



# Archdiocese of Birmingham

## Section 48 Inspection Report

### ST JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Newman Grove, Rugeley, Staffordshire, WS15 1BN

Inspection dates:

25-26 November 2021

Lead Inspector:

Ben McArdle

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#### OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS:

**Good**

Catholic Life:

Good

Religious Education:

Good

Collective Worship:

Outstanding

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*Overall effectiveness at previous inspection:*

*Outstanding*

#### SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

This is a Good Catholic school because:

- Opportunities for pupils' personal development are strong. Because of the consistently excellent leadership and modelling of the headteacher, pupils have an overwhelming desire to be good people and know how to become so.
- There is a good connection with the parish. Members of the congregation hold responsibilities within the school and the parish priest provides extensive support to the Catholic Life, Religious Education and Collective Worship of the school.
- Almost all pupils' progress in Religious Education in each key stage is good and is better than in other core subjects.
- Prayer is a lived experience in the school. It has a visible effect on the development of pupils, who share their witness throughout the community.

It is not yet Outstanding because:

- Pupils have a role in the evaluation of Catholic Life but the impact of their involvement in planning improvements is limited.
- Teachers' planning of Religious Education for more able pupils is not always based on their current assessment of those pupils' knowledge and understanding.
- Monitoring and evaluation processes require greater rigour to ensure they are consistently robust in accurately identifying areas for development and bringing about rapid improvements.

**FULL REPORT****What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Enable pupils to contribute to the school's evaluation of Catholic Life in a planned and systematic way, subsequently empowering them to take a lead in planning improvements.
- For more able pupils, plan Religious Education lessons that are linked to teachers' assessments, so that they consistently consolidate and extend these pupils' knowledge and understanding.
- Increase the rigour of monitoring and evaluation processes for Catholic Life and Religious Education so that they are consistently robust in accurately identifying areas for development and bringing about rapid improvements.

**THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL**

<b>The quality of the Catholic Life of the school</b>	<b>Good</b>
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school	Good
The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school	Outstanding
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor, and evaluate the provision of the Catholic Life of the school	Good

**CL1 The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school****CL2 The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school**

- The behaviour of pupils is excellent. Pupils demonstrate genuine, positive relationships with each other and the adults with whom they work. They are friendly, kind, and respectful; this is because of their desire to be 'good people'. There is a strong sense of fellowship within the school community, for example, pupils are quick to congratulate each other and to celebrate one another's successes.
- The provision of chaplaincy is outstanding. The work of the parish priest is greatly valued and has a significant positive impact within the school community. This is further strengthened by the extensive work of the school's lay chaplain, which is exemplary. All this ensures that St Joseph's is a community with prayer at its centre. Pupils are enthusiastic about their retreat experiences and can articulate the way in which they impact behaviours and attitudes in school with clarity and confidence.
- Everyone knows the school's mission. Pupils can express how God inspires their love and consideration of other people in the world, which is a particular strength of the school. Pupils are less confident in expressing how they learn with God in their hearts; their understanding of this needs to be developed.
- Opportunities for personal development are strong. Pupils desire to contribute towards the common good because of the consistent modelling of the headteacher and the staff, who highlight the importance of doing so at every available moment. This is reflected in the prayer life of the school which includes, for example, pupils

in Reception who pray for absent peers each day 'just in case' they are ill, and pupils in Year 5 who pray for members of the school community who are suffering.

- The impact of pupils' involvement in planning improvements to Catholic Life because of their evaluation of it is limited; during the inspection, pupils were unable to talk about opportunities for them to contribute in this area. Pupils' evaluation of Catholic Life needs to be a regular, planned, and systematic feature of the school's self-evaluation so that pupils are empowered to lead aspects of its development.
- Pupils' understanding of the concept of vocation develops during their time at St Joseph's. Older pupils articulate their understanding of God's call to serve in all areas of their lives deeply, whilst younger pupils think about vocation in terms of jobs and careers. This understanding could be developed more quickly.
- Staff are fully committed to the school community. They are excellent role models for pupils, who aspire to emulate what they see. Staff are equally supportive of one another and thrive in their shared ambition to provide high quality Catholic education.
- Pupils, staff, and governors particularly value the deep-rooted commitment of the headteacher, who is an inspirational witness to the Good News of Jesus Christ. Parents appreciate his approachability and the way in which he maintains an open line of communication between the school, home, and parish. They recognise him as a good person who is sincere in his care of the pupils.
- The school continues to improve its physical environment as an expression of the Faith. The site is distinctively Catholic and there are plans to continue to develop it. There is good consistency between different classrooms in terms of prayer focus areas. Because of this, pupils can speak with confidence about the items that are on display and their importance.
- There is a planned focus on incorporating Catholic Life discretely into some areas of the curriculum. For example, in science lessons, pupils look at how habitats change through the lens of sustainability, and poems written on the theme of remembrance in English lessons serve as a catalyst for pupils to write their own prayers for holy souls. A particular focus on incorporating Catholic social teaching into all subject areas will help to further develop a truly Catholic curriculum.
- The quality of pastoral care for pupils is very good. Parents are appreciative of this and the effect it has on the well-being of their children within and beyond the school gates. One parent, whose child has recently joined the school, was overwhelmed by the proactive and quick identification of their child's need and the support plan that has been put in place to address it.
- Staff are equally thankful of the pastoral care that is afforded them. They feel that leaders are attentive to their needs and, as a result, the community is a safe and happy refuge for all.
- Pupils' understanding of loving relationships and sexual development is growing as a result of the implementation of a new relationships, sex, and health education programme.
- The spiritual development of pupils is a real strength of the school. Through a focussed spotlight on their relationship with God, pupils are provided with extensive opportunities to grow as people of God and encouraged to be active disciples.
- The school provides numerous opportunities for pupils to express pride in their religious and cultural identity. Pupils at St Joseph's visit care homes, sing in the town centre and take part in a joint school-parish service of reconciliation, which have a good impact on developing their sense of belonging within the local community.
- The school has recently re-launched its Faith Ambassador and Mini Vinnie initiatives, as we emerge from the pandemic. Pupils have been encouraged to reflect on the commitments they sign-up to because leaders want pupil leaders who are

committed. Consequently, the number of Mini Vinnies has decreased, and it is too soon to see the impact of their work, but they are incredibly passionate about their role and are keen to recruit more to their ranks.

### **CL3 How well leaders and governors promote, monitor, and evaluate the provision of the Catholic Life of the school**

- As a result of the deep commitment of the headteacher, who is energised by the task of leading a Catholic community, the Catholic Life of the school is given priority by leaders and governors. It is viewed by all as a core leadership responsibility.
- Monitoring activities are undertaken to identify areas of strength and areas for development which subsequently inform school development work. However, the majority of these are informal and, as such, less useful for evaluation and planning. Rigorous monitoring, including analysis of information that is gained from interviews and surveys, is needed in order to identify priorities swiftly and clearly, to action next steps and bring about rapid improvements relating to Catholic Life.
- Leaders seek the views of parents as part of their evaluation of Catholic Life. Although findings are not formally analysed, the general feedback from them is used to determine planned improvements which further enhance the Catholic Life of the school.
- Feedback from the lay chaplain is given to the headteacher, the subject leader for Religious Education, class teachers and the parish priest, though this is not formalised.
- Staff are involved in continuing professional development (CPD) relating to the Catholic Life of the school, which they feel has enhanced their practice. In particular, training from high quality external providers has enabled staff to clearly understand the school's mission within the context of the community it serves.
- Governors have high aspirations for the school and are incredibly supportive of its leadership team. They view the Catholic Life of the school as the top priority, which is reflected in the way they have structured their meetings and organisation. In particular, the parish priest, who also serves as a foundation governor, has had a profound positive impact on the faith life of the school.
- Whilst there is good evidence of the active engagement of governors, information about the deliberations and challenges coming from the governing body is limited within the school's documentation. Consequently, the focus of their work is operational at times.
- Leaders and governors ensure that the school responds well to diocesan policies and initiatives. They promote the bishop's vision for the diocese throughout the school.

**RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

<b>The quality of Religious Education</b>	<b>Good</b>
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education	Good
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education	Good
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor, and evaluate the provision for Religious Education	Good

**RE1 How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education****RE2 The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education**

- Pupils' progress in Religious Education is good in each key stage for almost all pupils. Data provided by the school demonstrates that pupils make better progress in Religious Education than in other core subjects.
- Most groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and disabilities, are making progress comparable to the progress of other pupils. More able pupils, however, are not routinely challenged sufficiently to maximise their learning, which creates the opportunity for passivity in lessons. More able pupils need to be challenged further and more quickly in lessons to enable them to reach their full potential.
- Pupils are religiously literate. They have a very good understanding of the Bible and what it teaches them about God. Consequently, pupils use the Bible with confidence to support their learning.
- Because of the type of questions posed by teachers during lessons, pupils are enabled to reflect spiritually and morally on the issues covered by the curriculum.
- Pupils are actively engaged in lessons; they love Religious Education and are clear on why it is important to them. Pupils have an authentic desire to learn about God. Due to this, pupils' behaviour in Religious Education lessons is very good.
- Pupils' attainment, as indicated by teacher assessment, is good. Most pupils meet the age-related standards, however the number of pupils surpassing them is relatively low. This is because the tasks teachers set do not always enable pupils to achieve the more challenging learning outcomes. Teachers must provide pupils with opportunities to concretely demonstrate their achievement against these standards.
- The quality of pupils' written work is good: they take care with their work and standards of presentation are comparable to those in other core subjects.
- There is a high reliance on worksheets in exercise books, which limits the opportunity for pupils to write at length and clearly demonstrate the depth of their understanding.
- Teachers plan lessons which are consistently good. They ensure that all pupils are enabled to meet the outcomes that *most* pupils should. However, teachers' planning of lessons needs greater focus on their current assessment of more able pupils' knowledge and understanding, to ensure that tasks and questioning are pitched at an appropriate level for such pupils. The subject leader does this expertly, though the practice is not embedded more widely across the school.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is secure, which enables them to deal with pupils' questions confidently. This has been well supported by the parish priest, who has run the Alpha course for staff at the presbytery. This has contributed significantly to the development of their knowledge and spirituality.

- A good variety of teaching strategies is competently deployed by teachers. Work in pupils' exercise books shows that drama, drawing, Venn diagrams, and creative prayer opportunities are part of their routine diet in lessons. Consequently, pupils say they enjoy Religious Education.
- Time is used effectively for most pupils, though some need to be moved onto more challenging tasks quickly than they currently are, as teachers do not always have the highest expectations of all groups of pupils.
- Questioning is effective for most pupils and there are some examples of outstanding practice in this area, particularly in the early years foundation stage. Where questioning is outstanding, teachers routinely use it to assess pupils' knowledge before immediately pushing them on to a greater depth of understanding, though this is not embedded consistently across classrooms within the school, many of which rely on whole class questioning.
- Long term planning must allow sufficient time for all topics to be explored in depth. Teachers ought to ensure every opportunity for pupils to demonstrate the depth of their understanding for all topics on the curriculum.
- Feedback in Religious Education identifies successes in pupils' work and poses questions for reflection. Because of this, pupils are well motivated to consider how religious teaching influences their behaviours and attitudes.
- Pupils' achievements are also celebrated by teachers in their written feedback to pupils. However, there is little evidence in school of this being celebrated through the display of pupils' work in classrooms and corridors.

### **RE3 How well leaders and governors promote, monitor, and evaluate the provision for Religious Education**

- Leaders and governors ensure that the required time is allocated to the teaching of Religious Education in each key stage.
- Governors ensure that Religious Education meets the additional requirements of the Archbishop of Birmingham in every respect.
- The subject is afforded full parity with other core subjects, in terms of finance, esteem and CPD. The commitment of the governors is clearly demonstrated through the fact that the subject leader for Religious Education is not currently class-based, enabling her to dedicate all of her time to further driving up standards.
- Self-evaluation in Religious Education identifies some of the issues that the school needs to address. However, more rigour is needed in order to evaluate the provision and practice of the school against the requirements of the inspection framework accurately.
- The subject leader for Religious Education uses her knowledge and skillset to result in teaching that is at least consistently good. Because monitoring and evaluation is not always rigorous, the pockets of outstanding practice that exist within the teaching of Religious Education are not accurately identified and shared effectively with all teachers. In pursuit of outstanding teaching and learning, leaders should focus their CPD on the specific areas that would enable this standard to be met.
- Prior to the pandemic, teachers' planning for Religious Education was shared with the parish priest, which enabled him to refer to their learning in his homilies at school Masses.

**COLLECTIVE WORSHIP**

<b>The quality of Collective Worship</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship	Outstanding
The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school	Outstanding
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor, and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship	Outstanding

**CW1 How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship****CW2 The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school**

- Pupils are highly engaged in prayer and liturgy because they are given the opportunity to pray about things that are important and relevant to them. This enables them to pray for their own intentions. As a result, they are confident and enthusiastic about prayer whilst at school.
- Pupils display an exceptional level of reverence during prayer. This is because of the high expectations and deeply embedded routines throughout the school. Pupils understand that prayer is a time to speak to God. By being respectful and embracing the opportunity to do so themselves, they enable one another to pray.
- A variety of traditional and contemporary prayer styles is used with all pupils: scripture, intercessions, and prayers of thanksgiving feature regularly in the school's provision. Furthermore, pupils are confident in facilitating open prayer within their classrooms. This is because they are routinely expected to be actively involved in leading prayer.
- The routine provision of Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament is an area of excellence at St Joseph's. Because the parish priest and headteacher have explained the form of prayer carefully to pupils, not only do they have a deeper understanding of it, but they also embrace the opportunity to pray reverently in this way. Provision is in place for Adoration to take place in the absence of the parish priest through careful instruction. This ensures that pupils' spiritual development continues without disruption.
- The weekly Mass, which is usually well attended by parents and parishioners, is effective in developing pupils' understanding of the key seasons and feasts of the Church.
- The quality of singing is very good. As a result, Mass and assemblies are joyful occasions which pupils enjoy. Hymns that are used in Mass are carefully selected to reinforce key concepts in order to develop pupils' understanding. For example, the hymn sung during the Offertory at the time of this inspection contained excellent Eucharistic teaching.
- Prayer is a lived experience which has a profound and visible effect on the development of pupils. Their witness is proclaimed throughout the local community, including to the parish and a local care home.
- Prayer is purposeful at St Joseph's. Staff identify themes for prayer throughout the school consistently. Elements of this are encouraged in some areas of the school's taught curriculum. As a result, pupils understand that prayer is central to the life of the school community.

- Collective Worship is planned carefully against the Church's liturgical year and, as a result of effective monitoring and resourcing, this enhances the cherishment of prayer by all members of the community.
- Whilst pupils are confident in leading prayer, the school has accurately identified this as an area to develop further, in order to give pupils opportunities to plan and deliver prayer that is uplifting for their peers.
- Opportunities for prayer are planned in a way that facilitates and attracts attendance by parents and parishioners, who appreciate the high-quality prayer experiences provided.

### **CW3 How well leaders and governors promote, monitor, and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship**

- Leaders have expert knowledge in how to plan and deliver quality prayer and liturgy. As a result of their knowledge and mastery, the promotion of Collective Worship is a key strength of the school.
- Leaders' extensive knowledge of the Church's liturgical year is demonstrated through the way they plan acts of prayer that are in union with the rhythm of the Church. They explain the seasons and feasts very well resulting in pupils' excellent understanding. Because of the high quality CPD provided by the parish priest and external providers, the confidence of all staff in doing this has grown considerably in recent times.
- Governors place high priority on Collective Worship. This is demonstrated by the commitment to engage an independent lay chaplain to work with pupils, primarily to prepare them to lead aspects of Mass. As a result of this, pupils are confident, creative leaders of prayer and all members of the community cherish these aspects of worship.
- The lay chaplain is expert in promoting pupil leadership of prayer. Because of her work, in conjunction with the work of the parish priest, all members of the community fully understand the importance and sanctity of the liturgy.
- Effective monitoring and evaluation ensure that standards are consistently high and that the prayer life of St Joseph's remains a development for leaders.
- Leaders' and governors' commitment to the development of Collective Worship is further demonstrated by the recent creation of a chapel on the school site. This was well-supported by the parish, who provided furnishings and artefacts. Use of the chapel now needs to be resurrected as a daily feature of the school's prayer life.
- Leaders are highly competent role models in demonstrating high expectations surrounding prayer. The headteacher is universally loved for the work he does in this area.
- St Joseph's fully embraces the additional requirements of the Archbishop of Birmingham in relation to Collective Worship.

**SCHOOL DETAILS**

Unique reference number	124360
Local authority	Staffordshire
<i>This inspection was carried out under Canon 806 of Canon Law and under Section 48 of the Education Act (2005).</i>	
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary Aided
Age range	2-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on roll	224, including 31 in Nursery
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mary Green
Headteacher	David Jobburns
Telephone number	01889 228735
Website address	<a href="https://www.st-josephs-rugeley.org.uk">https://www.st-josephs-rugeley.org.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:office@st-josephs-rugeley.staffs.sch.uk">office@st-josephs-rugeley.staffs.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	17-18 June 2015

**INFORMATION ABOUT THIS SCHOOL**

- St Joseph's Catholic Primary School is a smaller than average primary school serving the parish of St Joseph and St Etheldreda in Rugeley.
- The percentage of Catholic pupils is currently 38.5%.
- The percentage of disadvantaged pupils is broadly in line with the national average.
- The percentage of SEND pupils is broadly in line with the national average.
- The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic origins is below the national average.
- The percentage of pupils with EAL is in line with the national average.
- Attainment on entry is average.
- Since the last inspection a new headteacher, a new deputy headteacher and new subject leader for Religious Education have been appointed. There has also been significant changes to the composition of the governing body, including a new chairperson.

**INFORMATION ABOUT THIS INSPECTION**

- The inspection was carried out by two Diocesan Inspectors: Ben McArdle and Karyn Oakley; a shadow inspector – Janet Mellor – followed the inspection activities undertaken by them throughout both days of the inspection.
- The focus of the inspection was on the impact, quality, and leadership of the school's provision of Catholic Life, Religious Education and Collective Worship.
- The inspectors observed teaching across eight Religious Education lessons to evaluate the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Some of these lesson observations were conducted jointly with senior and/or middle leaders.
- The inspectors completed a work scrutiny and held discussions with pupils to evaluate their understanding of Catholic Life, the impact of Religious Education teaching on their learning over time and their experience of Collective Worship.

- Meetings were held with the chair of governors, the Catholic Life link governor, and two foundation governors, the headteacher, the Religious Education subject leader, lay chaplain, parish priest, teaching and non-teaching staff and pupils. A sample of parents also discussed the Catholic Life and Collective Worship of the school with inspectors.
- The inspectors attended a whole school Mass, class Collective Worship, a whole school assembly and undertook a learning walk to look at aspects of learning and teaching in Religious Education, 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, Analyse School Performance (ASP) data, the school development plan, the RE action plan, teachers' planning and learning journals.