scheme, Bike/scooter storage, Be Bright Be Seen! theme day, Parent Parking Promise & Travel-themed school assemblies

St Joseph's Guardians – This is our School Council that is elected by the pupils each year. It gives the children the chance to have a voice about issues that affect them and encourages them to work together as part of the school community to find solutions to things that affect all of us.

The name and logo for this group was designed, and voted for by the children of the school and everyone agreed that this winning entry summed up the ethos and passion of the staff and children.



A WELL BEHAVED SCHOOL

Our school is a happy welcoming place where children and adults work towards making our Mission Statement a reality. For the children, the Mission Statement is simplified to:

“I am special in God’s eyes”.

We expect children and adults to be well mannered and to treat each other with respect. It is the school’s policy to contact the parents if we have any concerns regarding children’s behaviour.

Good behaviour and effort are encouraged through our awards system. We have a ‘Star Awards’ assembly each week where a teacher nominates children to become ‘Stars of the Week’. Children are also rewarded and celebrated for their work efforts and achievements outside of school.

A recent visit by the Trust leaders observed ‘the strength of relationships between staff and pupils and pupil to pupil promotes and effective working environment

‘Children are happy, confident, resilient and with an enthusiasm for learning’

SCHOOL ORGANISATION

CLASS ORGANISATION

We are a two-form entry school. Children are organised into six classes according to age. There are two classes for each age group of Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 with up to 30 children in each class.

The maximum class size in Reception and Key Stage 1 (Year 1 & 2) is 30. Class sizes in Infant schools are restricted by infant class size legislation. All of the classes are supported where possible with a full or part-time teaching assistant.

Class, group and individual teaching will be used to develop each child to their full potential.

THE SCHOOL DAY

The school office is open from 08.30 a.m. – 4.00 p.m. Monday to Friday during term time. Messages can be left on the 24 hour answer machine.

School opens for pupils to be dropped off at classroom doors between 08:40am and 08.45am when the school day starts. School finishes at 3.15 p.m. Children should be collected from their classroom door.

Morning Session

Afternoon Session

Year 1 & 2	08.45-12.15	13.15-15.15
Year R	08.45-12.00	13.00-15.15

22 hours per week is allocated to curriculum learning with other time allocated to registration, social learning, collective worship, playtime and lunchtimes. All pupils have an hour lunchtime break and there is a short break mid-morning where children have the opportunity to have fruit and a drink.

Break times and lunch times are staggered between the year groups to minimise congestion on the playground. There are separate play areas for the Reception classes and Key Stage 1.

Break times are supervised by teachers, teaching assistants and midday supervisors.

LUNCH & SNACKS

Our catering supplier Alliance in Partnership (AIP) provides hot meals. Menus operate on a three-week rota and change twice a year. Meals are ordered online via the ParentPay system. (There is no charge for infant school meals). AIP offer dietary information for parents and will work with parents to cater for individual needs.

We have an area of the lunch hall designated as a 'nut free zone'. Children who are at risk are seated within this area to enable them to be monitored more closely during mealtimes. We will contact parents to discuss their child's needs and suitable provision when they start at the school or as the school is made aware of any food related conditions.

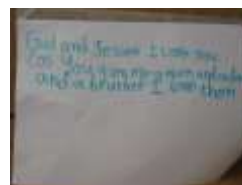
Some parents may prefer to send a packed lunch into school. These are eaten in the hall alongside the children having hot meals. We encourage parents to adopt a healthy approach to lunch boxes and support the school in encouraging children to develop healthy lifestyles.

THE CURRICULUM

Curriculum planning takes into account the needs of individual children in line with our equality policy. The children follow a broad and balanced curriculum, our aim being to achieve continuity and progression through the school.



Our prayer garden



RELIGIOUS EDUCATION & PRAYER LIFE

All schools are required by law to teach Religious Education, but being a Catholic school it is not only a subject that we teach, but also central to the principles and values by which we, as a community, try to live. 10% of teaching time is given to delivering the Religious Education programme to children at each Key Stage of their education.

Religious Education is at the heart of all we do and informs our teaching and all aspects of the curriculum.

The school follows the Diocesan scheme "Come and See" alongside instruction on scripture and the liturgical year.

Children are taught to respect and value difference, and learning about other faiths is part of the RE curriculum.

By encouraging personal prayer, each child has the opportunity to develop his/her own personal relationship with Jesus.

Fr John Beirne is our linked priest chaplain. Mass is celebrated in school at least once a term. In addition, there are many other opportunities for special liturgical celebrations often led by the children such as: Epiphany, Remembrance Day, Pentecost and Blessing of the Advent Wreath.

Singing assemblies are held each week and daily prayers take place in classes.

FAMILY LIVING & RELATIONSHIPS POLICY

The Governors of St Joseph's believe that sex education for children of infant school age is primarily the responsibility of the parents. There is no formal education on reproduction or sexual relationships.

In the school library, there are books that are deemed appropriate for children of infant school age e.g. books about 'me and my body'; and books about animals and their young.

In our caring Christian atmosphere, children are encouraged to develop responsible social behaviour. This is in keeping with the Church, which directs us to develop in each individual a sense of love and respect for God's creative order.

EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE (Reception Classes)

Children learn by playing and exploring, being active, and through creative and critical thinking which takes place both indoors and outside. The staff plan activities that provide opportunities for children to learn in different ways equipping them with the skills to become effective learners. The Curriculum for the Foundation Stage underpins all future learning in Key Stage 1 by supporting, fostering, promoting and developing children's skills in the following prime and specific areas:

The three *prime* areas are:



- communication and language;
- physical development; and
- personal, social and emotional development



We consider Religious Education to be an additional prime areas and this is taught as a separate subject as well as through the play-based curriculum.

The four *specific* areas, through which the prime areas are strengthened and applied, are:



- literacy;
- mathematics;
- understanding the world; and
- expressive arts and design



KEY STAGE 1 (Year 1 and 2)

In Key Stage 1 children follow the National Curriculum and Diocesan Religious Education programme. The curriculum is delivered through creative and subject based teaching which builds on the learning and teaching of the Early Years Curriculum. The teaching approach becomes more formal as the maturity and skills of the children develop.

The subjects are taught directly or indirectly through 'topics'. Topics are taught termly, half-termly or in a block of lessons. Staff within the school have responsibility for leading on a given subject area.

The KS1 subjects are

Core subjects

English – *Reading, Writing, Phonics and Handwriting*
Mathematics
Science
Computing
RE
PSHE

Foundation subjects

Art
History
Geography
Design Technology
Music
Physical Education



Further details about the curriculum structure and organisation can be found on the school website.

TEACHING METHODS

Teachers use a mix of whole class and group teaching methods. The subject being taught and the needs of the class will determine the approach of the teacher. For example, in Science a new concept may be introduced to the whole class and then followed up by differentiated work.

Practical activities and visual clues are key for young children and also support children who have English as an additional language.

ASSESSMENT

There is national formal assessment of each child's attainment at the end of the Foundation Stage (Early Years Foundation Stage Profile) and again at the end of Year 2 (Key Stage 1 Standard Assessment Tests – SATs). In Year 1 children are formally screened to ascertain their phonic attainment. The results of these assessments are reported to parents as part of the end of year report in July.

In addition to the formal assessment, on-going teacher assessment takes place in every class. The purpose of this assessment is to inform teachers of what learning has taken place and to enable them to plan the next steps in teaching. Tests and tasks will be used when necessary to help the teacher gauge a child's learning and the application of that learning.

HOMEWORK

Homework is used to reinforce classroom learning, suggest opportunities for further study and link with targets set for your child.

At the beginning of each term the school informs parents and carers about the particular areas of the curriculum to be studied during the term and this includes a parent's information sheet for RE. This is to allow parents to follow and supplement the work done in school.

The school also suggests ways in which parents can help their child at home and encourages regular communication between the parent and the class teacher.

Homework for each year group is outlined in the Homework policy and procedures.

Independence & Basic Skills – Encouraging children to look after their own belongings and master self-help skills appropriate to their age. Carrying out tasks and everyday activities with your child that encourages speaking and listening, basic counting, the development of vocabulary and social skills such as turn taking and self-confidence.

Reading & Phonics - We use the scheme Read Write Inc. Guidance for parents to help children at home is shared through meetings and support materials online. We do ask you to read with your child every night at every age. This should include you reading to them as well.

Spellings – high frequency words begin in Reception and progress with increasing complexity, right through the school. Children are given words to learn to spell words at home and are then assessed on them in school whether by a small spelling test or through the correct use of the word in their written work

Maths - work is sent home for learning each week in Year 2.

Purple Mash - is used to set tasks and activities that can be completed at home.

Projects: From time to time children may be asked to complete a project at home that may run over several days or weeks.

COMMUNICATION ABOUT YOUR CHILD'S PROGRESS

Parents Evenings are held in the autumn and spring term. An open evening is held in the summer term where children invite their parents to come into their classrooms to celebrate the work they have done. In addition following the annual report to parents, parents may request a consultation with their child's teacher if they wish.

At the start of the year there are informal drop-in sessions for parents to chat to the class teacher and Parent Information events.

You may make an appointment to see either the Headteacher or your child's class teacher at any time throughout the year. Our 'open door' policy means that parents can speak to the class teacher at the start and end of the school day. Teachers will endeavour to speak to parents as soon as they raise a concern but it may be more appropriate to arrange an appointment at an alternative time.

We will contact you should we have any concerns about your child.

A written report on your child's progress is sent out in July.

Our Headteacher will always endeavour to see a parent as soon as possible.

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN IN SCHOOL

The health, safety and well-being of every child is our paramount concern. Our aim is for children to enjoy their time as pupils in this school.

To promote a safe environment for pupils, our selection and recruitment policy includes all checks on staff and regular volunteers' suitability, including checks with the Disclosure and Barring Services, as recommended by Buckinghamshire Council in line with current legislation.

In accordance with our responsibilities under section 175/157 of the Education Act 2002, and "Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023" we have a Designated Safeguarding Lead for Child Protection (Mrs Ann Taylor - Headteacher) who is a member of the Senior Management Team. We also have a Deputy DSL and an additional DSL.

We believe safeguarding and promoting our students' welfare is everyone's responsibility and we work together as a team to achieve this. We listen to our pupils and take seriously what they tell us.

The Safeguarding procedures we follow have been laid down by the Local Safeguarding Children's Board, and the St Thomas Catholic Academies Trust Safeguarding Children Policy and Child

Protection Procedure for the safety of all. If you want to know more about our procedures, please speak to the Headteacher, Mrs Ann Taylor.

The Policy can be found on the Trust website via the 'Policies' tab on our school website or through the school office.

VOLUNTEERS IN SCHOOL

Parents and carers are invited to help in school and are asked to contact the school office if they can spare an hour or two each week.

All volunteers who come into school to work with the children are required to complete a disclosure application for the Disclosure and Barring Service. This is in the interests of the children in our care and supersedes any previous police checking procedure.

HOME / SCHOOL COMMUNICATION

We want to work in partnership with you to help your child achieve their full potential and make a positive contribution.

The school operates an open door policy and welcomes and encourages good communication between parents and staff. Parents can speak to the teacher at the end of each day or arrange to speak by telephone if this is not possible. We do ask that parents understand that the class teacher may need to dismiss other pupils before they are free to talk. Messages can be left with the class teacher or the school office in the morning.

Each child is given a reading record book that we encourage parents to comment in at least weekly to keep the school informed on reading progress and achievements at home.

The monthly newsletters and school website update parents about events in the school. We also use 'ParentMail' as a means of communication. All parents have an account that they can use to receive emails, report absences, make payments and book Parents Evenings.

Weekly Learning updates about what the children have been learning are available on the school website.

SPECIAL NEEDS AND DISABILITY PROVISION

We are committed to valuing each child as an individual with individual needs. Advice and information is sought on an on-going basis, from the appropriate advisory services to ensure that pupils with disabilities are not treated less favourably than other pupils. Resources are allocated in the light of assessed need, to include learning support, training and equipment.

The school has an access footpath, ramps to two classrooms and the front door, and handrails for use with steps inside the school.

We aim for most children with Special Educational Needs to be taught within the classroom and provided with individual education programmes. When necessary, individuals and small groups are given extra support, for a short period of time each day, working inside or outside the classroom.

Staff, pupils and parents are supported by the school's Special Educational Needs & Disability Coordinator (SENDCo) who will liaise with outside agencies when appropriate.

Children with Special Educational Needs are taught mainly within the classroom through a SEN support plan. In some circumstances, it is necessary to seek further advice from external sources or specialists regarding effective provision or strategies or assessment of the child's needs.

Parents are kept informed throughout these stages and regular meetings with parents are arranged.

EDUCATIONAL VISITS

The school recognises the value of educational visits and these are planned into the curriculum. The visits are chosen to enhance the curriculum, broaden children's experiences and increase enjoyment of learning.

The Local Academy Committee of Governing Body aims to promote and provide such activities as part of a broad and balanced curriculum. A voluntary contribution is asked for these visits to help cover the costs.

OUT OF SCHOOL PROVISION – Care Clubs

St Joseph's Care Club provides wrap around care for pupils during term time. The Breakfast Club opens at 7.45 am each day. The After School Club runs from the end of the school day until 6 pm – an earlier collection is available at a reduced price. Further information is available on the school website or from the school office.

PRE-SCHOOL

There is an on-site Pre-School that caters for 2, 3 and 4 year-olds. The Pre-School is managed by the school and operates within the school building. This is a stimulating and welcoming environment where children thrive in the care of experienced and dedicated staff.

Pre-School prepares your child for entering compulsory school. Children attend all day, morning or afternoon sessions.

Please contact the Pre-School if you would like to visit or find out more information by calling 01296 484618. Information can also be found on the main school website.

SCHOOL COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

We have a thriving SCA whose main function is to fundraise. Organised events occur throughout the year, and are frequently of a social nature. Over the years the SCA has bought many items of equipment which would have been difficult to fund through our budget allocation.

All parents and staff are automatically members of this association. Please let the SCA know if you would like to become a member of the organising committee, or if you can help in some other way. New volunteers are very welcome.

WEBSITE

The school website contains useful information about St Joseph's Catholic Infant School and is updated regularly with future events and diary dates. The website address is

www.stjosephsrcinfant.bucks.sch.uk

VISITS TO THE SCHOOL

The information on the website and in this prospectus is intended to provide parents with some general information about the school. There is, however, no substitute for first-hand experience and we invite you to contact the school to arrange a visit. You will then have the opportunity to experience the real spirit and motivation of the school.

Admissions Information Meetings and Tours are held during the autumn term for parents of children who are looking for a place in the Reception year the following September. This is an opportunity to visit the school and to hear information about the admissions procedure.

Visits can be arranged by appointment at other times in the year. Once places have been offered and accepted, visits for new pupils to meet their teachers and peers are arranged.

ADMISSIONS POLICY

Our Admissions Policy can be found on the school website in the Key Information tab, Admissions Policy.

<https://www.stjosephsrcinfant.bucks.sch.uk/key-info/admissions-policy-and-information/>

A warm welcome awaits you and your child.

