

Catholic Schools Inspectorate inspection report for St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Newbury

URN: 110094

Carried out on behalf of the Right Rev. Philip Egan, Bishop of Portsmouth on:

Date: 7 -8 June 2023

Overall effectiveness

The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school.....

2

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.....

2

Religious education (p.5)

The quality of curriculum religious education.....

2

Collective worship (p.7)

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

2

The school is fully compliant with the curriculum requirements laid down by the Bishops' Conference

✓

The school is fully compliant with all requirements of the diocesan bishop

✓

The school has responded to the areas for improvement from the last inspection

Fully

Summary of key findings

What the school does well

- The humility and commitment of St Joseph is embodied in the leadership of this school. The headteacher and deputy headteacher are true servant leaders, working tirelessly and with dedication to serve the pupils, staff and families.
- The school is a community with Christ truly at the centre. The mission statement is known and lived out by all members of the community. It is carefully and deliberately woven through all aspects of school life. The mission inspires the welcome and outreach that is offered by the school to its pupils and families. The level of consideration for the health and well-being of all members of the community is what makes St Joseph's a living embodiment of Christ's teaching.

- Behaviour in the school is exemplary. Pupils are polite, respectful, kind and are able to speak confidently about who they are and why they are proud to be members of the St Joseph's family.
- The impact of the work of leaders to develop pupils' religious literacy can be seen in all classes. Pupils are able to speak confidently and articulately, using religious terminology and phrases, that has allowed them to develop a secure knowledge and to be religiously literate and engaged young people.
- Pupils respond reverently to prayer and worship in an authentic, heartfelt, and reflective manner.

What the school needs to improve:

- As the school strives for exceptional practice, governors need to be more actively involved in the evaluation of all aspects of this inspection framework. This will ensure they have a clear system feeding into their strategic overview and ensure high levels of challenge and support.
- Following the support that has been given by the RE leader, teachers now need to take greater ownership of RE learning in their classrooms.
- Pupils need to develop skills of planning and preparing engaging experiences of prayer and liturgy, developing their confidence and greater independence as they move up through the 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:.....

2

Pupil outcomes

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

2

Provision

The quality of provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school

1

Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school

2

St Joseph's is welcoming and inclusive, driven by its mission statement, 'Following in Jesus' footsteps; Recognising the Holy Spirit in ourselves and each other; and nurturing our God-given gifts'. Pupils can articulate what this means to them and for everyday life at St Joseph's, having a good understanding of how their community strives to follow the Gospel values. One pupil stated, 'I can reach my potential here. I nurture my gifts and can help others reach their potential too using what God has given them.' Pupils value using these gifts in the various opportunities for ministry in the school. The school council, mini-vinnies and prayer leaders are some examples of the opportunity for service offered. Pupils feel valued and cared for and say that school is a very happy place. Pupils demonstrate high standards of behaviour and are considerate in their attitude, particularly to those of other faiths and backgrounds. Pupils are engaging with the demands of Catholic social teaching, being keen to participate in charitable drives, such as CAFOD, NSPCC and the local Loose Ends charity for the vulnerable. The school recognises the next step now being to teach more explicitly the principles of Catholic social teaching through various areas of the curriculum, putting in place elements of the *Building the Kingdom* initiative undertaken by the leadership team.

The mission statement is clear and inspiring and is evident in all areas of life at St Joseph's. It is truly understood and lived by all in the community. Staff are fully committed to the ethos and passionate in serving others in whatever role they have. The work of the inclusion and pupil premium lead is one example of many of how the mission is being embraced, with families knowing they are valued and feeling supported. There is a very strong sense of community in the school with all families, regardless of culture or faith, welcomed at St

Joseph's. Families from various backgrounds choose to send their pupils to the school. 'My child speaks fondly of her religious education and the school warmly welcomes parents to be part of that journey.' Parent feedback was very positive. The sense of community begins with the welcome and the nurturing of belonging is something the school invests heavily in. Pre-meets for new arrivals, family induction packs and work based on the 'Healing Classrooms' approach enhance the welcome. Staff are generous in sharing their gifts in their service of the school and they ensure the highest levels of pastoral care for the child - recognising the development of the whole child is paramount. The provision for Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) is carefully planned and firmly rooted in the teachings of the Church.

There is a strong commitment from all leaders and governors to the school's Catholic life and mission. The senior leadership team, who are knowledgeable and skilled, drive the school's mission, being servant leaders and leading by example. They serve the school with humility and walk alongside others in the school community when leading. The pastoral support of staff is valued at the school. Staff shared, 'The leaders are supportive and generous with their time. The team at St Joseph's is caring towards each other and we really do support one another'. The governors' Catholic ethos committee ensures that the school's Catholic identity is at the heart of all policies. Although monitoring does occur governors need to develop monitoring systems that support school self-evaluation and so feed into strategic development and school improvement linked to the Catholic school inspection framework. This will ensure high levels of challenge and support. St Joseph's curriculum reflects the school's charism and school leaders are aware of the need to continue to plan connections with Catholic social teaching as they develop a Catholic curriculum for St Joseph's. The link with the local church is valued by all. The parish priest, commented, 'It is an incredibly positive and courteous environment- with Christian values underpinning it - which is something we cannot take for granted these days.'

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade:.....

2

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

Pupils' knowledge and understanding of religious education is secure in all classes. Pupils build this knowledge upon previous learning through the embedded practice of retrieval activities which are used effectively to support them to know more and remember more. The pupils' use of religious vocabulary is a particular strength. The pupils are articulate and confident in their responses to questioning; the youngest pupils were able to talk about the 'mighty wind' and 'flames of the Holy Spirit' when answering questions. Most pupils can articulate how to apply their knowledge to their own choices and behaviour using the mission statement and the principles of Catholic Social Teaching. Many pupils recognise that 'being like Jesus' is challenging and can identify the gifts of the Holy Spirit which support them. Pupils use reflection time within lessons to formulate their responses and apply their knowledge. Where pupils had the opportunity to work collaboratively this led to deeper, more detailed responses from the pupils. Behaviour is consistently good across all year groups because pupils enjoy religious education. Pupils engage well in lessons, answering questions and offering their thoughts and reflections readily. Pupils produce work that shows emerging individuality using thinking skills and art. In the strongest practice observed, opportunities were provided for pupils to demonstrate their learning through sustained writing. Parental feedback is very positive about the pupils' enjoyment of religious education and how it impacts the family's home life. One parent said, 'My child comes home and asks questions about religious education which is great'. Whilst pupils talk confidently about what they know and how they apply it to their own lives, they struggle to articulate what they need to do to improve their work. The school's next steps are to develop opportunities for pupils to grow their understanding of their own attainment and progress within units of learning as well as across individual lessons.

With the support and scaffolding of the religious education leader, teachers have developed strong subject knowledge and pedagogy. The planning provided by the religious education leader has embedded a consistent approach to lesson delivery. This has been effective in enabling teachers to focus on the development of their theological understanding and to meet the demands of the current curriculum directory. Staff survey responses were very positive and staff value the support leaders have provided which has helped them develop their own subject knowledge. Teachers consistently use questioning to identify pupils' understanding and encourage regular retrieval of prior learning. In some classes, teachers take this further, using follow-up questions to scaffold deeper, more meaningful, responses from pupils. In the strongest practice, feedback identifies next steps in learning and challenges the pupils to progress. However, this is not yet consistent across the school meaning pupils struggle at times to understand how to improve their work. Leaders recognise that next steps are to build upon the good practice already within the school by providing feedback which ensures that most pupils understand what they need to do to make progress in their learning.

The headteacher and religious education leader are passionate and aspirational. The religious education lead has a clear vision for teaching and learning, working tirelessly to develop teaching using a coaching model. Teaching was observed to be consistently good as a result. Leaders ensure that professional development opportunities in religious education are available for all staff. Staff say they are supported by leaders and regularly draw on their expertise to improve standards. Attainment, progress and pupils' work in books for religious education has parity with other core curriculum subjects. In the strongest practice, religious education is taught in the mornings and returned to across the week as part of a sequence of lessons. The impact of leaders on curriculum development and improvements in teaching is evident across the school. The religious education leader is currently providing a high amount of support to class teachers; teachers now need to take on greater ownership of the religious education learning in their own classroom, planning their own religious education and adapting it as necessary. A benefit of this approach will be to give senior leaders greater capacity to take a more strategic approach to religious education. Governor monitoring and self-evaluation of religious education needs to be more systematic and in-line with the inspection framework.

Collective worship

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

Collective worship key judgement grade:.....

2

Pupil outcomes

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

2

Provision

The quality of collective worship provided by the school

2

Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for collective worship

2

Prayer and liturgy are central to life at St Joseph's, with pupils responding well to the wide variety of worship offered. The school family values prayer, both planned and more spontaneous in moments of joy and sorrow. The pupils can explain various aspects of the Church's year and they value Catholic traditions such as praying the Rosary, Mass, Advent liturgies and Stations of the Cross. In liturgies pupils are reverent, engaged and prayerful, while the liturgies themselves centre on scripture and link to the Church's liturgical year. In the whole school Gospel assembly, the atmosphere created was prayerful, reverent and reflective. Pupils are proud of their Year 6 buddying with Reception children for Mass and liturgies. While pupils undertake liturgical ministries, such as setting up for assemblies and leading teacher scripted prayers, pupils need to be given more opportunity to take ownership and plan, deliver and evaluate their worship. Leaders need to develop a strategy to build up pupils' involvement as they progress through the school. Pupils are confident in sharing how prayer can lead to action and have impact on their lives and the lives of others, as evidenced in the Golden Book that is part of the 'going forth' following the weekly Gospel assembly. There is a high-quality response to the Gospel in this book – that is clearly valued. The Gospel board, in the main entrance is a focal point and opportunity to continue to share the Good News to all throughout the following week.

Prayer and liturgy are part of everyday life at St Joseph's. Prayer and liturgy are planned each term according to the Church's cycle of seasons and feasts. Senior leaders model good practice for all. There are prayer spaces in each classroom, linked to the liturgical year with house and class saints. In the nursery, there are age-appropriate prayer aids to help the pupils celebrate the liturgical season, while the Sacrament of Reconciliation is offered to the older

pupils. During the school's weekly 'House' assemblies it was evident that the pupils leading the worship were using the school leaders as role models. With the confidence pupils are now showing in leading scaffolded prayers they now need to be supported in planning their own worships. The school works closely with the parish priest to enable liturgies in the school and at the church, to which parents are invited. The school attending the parish Mass is valued and enhances the school, parish, family link.

A school policy on prayer and liturgy and effective planning is in place to ensure that the liturgy is regular and varied throughout the year. This also ensures that key moments in the Church's year are appropriately celebrated or commemorated, such as Stations of the Cross in Holy Week and Reconciliation during Advent and Lent. Children start in nursery, at the earliest age, to participate in prayer. A strategy for pupils' participation that is reflective of age and understanding would be useful as pupil prayer ministry is developed. There are effective training opportunities for staff to develop their skills in prayer leadership through professional development meetings with model planning. Staff appreciate this and feel supported in planning and delivering prayer through both formal training and the informal 'open door' policy in the school. There are opportunities for pupils to experience different types of prayer, including singing, music, reflecting, and silent meditation. Leaders and governors recognise the centrality of prayer at St Joseph's ensuring it is resourced and invested in. More systematic monitoring will ensure the school's self-evaluation is effective and can drive continuing improvement.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Joseph's Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	110094
Full postal address of the school	Newport Road, Newbury, RG14 2AW
School phone number	0163543455
Name of head teacher or principal	Kelly Boshier
Chair of governing board	Sinead Hall
School Website	http://www.stjosephs.w-berks.sch.uk/
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	Not applicable
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age-range of pupils	3-11 years
Trustees	Catholic Diocese of Portsmouth
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	28 April 2016
Previous denominational inspection grade	Good

The inspection team

Louise Buxton

Lead inspector

Catherine Whatley

Team inspector

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