



St Joseph's RCVA Primary School

Prince Consort Road, Gateshead, Tyne and Wear, NE8 1LR

School Unique Reference Number: **108383**

Inspection dates:	03 – 04 October 2019
Lead inspector:	Clare Swales

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

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

St Joseph's RCVA Primary School is an outstanding Catholic school because:

- St Joseph's is a warm, welcoming school, where everyone shares the vision of the headteacher and where everyone is loved and respected. It is clear that the prime purpose is helping children to develop their faith and to understand that God loves them.
- The Catholic Life of the school is outstanding. The mission statement is truly at the heart of everything the school does. It is a joyful, prayerful community in which pupils, staff, parents and governors support one another as they continue to develop and grow in faith.
- The quality of Religious Education is good. Pupils enjoy Religious Education and are committed to improving their knowledge. They understand its value and make good progress in most lessons.
- The quality of Collective Worship is outstanding. Prayer and worship are central to the life of the school and a key part of every school celebration. High quality acts of worship create a nurturing, spiritual environment.

FULL REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

- St Joseph's is a smaller than average primary school situated in an urban area, in the centre of Gateshead, with high levels of social deprivation.
- Most pupils are of white British heritage, although there is an increasing percentage of pupils from other ethnicity groups, the majority of whom have English as an additional language.
- The percentage of pupils eligible for pupil premium is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is well above the national average.
- From September 2019, each member of the teaching staff is teaching in a year group which is different to that of recent years.

WHAT DOES THE SCHOOL NEED TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- Improve the quality of Religious Education by:
 - developing teacher subject knowledge through leadership support and focused continuing professional development, so that it inspires pupils to make rapid and sustained progress
 - ensuring high quality feedback in all lessons, so that pupils understand what they need to do to improve

CATHOLIC LIFE

THE QUALITY OF 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.
- 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.

- Pupils make an outstanding contribution to the Catholic Life of the school. It is a very natural part of being a member of the school community. The mission statement is displayed throughout the school and pupils have an exceptional understanding of how this impacts on their daily lives.
- Pupils have a deep respect for themselves and others, and from an early age, develop an understanding that they are made in the image and likeness of God. They are happy, confident and secure in their own stage of spiritual and emotional growth.
- The behaviour of almost all pupils is exemplary at all times. In proportion to their years they show an ability to listen, to give thanks, to forgive and be forgiven. They are supported by a coherent team of staff, governors and parents. The school provides excellent care and support, resulting in happy, confident pupils who thoroughly enjoy coming to school.
- Pupils respond enthusiastically to opportunities to take on areas of responsibility in and out of school. Older pupils understand that sharing their gifts with others is part of their vocation and they do so with joy. Mini Vinnies spoke with pride about their support for the Gateshead Foodbank and a summer holiday project at Oasis Community Housing, as well as carol singing for the homeless at Joe's Place.

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

- The mission statement, 'Aim high, Care for others as Jesus does, Everyone welcome' is proudly displayed throughout the school. The whole school is passionate about its implementation. It is woven into all aspects of school life and clearly focuses the school community.
- The school community is an inspiration; staff are excellent role models when promoting mutual respect and forgiveness to pupils. Parents speak of a safe and caring community. They choose the school because, 'there is something special about it,' and 'it has an excellent, caring, nurturing atmosphere.'
- The learning environment reflects the school's mission and Catholic character. Focal points in the hall and each classroom reflect the liturgical year and displays promote the importance of Catholic Life in the community. There are areas around school for quiet reflection and a post box for pupils to post their letters to Pope Francis.

- Relationships in school are excellent. Staff speak of a family atmosphere, where everyone is very much part of the team.
- A commitment to the most vulnerable is reflected in policies and pastoral programmes. Pupils and their families are exceptionally well cared for and parents very much appreciate the support they are given by the school community.

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

- There is a deep commitment, from all leaders, to the Church's mission in education. The headteacher and deputy headteacher, who is also the Religious Education coordinator, lead by example and act as a source of inspiration to the community. They are active and visible in school and the community ensuring pupils are given the best possible experiences in order to grow in faith.
- The vision for the school is clear and is shared by leaders and governors as a core leadership responsibility. The Catholic Life of the school is given the highest priority, governors commented that, 'there is an understanding of need and that is translated into vision and community.'
- School self-evaluation is rigorous and accurate, staff work together to monitor and evaluate the strengths of the school and analyse the impact of provision. This has clear links to the school development plan, which is focused on improving outcomes.
- The school has very successful strategies for engaging with parents and carers. Parents and carers are fully supportive of the school and the many opportunities it offers their children. They appreciate the many opportunities to come into school and the welcome they are given. As one grandparent commented, 'you can't get better than excellent, and this school is excellent.'
- Parents and carers have a thorough understanding of the school's mission and are highly supportive of it. One parent commented that, 'the mission builds a community, a caring school.'
- Governors are active within the school community and have an excellent grasp of the school's strengths and areas for development. They know the school well and are skilful and effective in holding leaders to account whilst supporting its mission.
- Staff, particularly those who are new to the school, are very well supported. They are very appreciative of the support given to them.

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.

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

- Most pupils, from their varied starting points, make good progress in each key stage with a minority making outstanding progress, particularly in key stage 1.
- Relative to their age, pupils are religiously literate and engaged and are developing the knowledge, skills and understanding to think ethically and theologically.
- Most are aware of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life.
- The majority of pupils are actively engaged in lessons and are committed to improving their knowledge, understanding and skills to develop further as learners. However, opportunities to understand how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve are inconsistent and, at times, limit progress.
- Pupils approach lessons with enthusiasm and interest and enjoy challenging activities. Pupils say they like to learn about God and how to live like him, and they very much enjoy role play activities. They comment that, 'more creative things in Religious Education might help us to learn even more.'
- Behaviour in lessons is consistently very good because pupils enjoy Religious Education and are rarely off task.
- Pupils identified as having special educational needs make good progress because their needs are quickly and accurately identified and they have well targeted support from highly skilled staff. Pupils with special educational needs are engaged and very much enjoy their Religious Education.
- Inspection findings and data presented by the school shows no notable differences between groups of learners.

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

- Teaching is mainly good and there is some outstanding practice.
- Because of recent movement amongst classes, staff subject knowledge is not as strong as in previous years. Leadership are aware of this and have planned a programme of support and focused professional development opportunities.
- Teachers employ a range of appropriate strategies, including individual and collaborative work. Consequently, pupils are motivated and concentrate in lessons.

- Teachers communicate high expectations about Religious Education to their pupils, most of whom respond positively. Work is presented with care and a sense of pride.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are very positive and a real strength of the school. Teaching assistants are confident in their knowledge and ability; they are effectively deployed to efficiently support and extend the learning of pupils across the range of abilities.
- Achievement and effort are regularly celebrated. There are examples of good quality feedback throughout school to accelerate pupil progress. However, this is inconsistent and not all pupils are given the opportunity to develop their understanding of what they need to do to improve.
- Alongside knowledge of their targets, pupils are encouraged to reflect upon their learning and are able to do so with increasing effectiveness. Self-assessment by pupils is well embedded and consistently applied across the school. Pupils enjoy talking about the impact their work has on them, stating, 'there is always something new to learn and you can use it in your life.'

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

- Leaders and governors ensure that the Religious Education curriculum meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference in every respect and in each key stage.
- Leaders and governors ensure that Religious Education has full parity with other core subjects, including professional development, resourcing, staffing and accommodation. This is evident in the quality of focal points and displays in classrooms.
- Leaders and governors' self-evaluation is coherent and well-informed. Governors report that planned Governor Weeks are very insightful and enable them to contribute effectively to self-evaluation. As a result, leaders have an accurate picture of the strengths and areas for development, evidenced in the school improvement plan.
- There is a rigorous monitoring programme in place, which includes staff, pupils, parents and governors. Governors report being kept well-informed and up to date on key issues by the Religious Education curriculum leader. They actively challenge and ask questions.
- The curriculum leader for Religious Education has an inspiring vision for outstanding teaching and learning. Staff very much welcome her support and expertise in securing this vision. The curriculum leader demonstrates a passion for Religious Education, which is clearly shared by the headteacher and governors. These qualities are used very effectively to improve teaching, which is consistently good and at times outstanding.
- Leaders and governors give Religious Education the highest profile. It is imaginatively and thoughtfully planned to meet the needs of different groups and is creatively structured to build on previous learning.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

THE QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

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- 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.

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

- St Joseph's is a prayerful community, where acts of Collective Worship engage all pupils' interest and inspire them in thoughtful and heartfelt response.
- Pupils are natural and at ease with the prayer life of the school. The enthusiasm for Collective Worship is reflected in the quality of singing, in the quality of prayerful silence, and the depth of reverent participation in communal prayer.
- Pupils readily take the initiative in leading worship, displaying confidence and enthusiasm. They are creative and resourceful in their planning of liturgy, creating focal points and prayer spaces or prayer stops. They want it to be the best it can be; they are able to talk knowledgeably about the variety of prayers and liturgies that take place, commenting that, 'we pray regularly, in liturgy, in our house groups and in Rosary Club.'
- From the earliest age, pupils recognise the special nature of liturgical symbols and show reverence and respect. They are aware that religious beliefs are important and can affect their own actions.
- The experience of living and working in a faithful, praying community has a profound and visible effect on the spiritual and moral development of all pupils. Pupils at St Joseph's come from a wide variety of faith backgrounds, but all, very clearly benefit from daily acts of Collective Worship in its variety of forms. This has a very positive effect on relationships and behaviour in school.

The quality of provision for Collective Worship is outstanding.

- Collective Worship is central to the life of the school for all pupils, whatever their own particular faith background and forms the heart of every celebration. Praying together is part of a joyful daily experience for pupils and staff.
- Collective Worship has a clear purpose, message and direction. It engages pupils, staff and parents, leading to a deeper understanding of the school's mission and how belief affects action.
- There is a clear policy for Collective Worship; it is carefully planned and resourced. Relevant staff have an excellent understanding of the Church's liturgical year, seasons and feasts and are passionate about ensuring that pupils have high quality experiences of the Church's

liturgical life.

- Staff are very skilled in helping pupils to plan and deliver quality worship. They act as excellent role models for all pupils and are actively engaged in all forms of worship. Pupils are introduced to a wide variety of forms and style of prayer appropriate to their age and stage of development. A rich variety of prayer forms were observed during the inspection including traditional prayer, hymns, music, liturgical dance, stillness and contemplation.
- There is a comprehensive timetable for worship, which attracts and facilitates attendance by parents and governors. They actively support and engage in worship with the school community on a regular basis. They appreciate the fact that they are given a calendar of Collective Worship planned throughout the year. One parent commented that Collective Worship in school is, 'embedded in ethos and anchored in community.'

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

- Leaders, including governors, have expert knowledge and understanding in how to plan and deliver quality Collective Worship. They have an extensive understanding of the Church's liturgical year, seasons and feasts and translate that knowledge into worship which is contextualised and meaningful to pupils.
- They are always able to make these accessible to pupils; the headteacher skilfully weaves real life situations into Collective Worship to deepen pupils' understanding of faith in a contemporary context. A range of artefacts, symbols and information technology are used to deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding. Therefore, worship is delivered in a way that is relevant to pupils using a range of skills and quality resources.
- Leaders are very visible as leaders of Collective Worship within school and are models of outstanding practice for staff and pupils. Governors regularly attend worship and are known to pupils, staff and parents.
- Leaders regularly review Collective Worship throughout the school. They seek the views of pupils and parents through the use of questionnaires. Responses are very affirming; parents describe Collective Worship as meaningful and appropriate and say that it resonates with the children.
- The headteacher and Religious Education coordinator are passionate that liturgical and spiritual development are priorities for all in school. This is evident in the priority placed on the professional development of staff incorporating liturgical formation and the planning of Collective Worship.
- The quality of Collective Worship is monitored by the leadership team. It is given high priority by all leaders and ensures that all, including governors, have an accurate understanding of the strengths and area for further development in Collective Worship.

SUMMARY OF INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

HOW EFFECTIVE THE SCHOOL IS IN PROVIDING CATHOLIC EDUCATION:

1

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.

1

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP:

1

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

1

The quality of provision for Collective Worship.

1

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

1

SCHOOL DETAILS

School name	St Joseph's RCVA Primary School
Unique reference number	108383
Local authority	Gateshead
This Inspection Report is produced for the Rt Reverend Robert Byrne 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	Mr John Hattam
Date of previous school inspection	February 2015
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