



St Joseph's RC Primary Highfield

Whinfield Way, Highfield, Rowlands Gill, NE39 1EH

School Unique Reference Number: **108381**

Inspection dates:	28 – 29 November 2018
Lead inspector:	Miss Maria Elliott

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Catholic Life:		Outstanding	1
Religious Education:		Good	2
Collective Worship:		Good	2

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

St Joseph's RC Primary Highfield is a good Catholic school because:

- St Joseph's is a calm, happy, welcoming and fully inclusive school with a deep sense of family. The school mission statement is a living document which all pupils strive to live by. Very strong relationships are at the heart of the school. All staff know pupils and their families very well, allowing for an understanding of their individual personalities and needs.
- Religious Education is good because pupils concentrate well, are keen to do well and can explain its value, leading to good progress in most lessons.
- The quality of Collective Worship is good because prayer and worship punctuate the day and are at the heart of the school community.

FULL REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

- The school is a smaller than average primary school in Gateshead, serving the parishes of Our Lady of Lourdes Chopwell and St Joseph's Highfield. Mass is celebrated at St Barnabas Church of England church Rowlands Gill and Our Lady of Lourdes Chopwell.
- Pupils are taught in mixed aged classes.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium funding is lower than the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special education needs is lower than the national average.
- The majority of pupils are of white British heritage.
- A very small proportion of pupils are from minority ethnic groups.
- The school is housed in a purpose-built school building which it shares with Highfield Community School.

WHAT DOES THE SCHOOL NEED TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- Further develop the quality of Collective Worship by:
 - developing pupils' skills so they are more involved in preparing and leading Collective Worship independently.
- Improve the quality of Religious Education by:
 - developing the knowledge, skills, and understanding of the Religious Education subject leader to ensure a focus on improvement in teaching, learning and assessment.
 - ensuring consistency of practice in teaching, learning and assessment across the school.

CATHOLIC LIFE

THE QUALITY OF THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

1

- The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school.
- The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school.
- How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school.

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The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school is outstanding.

- The pupils of St Joseph's are happy and confident; they have a deep sense of belonging and are very proud to be part of St Joseph's Catholic school.
- Pupils, through involvement in the school council and Mini Vinnies, are central to shaping the school's mission and ethos. They take full advantage of the opportunities the school provides and speak with enthusiasm about them.
- There are very high expectations of pupils' behaviour and these are fully understood by all pupils. Staff strive to lead by example and as a result pupils' behaviour is exemplary; they are polite and courteous.
- Pupils have an excellent understanding of their own religious identity and beliefs and how they may differ from that of others. They show great respect for others.
- Pupils are very well supported throughout the school by a range of pastoral opportunities. Staff are very caring and deeply committed, forming a very effective team where everyone is valued for their contribution.
- Pupils deeply value and respect the Catholic traditions of the school. There are effective links with the parish communities and as a result they are enthusiastically involved with parish and diocesan celebrations and activities.

The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school is outstanding.

- St Joseph's is a calm prayerful place where the school mission statement is reviewed yearly to ensure it is relevant and a clear and inspiring expression of the school's values and educational mission.
- There is a strong sense of community at all levels and very strong relationships are at the heart of the school. The staff are deeply committed and work tirelessly to ensure the school mission is lived out daily.
- The school building is shared with the community school and as such there are limitations as to which parts of the building can be used for display. Despite this the school environment reflects its mission and can be identified through colourful and vibrant displays which reflect the school's Catholic character.
- St Joseph's is deeply committed to promoting Catholic traditions, ethos and social teaching.

- The highest level of support is offered to the pupils through effective policies and procedures along with an explicit commitment to the most vulnerable. The well-being of pupils, staff and parents is well catered for through effective pastoral support. Personal, social and health education is given high priority and dovetailed into the Religious Education curriculum very effectively.
- Relationship and sex education is well planned and refers explicitly to Catholic teaching and principles.
- The school behaviour policy embodies the need for fairness and justice: it is supported by weekly 'Statements to live by' and underpinned by the principles of Rights Respecting Schools.

How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school is outstanding.

- Leaders and governors are deeply committed to the mission of the Church. They have a very strong sense of the Church's mission and the school's role in expressing it. They are extremely conscientious in their delivery, providing an authentic Catholic ethos with a strong sense of spiritual purpose, and a relentless focus on ensuring the fullest personal development of all pupils.
- The promotion of an authentic Catholic ethos is seen as fundamental role of both leaders and governors alike and is shared by the whole community who demonstrate great pride in their school.
- The school's self-evaluation shows evidence of planned monitoring, analysis and challenge. This leads to clearly focused plans to further enhance the Catholic Life of the school.
- The school engages well with parents and carers but this is often on an informal basis. They have a very good understanding of the school's mission and are very supportive of it. They are very proud of their school and feel that the small nature of the school gives a family feel where all the staff know their children very well.
- Governors make a significant contribution to the Catholic Life of the school. They are passionate about the school's mission, ambitious for its future developments and their role in ensuring it has the highest priority. They are visible in school, actively involved in the evaluation of the Catholic Life of the school and provide challenge and support where necessary.
- Governors discharge their statutory duties and canonical duties extremely well.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

THE QUALITY OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

2

- How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education.
- The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education.
- How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education.

2

2

2

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education is good.

- Most pupils say they enjoy Religious Education. They are generally engaged in their learning and older pupils are able to explain how it helps them in their lives.
- Pupils are keen to do well; most pupils are focused in lessons and usually work at a good pace. Older pupils are able to successfully articulate their understanding of how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve.
- Behaviour for learning throughout the school is good, enabling effective learning to take place.
- Most pupils approach their lessons with interest and enthusiasm and enjoy exciting activities. During the introduction of their new topic of 'waiting', reception/year 1 class were thrilled to receive a large present delivered to their class with a letter attached asking them to wait for a full minute before they opened it.
- Outcomes for pupils are good and most pupils are making good progress over time, although recently there has been fluctuation in attainment due to a number of factors. Pupils with special educational needs and disabilities are very well supported by effective support staff and achieve well according to their age and ability.

The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education is good.

- Most teachers are confident in their subject knowledge and have an understanding of how pupils learn. Teachers use a range of strategies including individual, paired and group work. There are a variety of quality resources including additional adults and effective questioning, as a consequence most pupils are motivated and concentrate in lessons.
- Teachers generally plan good lessons but the focus is often placed on the tasks and activities rather than the desired learning and as a result links are not always made to pupil's current assessment.
- Most teachers manage time well to secure good learning in lessons and across sequences of lessons.
- Where teaching is most effective on-going assessment is used to plan future learning. Driver words inform learning objectives, and challenge and differentiation is an integral part of learning. Marking and feedback enable pupils to recognise success and identify ways to improve their work and progress is tracked throughout the year. This is not yet consistent across school and as a result there are fluctuations in attainment and progress.

- The school has faced challenges in recent years due to lack of stability in staffing which has led to inconsistencies in teaching, learning and assessment. The headteacher and governors are committed to ensuring that all staff are consistent in their approach to the planned improvements in Religious Education.
- Achievement is celebrated both within lesson and weekly in whole school celebration assembly.

How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education is good.

- The headteacher and governors are enthusiastic and effective in promoting the high profile of Religious Education and ensure that the subject is seen as the core of the core.
- The headteacher and governors ensure that the Religious Education curriculum meets the requirements of the Bishops conference and the appropriate amount of curriculum is dedicated to the teaching of Religious Education in each key stage.
- The headteacher and governors ensure that Religious Education is comparable to other core subjects, in terms of professional development, resourcing and accommodation.
- The headteacher and governors ensure that Religious Education is effectively planned to meet the needs of different groups of pupils and coherence across the different key stages is developing.
- The headteacher and governors self-evaluation of Religious Education is an accurate reflection of monitoring and analysis and forms the basis for clearly identified planned actions for improvement. However, the curriculum leader for Religious Education is not sufficiently rigorous, as their skills and knowledge of the subject are not sufficiently developed.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

THE QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

2

- How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship.
- The quality of provision for Collective Worship.
- How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship.

2

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1

How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship is good.

- Staff led prayers and worship are well planned and thought provoking. As a result pupils are keen to participate and act with reverence.
- St Joseph's is a prayerful community where pupils join in community prayers appropriately and with confidence. Pupils respond respectfully, articulately and thoughtfully when participating in Collective Worship in small and large groups.
- Pupils are becoming more confident when creating an atmosphere for prayer and reflection independently and in groups. Pupils, dependent upon their age, are becoming more equipped to prepare and lead worship using a variety of resources including scripture, the Wednesday Word, liturgical music and religious artefacts. With adult guidance, class worship, planned by a group of year two, allowed the pupils the space to reflect on the weekly statement and how they could live it in their daily lives. Pupils across the school now need to be given more opportunities to plan worship independently.
- Most pupils have a good understanding of the Church's liturgical year, its seasons and feasts. Older children were able to make links between the purple they would be seeing in the coming weeks of Advent with that of Lent, one child stating purple was the colour of waiting; waiting for Jesus' birth and waiting for Jesus' resurrection.
- Pupils demonstrate a well-developed sense of respect for all irrespective of faith background. As one pupil said, 'We at St. Joseph's Catholic School are not better than anyone in other schools we are just different but equal.'
- The experience of living and working in a faithful, praying community has a positive impact on their spiritual and moral development. Pupils talked with enthusiasm of the Friday prayer club, which they value greatly and participate in voluntarily.
- School and parish work in partnership for sacramental preparation follows diocesan guidelines.

The quality of provision for Collective Worship is good.

- Collective Worship is central to the life of the school. The central, whole school space for worship is shared and limitations placed upon it, however the staff are very flexible and adaptable in their approach to creating an atmosphere and focal point for whole-school worship. There is a clear policy for Collective Worship with a structured programme of

liturgies, worship and Masses.

- Collective Worship is given high priority in terms of planning, evaluating, resourcing, training and staff support, and as a result is an engaging and uplifting experience.
- Both whole school and class worship have a clear purpose, direction and message. The themes chosen reflect a good understanding of the liturgical seasons and the Catholic character of the school. Worship regularly incorporates Statements to Live By, Rights Respecting themes and topical events.
- Staff are becoming more confident and skilled in their understanding of what constitutes effective worship due to planned support and training; they are able to guide and support the development of pupils.
- Staff pray together and this is seen as an integral part of the school provision.
- Parents speak with enthusiasm and positivity about the opportunities offered to them to attend worship. One parent stating she gained a lot from the variety of worship she had attended.

How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship is outstanding.

- Leaders and managers display expert knowledge of how to plan and deliver high quality experiences of Collective Worship. They have a very clear understanding of the Church's liturgical year and use this effectively in leading the school in its knowledge and understanding of Catholic rites and symbols.
- Leaders and managers have a very visible presence in school worship and the Collective Worship lead has a very clear understanding of strengths and areas for further development through a variety of monitoring activities.
- Leaders, especially the Collective Worship lead, support staff to continually develop their skills in leading Collective Worship and in helping pupils to become more independent in their leadership.
- Leaders and managers seek the views of pupils, staff and parents. However, feedback from parents is often on an informal basis.
- The school's prayer life is given very high priority by the school leadership. Governors worked with the Finance Committee at Our Lady of Lourdes Chopwell to finance transport so that key stage one children can celebrate Mass at Our Lady of Lourdes church in Chopwell. A very effective partnership exists with the parish community of St Joseph's Highfield.

SUMMARY OF INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

HOW EFFECTIVE THE SCHOOL IS IN PROVIDING CATHOLIC EDUCATION:**2****CATHOLIC LIFE:****1**

The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school.

1

The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school.

1

How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school.

1

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION:**2**

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education.

2

The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education.

2

How well leaders and managers monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education.

2

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP:**2**

How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship.

2

The quality of provision for Collective Worship.

2

How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship.

1

SCHOOL DETAILS

School name	St Joseph's RC Primary Highfield
Unique reference number	108381
Local authority	Gateshead
This Inspection Report is produced for the Rt Reverend Seamus Cunningham the Bishop of Hexham and Newcastle under canon 806 of Canon Law. For voluntary aided schools it also fulfils the responsibility the governing body has to inspect the school under s48 of the Education Act 2005.	
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Headteacher	Mrs Joanna Bircham
Date of previous school inspection	March 2014
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