



Archdiocese of Birmingham

Section 48 Inspection

ST JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Cherry Orchard, Lichfield, Staffordshire, WS14 9AN

Inspection date	8 th & 9 th March 2017
Reporting Inspector	Maureen O'Leary
Assistant Inspector	Evelyn Harper

Inspection carried out under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

Type of school	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils	4-11 years
Number on roll	213
Appropriate authority	The Governing Body
Chair of Governors	Martina Rowe
Telephone number	01543 263505
E-mail address	office@st-josephs-lichfield.staffs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	February 2012
DFE School Number	860/3464
Unique Reference Number	124357

Headteacher	Mrs Deirdre McLeary
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Previous inspection:	2
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This inspection:	2
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DIOCESAN EDUCATION SERVICE



Evidence

- The inspection was carried out by two Diocesan Inspectors.
- The focus of the inspection was on the quality, leadership, and impact of the school's provision of Catholic life, collective worship, and religious education (RE).
- The inspectors observed teaching across 7 RE lessons to evaluate the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. 6 of these lesson observations were conducted jointly with the headteacher or deputy headteacher.
- The inspectors completed a work scrutiny and held discussions with pupils to evaluate their understanding of Catholic life, worship, and the impact of teaching on their learning over time.
- Meetings were held with the chair of governors and two other governors, the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and the RE subject lead.
- The inspectors attended a whole school Mass, house assemblies and undertook a learning walk to look at aspects of learning and teaching in RE, the presentation of the Catholic life of the school and pupils' behaviour.
- The inspectors reviewed a range of documents including the school's self-evaluation, data about pupils' attainment and progress, RAISEonline, the development plan, teachers' planning and learning journals.

Information about the school

- St Joseph's is a smaller than average primary school that serves the parishes of Holy Cross and SS Peter and Paul in the city of Lichfield.
- The percentage of Catholic pupils is currently 81%.
- The number of pupils from a minority ethnic heritage group is below the national average.
- The percentage of disadvantaged pupils attending the school is well below the national average.
- The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) is below the national average.
- Attainment on entry is broadly in line with national expectations.
- Since the last inspection a new headteacher and deputy headteacher have been appointed, and a new priest chaplain is serving the school.

Main Findings

- St Joseph's Catholic Primary School is a faith-filled community where all are '*Growing with Jesus*'.
- The strong leadership of the headteacher and the governing body has ensured that the Catholic life of the school is outstanding.
- To maintain and develop the Catholic life of the school it would be beneficial to increase the RE and Catholic life link governor's involvement in the ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the school.
- Collective worship within the school is vibrant and pupils are provided with a wide variety of opportunities to worship.
- The collective worship, led by pupils of all ages, is a strength of the school.
- Pupils are provided with a good religious education and they make good progress throughout the school.

- In order to develop teaching and learning in RE from good to outstanding, the RE subject action plan should reflect the priorities that the school has identified through its monitoring and evaluation.

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

Catholic life, collective worship and spiritual, moral and vocational development: provision and outcomes

- The Catholic life of the school is outstanding.
- Pupils have a profound understanding of the school mission. They value, promote and can articulate the Catholic ethos of the school with great pride. *'We are like a big family, we love and respect each other, God made us all, God is like our second Father.'*
- The school environment is explicitly Catholic in nature and directly supports pupils' faith development and their religious knowledge. All who enter the school are immersed in displays and artefacts that inform, celebrate and challenge their knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith.
- An inspirational prayer table is a focal point of every classroom. These are prepared and maintained by pupils, contributing to their sense of ownership of and responsibility for the prayer life of the class.
- Prayer for both pupils and staff provides a firm foundation for the spiritual nourishment of the school. All stakeholders value and benefit from the daily prayer experiences of the school.
- Pupils experience a variety of spiritually stimulating collective worship in the form of weekly mission assemblies, class collective worship, hymn practice and celebration assemblies.
- Following the recommendation from the last inspection, the school leadership has provided pupils, of all ages, with many opportunities to plan and lead collective worship. This has now become a real strength of the school.
- All pupils from the very youngest are provided with excellent modelling of prayer from senior leaders and class teachers.
- Pupils from Year 2 onwards are able to plan and lead quality prayer in their own classrooms each week. As a result, by the time pupils reach Year 6 they are able to create and deliver reflective and thought provoking collective worship for house assemblies.
- Pupils' prayer development is further enhanced by the provision of school prayer bags that are shared with families at home.
- Most pupils have a good understanding of traditional Catholic prayers.
- The celebration of the Eucharist is at the heart of the school and pupils are given the opportunity to attend Mass at the school, at Holy Cross church and at SS Peter and Paul church.
- The school has actively welcomed both family and parish members to attend school Masses. As a result, parish and parental involvement at school Masses is very high.
- All pupils have greatly benefitted from the uplifting spiritual experience of a One Life Retreat day, Y5 have also attended a residential retreat, and Year 6 a one day retreat at Alton Castle.
- Pupils understanding of the Catholic Schools' Pupil Profile is excellent and this has contributed to the pupils' outstanding spiritual and moral development. There is a comprehensive whole school approach to enabling pupils to live their lives directed by these important virtues and values. Pupils are able to explain that *'if you are grateful then you will be generous to others.'* The virtues and

values are displayed prominently throughout the school and the teaching of them is developed as pupils mature.

- The school council decides which charitable causes to support and promotes fundraising for a number of local, national and global charities. Some pupils have initiated fundraising outside of school too. Consequently, the pupils understand that their Catholic faith calls them to help others.
- Pupils are given many opportunities to serve each other in school through the activities of classroom monitors, the school council, the Jumping Jaxx team (Year 6 pupils who support reception class pupils on the playground), Year 5 reading buddies who support Year 2, dinner hall monitors, altar servers and house captains. Pupils take these responsibilities seriously and understand that they form part of their Christian service to others.
- As a consequence of the all-pervasive spiritual and moral development that pupils encounter at St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, the behaviour of pupils towards adults and to each other is outstanding. Pupils see it as their Christian duty to include and support one another, in both their work and their play.
- Pupils understanding of vocation is outstanding. They know that God wants them to do something special with their lives and that they need to listen to him attentively to discern what that role is. Again, this is a recommendation from the previous inspection that has been thoroughly addressed.

LEADERSHIP

Leadership of Catholic life and Collective Worship

- The leadership of Catholic life and collective worship of the school is outstanding.
- The headteacher, staff and governors have a deep-seated dedication to the Catholic life of the school.
- Senior leaders have continually ensured that the Catholic life of the school is a focus priority of the school improvement plan (SIP). They have allocated the necessary resources to implement the actions of the SIP, so that its aims are always met.
- Governors regularly support the headteacher in the formation and review of the SIP and ensure that the Catholic life of the school and collective worship are given priority.
- Quality, continuing professional development is provided each half term through in house and/or diocesan training. This has resulted in all staff, including those who are new to teaching in a Catholic school, having a robust understanding and commitment to the Catholic mission and vision of the school.
- The whole school responsibility to, and accountability for, the Catholic life of the school is reflected annually in the performance management targets set for all staff.
- Through the strong leadership of the headteacher, governors are fully aware of the strengths and areas for development in Catholic life and collective worship of the school. Information is shared with governors via the headteacher's termly report to governors, governors' strategy meetings and regular formal and informal visits to school.
- Governors have conducted the Catholic Education Service self-evaluation of the governing body. As a result of this comprehensive and robust review, governors have been able to clearly identify which actions they need to implement to improve their governance of the Catholic life of the school further.

One such action is to increase the RE and Catholic life link governor's involvement in the ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the school.

- The school leaders have scheduled a wide range of monitoring such as: a prayer resource audit; a spiritual, moral, vocational, social and cultural audit, conducted by the whole staff; prayer area monitoring; and pupil interviews. The evaluation of this monitoring has not only identified key priorities for this academic year but also informed the three year, long term monitoring schedule of the Catholic life of the school.
- Pupils are regularly involved in the evaluation of collective worship within the school. Their ideas are valued and acted upon. Suggestions from pupils that have been implemented include: that prayer rules need to be established and that door hangers, announcing prayer is taking place in classrooms, should be used.
- Governors and senior leaders have formed strong collaborative links with other local Catholic schools. They are resolute in their desire to continue and promote this collaboration through the Lichfield & Tamworth Catholic Primary Partnership (LTCPP), the Birmingham Catholic Primary Partnership (BCPP) and working with the diocese.
- Collective worship is well planned and monitored by the senior leadership team and RE subject lead. It closely adheres to and reflects the Sunday liturgy, liturgical seasons and the virtues and values promoted through the Catholic Schools' Pupil Profile.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Leadership, outcomes from and provision for religious education

- Leadership, outcomes from and provision for religious education at St Joseph's Catholic Primary School are all good.
- Through regular reporting of the monitoring and evaluation processes in RE by the headteacher, governors have a good understanding of the subject's strengths and areas for development.
- Senior leaders have used monitoring in RE to identify and address any areas that require improving. Pupil progress meetings conducted by senior leaders each half term have been particularly useful in monitoring standards in RE.
- Although current monitoring and evaluation correctly identifies and addresses the areas that require improvement, the RE action plan does not reflect these key priorities recognised by the school. To improve teaching and learning in RE from good to outstanding the RE action plan needs to be adapted.
- Senior leaders ensure adequate time is devoted to professional development of staff in RE. Priority is given each half term to informing staff of any current evaluation of monitoring processes, diocesan initiatives and developments, and in-house training linked to the current SIP.
- Newly qualified teachers have been very well supported by the RE subject leader and by senior leaders. As a result, they have good subject knowledge and are able to teach RE with growing confidence.
- The school has made good use of support from the diocesan RE primary advisers to improve standards in RE. Staff have used the Thinking Skills resources to stimulate pupils' responses to questions about RE.
- Staff throughout the school use a wide variety of tasks to engage pupils such as role play, art and extended writing. Consequently, pupils enjoy their RE lessons and are keen to take an active part in them.
- A range of assessment processes are used to inform staff about pupils' attainment and progress in RE. These include the use of diocesan unit markers for pupils to self-

assess their knowledge and understanding of RE, end of unit assessments and the levelling of focus pupils' work. Staff use this information to inform the teaching and learning for all pupils but it could be used more thoroughly.

- To validate teacher assessment and to improve teaching and learning from good to outstanding, judgements should now be moderated both within school and across the LTCPP.
- Assessments, evidence from pupils' learning journals and lesson observations indicate that pupils' standards in RE meet diocesan expectations and that pupils progress well in RE.
- Underachievement or anomalies in teacher assessment are usually identified at pupil progress meetings by senior leaders, and measures are put in place to address underperformance.
- The quality of teaching in RE is never less than good and is sometimes outstanding. Consequently, the vast majority of pupils make good progress in RE. Progress is especially rapid in reception class and upper Key Stage 2 where teaching is challenging and inspirational.
- Pupils' understanding of how they should live their lives is securely informed by their knowledge of RE. Planning of lessons, class displays, the use of wonder walls and teacher feedback have all been instrumental in this development.
- Teacher questioning of pupils during lessons assesses pupils' knowledge of RE well but it needs to more frequently challenge children's in-depth understanding about the meaning of religion.
- Written and verbal feedback to pupils follows the school's marking policy. Teachers' next steps marking often poses questions about RE and asks pupils questions about what they have learnt about the meaning of RE.
- Many pupils provide heartfelt and thoughtful comments to teacher feedback. However, not all pupils respond to teachers' next steps in marking or respond at an appropriate level.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes to their learning. As a result, the vast majority of pupils take pride in their RE work and understand that it is special because it is '*about the Lord*.'
- The RE curriculum is based on the diocesan scheme, '*Learning and Growing as the People of God*,' and follows its recommendations in terms of planning and assessment.
- Governors fulfil their statutory and canonical responsibilities in regards to RE. They ensure that the requirements of the Bishops' Conference are met in terms of curriculum time for RE and the priority that RE is given within the school.
- Relationships and Sex Education is taught in an age appropriate way and in accordance with the teachings of the Catholic Church.
- All pupils have a good knowledge of other faiths and beliefs. Displays throughout the school and participation in a focused week about other faiths and beliefs have facilitated this learning. To further enhance this aspect of the curriculum it would be useful for pupils to visit a variety of places of worship during their time at St Joseph's.

Recommendations

In order to improve the school should:

- Ensure the RE action plan accurately reflects the key priorities of the school to improve teaching and learning in RE from good to outstanding.

- Develop the use of RE assessment data and moderation of pupils' work, both within school and the LTCP, to inform teaching and learning.
- Develop teacher questioning to deepen children's understanding about the meaning of religion.
- Increase the RE and Catholic life link governor's involvement in the ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the school.