



Values and Ethos at St Joseph's

The strong Catholic ethos of The Federation of St Joseph's R.C. Junior, Infant and Nursery Schools is evident as you step through the door. We believe our ethos is very much alive throughout the school. The vibrant and welcoming learning environment along with the impeccable behaviour of our children demonstrates the care and respect shared by all. Through our supportive and nurturing environment, each child is able to strive for excellence.

We have strong parish links and serve the communities of Virgo Fidelis Parish Upper Norwood, St Matthew's Parish West Norwood and Margaret Clitherow, West Dulwich.

At harvest time, we have a service and bring food to donate to those in need within our local community.

Christmas is celebrated on the infant site with Christmas plays involving each year group, and on the junior site, a special carol service that involves the youngest members of the junior school forming a tableau is enjoyed by all.

Year 6, the eldest members of the school community, lead our Easter liturgy with a meaningful and poignant stations of the cross. Year 1 perform the Easter Story for the school family.

Y2 and Y3 celebrate a mass for Holy Communion together, where Y3 children enjoy dressing in their special First Communion outfits, this helps to prepare Y2 as they come closer to making the sacrament of Holy Communion for the first time. Remembrance Day, the month of May and Feast days also provide opportunities for our school to come together and worship regularly.

The Infant May procession is a highlight of the year and is greatly enhanced by the presence of one of our parish priests. 19th March is always a much anticipated date in our school calendar as we celebrate the feast day of our patron saint St Joseph. The day is made particularly special as our governors join us. We are fortunate to have links with more than one parish so the priests share coming in to celebrate liturgies with the children and the children also have the opportunity to worship in Virgo Fidelis Church. Our parish links are

particularly strong at St Joseph's and we feel these links help the children enjoy liturgies more.

As soon as you walk into St Joseph's, our Catholic ethos is evident and alive, both in our environment and the actions of all members of our community. We have displays around the school to reflect the liturgical calendar, beautiful prayer areas with displays in each classroom, scripture is a focus around the school with framed posters designed by each class and a bright Salvadorian cross is in every room. In the infant and junior halls, children enjoy hanging prayers on the prayer trees.

Pupils at St Joseph's enjoy their Religious Education lessons and take great pride in their books. Teachers use The Way, The Truth, The Life scheme to support planning and assessment and the Curriculum Directory is adhered to. Pupils enjoy collective worship as a school and in small groups. The Apostles of Mercy have enjoyed preparing prayer services. Every class has a prayer book that children take home and write a prayer in with their families, this is then shared in class with their peers too. Our Y6 children make excellent House Captains for our houses; St Catherine, St Cecilia, St Francis and St Sebastian. They make excellent role models, along with our Head Boy and Head Girl, in ensuring that behaviour is impeccable. The House Captains organise a special assembly to celebrate the feast day of their house and support the younger pupils to feel part of the smaller community. School Games Day and the collecting of house points help the houses to feel further united. Our governors are actively involved with celebrating liturgies and attending many school events.

Pupil voice is strong in St Joseph's with an active school council who recently run a scripture competition and the Apostles of Mercy who were introduced to help guide our school through the Year of Mercy November 2015-November 2016. One apostle has been selected from each class from Y2-Y6. They have enjoyed preparing prayer services and look forward to helping the local community and supporting the Catholic life of the school in classrooms and the playground.

Prayer and collective worship are integral to the life of our school. Monday's assembly focuses on the readings and Gospel from the Sunday before. Each week, merit assemblies are held in each site to recognise the achievements and talents of the wonderful children who make up our school community. The children of St Joseph's enjoy singing and have regular opportunities to use this

skill both in class and within whole school collective worship. Each class prepares an assembly which is shared with parents. These are always an excellent opportunities to celebrate the success of each class as well as individuals and for the children to share their skills in drama, singing, computing, public speaking, quiet reflection and more. Staff and children pray together regularly throughout the day and children have opportunities to compose and share prayers in class and assemblies.