



St Joseph's Catholic Primary School Coundon

URN: 148629

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Bishop of Hexham and Newcastle

04–05 July 2024

Summary of key findings

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

Yes

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

Yes

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

Fully

What the school does well

- Through the recently revised mission statement, the school bears witness to its Catholic life and mission, welcoming all into their happy, caring and inclusive community.
- School leaders have a clear Christ-centred vision and have driven recent rapid improvements to all areas of the school's work and particularly to the school's Catholic identity.
- Pupils at St Joseph's are happy, respectful and confident. Their behaviour and attitudes to learning are good.
- Pupils plan and lead opportunities for prayer and liturgy with enthusiasm and confidence, and show maturity in their evaluations of how to improve.

- Relationships at all levels are warm and caring; parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school and value, the close links with the parish.

What the school needs to improve

- Ensure a regular and robust cycle of self-evaluation and monitoring is in place so that leaders and governors can use these to effectively drive continuous whole school improvement.
- Ensure that religious education planning, assessment and feedback is adapted to support the needs of all learners, allowing all pupils, including the least able, to make at least good progress.
- Provide training for all staff to enable them to teach religious education with more creativity, through a variety of means, including through the arts and technology.

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

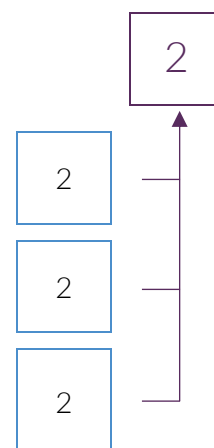
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

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 are proud to be part of St Joseph's and enjoy actively participating in the Catholic life and mission of the school. They understand the recently revised school's mission statement, 'You are God's children - shine like stars' and are proud to share it with others. They recognise and are proud of the distinctive Catholic character and identity of this school. Pupils show love and respect for those around them, including those of other faiths and religions. Pupils are happy, confident and positively responsive to the school's Catholic identity; they know that they are valued and cared for and that their uniqueness is celebrated. Pupils talk about following the example of Jesus, and their behaviour in lessons and outside the classroom is good because they understand this. For example, pupils wear 'What Would Jesus Do?' wristbands with pride when acts of kindness are recognised. The growing priority given to Catholic social teaching means that pupils grow in virtue by accepting responsibility in caring for our common home through initiatives and various social action projects. They recognise the importance of helping those less fortunate through collections for food banks and fundraising for charities such as Macmillan Cancer Support, Angel Trust and Cafod.

The school's distinctive, attractive and engaging environment reflects and greatly enhances its mission. As one parent commented, 'You can tell this is a Catholic school from the moment you come through the front door.' Pupils plan, create and evaluate prayer spaces and subsequently contribute to the development of the school's Catholic life. The school provides good opportunities for the spiritual and moral development of pupils and staff. The highest priority is given to the pastoral support of pupils and families to promote their well-being and parents are highly appreciative of the responsive way in which the school builds relationships with them. Pupils feel well supported and staff are skilled in ensuring that all pupils are included in school life. Weekly awards recognising the Shining Stars of the Week help to reinforce the values linked to the school's mission. The provision for relationships, sex, and health education meets

statutory and diocesan requirements. School leaders and governors do not sufficiently monitor and evaluate outcomes or provision in this area to accurately plan focused improvements. Pupils attend Mass in the parish church monthly and their involvement in parish life is welcomed by parents, the clergy and parish catechists.

The development of Catholic life and mission is a high priority for leaders and they are committed to the Church's mission and living out the Gospel. Because leaders place the mission at the heart of all their work, they are well regarded as effective Catholic role models by staff. There have been recent changes to the school's staffing structure; consequently, leaders have worked hard to ensure that newer staff are supported to become fully involved in the school's mission. Staff are fully committed to this. One member of staff said, 'Staff model how to live by the gospel values, to put others first and to love everyone as their neighbour.' The school recognises the importance of working with the local parish and recent improvements in shared celebrations with the parish are valued by the wider community. Staff well-being has remained a priority, as evidenced in how staff value the support they have received from leaders and governors. The school is supported by the Trust in conducting monitoring activities and evaluating the work of the school. Findings from these activities are shared with the local governing committee. However, self-evaluation strategies are insufficiently embedded to be able to support the school in identifying areas for improvement.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

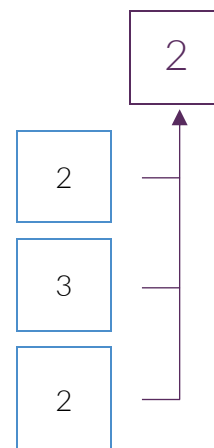
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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 enjoy and are enthusiastic about their learning in religious education; they take pride in their work and want to produce the best work they can. Work in pupils' books is neatly presented consistently across the school, although learning in some classes is reduced by pupils' writing excessively lengthy learning objectives. Pupils are starting to embrace the higher level of expectations and challenge being presented by teachers. They can articulate how they know and remember more, reflecting the learning required by the *Religious Education Curriculum Directory*. Some pupils can demonstrate confident understanding of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life. Pupils talk about the respect and confidence with which they now approach their religious education lessons; this is evidenced by the way they discuss their love for the subject. Comparative pupil outcomes are now improving in line with the more consistent approach taken to teaching and learning. Some pupils are still developing in their confidence and ability to question their adults about the different areas of their learning; in classes where it is encouraged, pupils deepen their understanding of the reasons why Catholics act as they do. Pupils work well collaboratively and their behaviour in lessons is good.

The teachers follow the *Come and See* scheme of work and, following recent improvements, they are consistently using age-related expectations to support how they assess pupils' work. This gives teachers an explicit and clear framework with which to assess outcomes. Teachers are committed to the value of religious education as a core part of the curriculum and they communicate this well to pupils. In some phases, teachers do not make adaptations for mixed-age planning or learning expectations, leading to lessons not meeting the needs of all learners. Where teachers are secure and confident in their subject knowledge, pupils are more comfortable with how they express their understanding of what faith and belief means to them. Pupils are not always sure of how to improve or develop their religious education learning; the

application of constructive marking and feedback is inconsistent across phases. Where teaching is less strong, the narrow scope of learning tasks can limit pupils' outcomes. Some teachers provide a limited range or forms of expression and there is often an over-reliance on the written form. Consequently, pupils report that they have limited time for reflection and creativity of expression.

School leaders demonstrate their commitment to religious education through prioritising an appropriate budget for the subject, ensuring pupils can access high quality religious resources and iconography. School leaders have worked closely with the Trust this academic year through participating in supportive reviews which have helped identify areas for improvement. There is an acknowledgement that governance will continue to benefit from the Trust's support to monitor, analyse and self-challenge; the recent recruitment of new governors is an important step forward. The subject leader for religious education has good expertise and uses her skills and knowledge to provide effective professional development for staff. The curriculum is a faithful expression of the *Religious Education Curriculum Directory* although learning for all pupils is not always sequenced clearly, particularly for pupils in mixed-age classes. Leaders are developing a monitoring format which is designed to ensure that strategic action is always prioritised and that all staff are challenged to aspire to the highest of expectations. There is evidence of leaders prioritising a rapid improvement in the quality and impact of monitoring to improve consistency in the quality of teaching and learning; however, it is not yet fully embedded.

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

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

2

Pupils respond well to prayer and liturgy and participate with reverence. They sing joyfully and join in with prayers enthusiastically. Pupils' behaviour during prayer and liturgy is exemplary. Their knowledge of the Church's liturgical year is good, as is their knowledge of how it influences the school's prayer life. The Mini Vinnies ensure that prayer spaces around the school and in classrooms are always relevant to current liturgical themes. Pupils work well with staff to prepare prayer and liturgy and are increasingly independent as they progress through the school. They lead with confidence, poise and clarity. Routines for acts of worship are well established and are spiritually uplifting. Pupils understand how to reflect on their prayer experience and how it impacts their lives. They value the opportunity to join the celebration of Mass with the local parish. Appropriately chosen Scripture is at the heart of worship, giving pupils a deeper understanding of the Bible's lessons and a firm understanding of the values and virtues identified in Catholic social teaching. For example, during the inspection a Year 5/6 lesson on stewardship was followed by a prayer and liturgy experience planned and led by pupils with a stewardship theme.

St Joseph's has a well-planned calendar reflecting a variety of prayer opportunities, which promotes regular pupil involvement. The school day is shaped by a daily pattern of prayer which is central to school life. Pupils speak confidently about various traditional prayers and their importance, including those related to parts of the liturgical year. The use of seasonally appropriate scripture passages across the school is a strength, especially where links are made between the Bible and what happens in the classroom and in local and global communities. Staff plan and lead classroom-based prayer and liturgy well and support pupils to develop their planning and leadership skills. They understand the elements well and use the model of 'gather, listen, respond, go forth', effectively. Focused prayer areas in classrooms are of a high standard,

and the school uses the spaces available to maximum effect in promoting prayer and reflection. Parents value the invitations they receive to join their children in prayer at the monthly Masses or 'stay-and-pray' events. Technology is used skilfully to share appropriate visual resources and every class has access to a range of high-quality resources which ensure class prayer times are valued as important aspects of school life.

Leaders and governors ensure the school's policy on prayer and liturgy is well formulated and fit for purpose. Leaders have planned the school calendar to include opportunities to celebrate the Eucharist at key times. Staff speak confidently about the centrality of prayer and liturgy to the life of the school. An effective strategy highlights the skills pupils will develop as they progress through the school. Pupils now plan and lead liturgies with confidence, a key area of improvement from the previous inspection. Leaders confidently bring an understanding of the Church's ministry to the community's needs through planned worship. School leaders ensure through training that skills are modelled for new staff, specifically around the structure of liturgies. Sacraments, holy days of obligation, and other essential feast days are well catered for with prayer and liturgy. Some self-evaluation for prayer and liturgy occurs, though it is not embedded by leaders or rigorously challenged by governors regarding how it feeds into strategic improvement planning. All staff are assisted in developing their personal and liturgical formation. Leaders and governors are committed to prayer and liturgy, and the school has invested significantly in high-quality resources including a beautifully sculpted altar which is used for whole school liturgies.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Joseph's Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	148629
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	8403469
Full postal address of the school	St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Victoria Lane, Coundon, Bishop Auckland, DL14 8NN
School phone number	01388602608
Headteacher	Mrs Anne-Marie Wilson
Chair of Governors/Trustees	Mrs Ann Gregg
School Website	https://stjosephscoundon.bhcet.org.uk/
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	Bishop Hogarth Catholic Education Trust
Phase	Primary
Type of school	Academy
Admissions policy	N/A
Age-range of pupils	2-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	April 2016
Previous denominational inspection grade	2

The inspection team

Michael Ewing
Allyson Thorpe

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