



St Joseph's RC Primary School

Ragworth Road , Norton, Stockton on Tees, TS20 1HR

School Unique Reference Number: **111684**

Inspection dates:	20 – 21 June 2016
Lead inspector:	Mrs Jane Weatherall
Team inspector:	Mrs Angela Boyle

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

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

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

- The Catholic life of St Joseph's is outstanding because the mission and ethos of Catholic education underpins the work of this inclusive school.
- The quality of Religious Education is outstanding because pupils enjoy their learning. Teaching across the school is consistently good with examples of outstanding practice. As a result pupils throughout the school achieve high standards. Behaviour for learning is outstanding.
- The quality of Collective Worship is outstanding because it is central to the life of the school and from a very young age pupils in school are deeply reverent and respectful during prayer, 'Candle Time' and whole school Collective Worship.

FULL REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

- St Joseph's is a larger than average primary school serving the parishes of St Joseph's, Norton and St Mary's, Stockton. Pupils enter the school from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals is lower than the national average, as is the percentage of pupils from ethnic minority groups. The number of pupils designated as having special educational needs is slightly below the national average. The school is oversubscribed.

WHAT DOES THE SCHOOL NEED TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- To further improve teaching by:
 - Ensuring that best practice in pupil self-assessment and peer assessment is implemented consistently across the school.
 - Continuing to develop the expertise of all staff in assessment procedures in line with the diocesan guidelines.

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 and staff have a palpable sense of belonging to this vibrant Catholic school community. They flourish in an atmosphere where everyone is valued and is expected to achieve.
- Pupils are very proud of their school and its religious identity and they eagerly take part in school, community, parish and diocesan celebrations and activities. They are able to contribute to the school's evaluation of its Catholic Life through their year six exit interviews with governors, along with responses through the school council.
- Pupils talk with pride about the activities they have been involved in through which they serve others; particularly their support of the food bank, A Way Out, singing carols at local care homes and the help they have given in fundraising for a parent travelling to Kenya to work with the disadvantaged. They have a strong sense of social justice for all and in this way live out their mission.
- All stakeholders have been involved in the shaping of the school's mission statements which are lived out each day in school.
- The behaviour of pupils is exemplary at all times. Pupils are alert to the needs of others they are ready to support each other and celebrate each other's qualities and successes with the school's 'Fruits of the Spirit' awards which they nominate each other for.

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

- The school mission statement is central to school life. The children's mission statement has meant that its principles are now known by all and lived out around school each day. It clearly defines the wider mission of the church in child friendly language.
- The school provides the very best pastoral care to all pupils particularly those in most need; providing a lunchtime nurture club for those pupils who would find the long playtime challenging. This care results in a happy, caring community where witness to Jesus Christ is at the heart of the school.
- Pupils have many opportunities to participate in a variety of activities including retreat days, celebrating the feast of the patron saint of their class and taking part in a school mission. These experiences have a very positive effect on their personal development.
- Throughout the school environment high quality displays and signs everywhere point to the

school's distinctive Catholic character. The result is that the children are immersed in the signs and images of their faith and so view it as central to their life.

- St Joseph's has high expectations of its pupil's behaviour which the children live up to. Consequently behaviour is exemplary.

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

- The school's leadership and management promote the Catholic Life of the school extremely well. They show deep commitment to this distinctively Catholic, thriving community. Development of this Catholic Life forms the first priority on the schools improvement plan and the priorities are then communicated to governors in each headteacher's report.
- Self-reflection and evaluation at all levels result in rigorous planning and actions taken to ensure continuous improvement in all aspects of the Catholic Life of this school.
- Parents and other stakeholders are kept well informed about the school and its Catholic mission through an engaging and informative website which allows them to share in the prayers their children are taught, the patron saints of each class and the learning they will be covering throughout the term.
- Governors offer support and challenge effectively and are welcome and established visitors around school. They have been generous in the support offered to another diocesan school in need.
- Staff work closely with catechists to ensure that sacramental preparation is of very high quality and is inclusive, making the receiving of sacraments a whole school celebration.
- Parents commented very positively on the sense of family within this school community, created by the executive headteacher, governors and staff. They are very supportive and clearly value the long term impact the Catholic Life of this school has on their children. They speak of this school as "a shining light" in their community.

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 very prayerful community. Collective Worship engages all pupils' interest and inspires them to reflect and respond reverently and with great joy. In both large and small gatherings pupils are respectful, reverent, reflective and prayerful. They know many traditional prayers appropriate to their age.
- Pupils take part in, lead and prepare class 'Candle Time' liturgies and whole school prayer with enthusiasm and confidence. Well established liturgy groups in each class know what is expected of them, and the part they have to play in preparing worship for their peers, which is done at an age appropriate level.
- The school has invested wisely in a variety of artefacts and resources which the children use to add to their worship experiences.
- Pupils have an excellent understanding of the church's liturgical year and seasons and a deep understanding of special devotions such as the Rosary and Stations of the Cross. They enjoy celebrating feast days and pupils throughout the school are aware of their importance to the school community.
- There is a deep sense of respect for other faiths and pupils are well informed about world faiths. All of these contribute very positively to their spiritual and moral development which is outstanding.

The quality of provision for Collective Worship is outstanding.

- Collective Worship forms the heart of every school celebration, is inclusive and reflective. Praying together is a natural part of the school day for all staff and pupils.
- From the beginning of their school life in nursery, pupils are encouraged to have a special relationship with God through prayer. Opportunities for worship, Masses, liturgies and other liturgical celebrations are well planned and resourced.
- There is a clear policy for Collective Worship. It is both regular and inclusive and the school has a wealth of photographic evidence of a wide range of worship opportunities. It is well resourced and as a result Collective Worship is of a very high quality.
- Themes chosen for worship reflect a deep understanding of the liturgical year. The school has wholeheartedly embraced the Year of Mercy and with the support of their teachers

pupils have taken ownership of the 'Fruits of the Spirit' initiative and are developing an excellent understanding of their meaning.

- Skilled staff enable pupils to confidently plan, prepare and lead Collective Worship. They have a thorough understanding of the purpose of worship; they plan carefully for the liturgical formation of their pupils and ensure there is progression of skills from foundation stage through to year six.
- Parents appreciate the opportunity to attend 'Candle Time' and worship with their children; they do so in great numbers. One parent commented 'Candle Time is precious time'.

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

- Leaders and managers have excellent knowledge of how to plan and deliver quality experiences of Collective Worship and have shared this with staff and pupils. They model this in school and their dedication and commitment are instrumental in the drive to provide high quality Collective Worship across the school.
- Leaders have a deeply rooted understanding of the church's liturgical year, its seasons, rites and symbols. A range of artefacts and symbols are used to deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding and are prominently displayed to support their formation.
- Leaders ensure staff training is a priority in liturgical formation and spiritual development and ensure that teachers new to the school are well supported.
- The monitoring and evaluation of Collective Worship is a priority in the regular review of school performance, and is informed by feedback from pupils, staff, parents and governors. The responses are highly valued and lead to further developments evidenced in the school improvement plan.
- Interviews with governors, leaders, parents and parish clergy, along with the scrutiny of Collective Worship observations, pupil evaluations and parent questionnaires, reflect the importance and value that is placed upon providing the best for all pupils.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

THE QUALITY OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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- 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 outstanding.

- Pupils have a very positive attitude towards their Religious Education lessons, they concentrate well and tell us in pupil discussions how much they enjoy them. They produce work of high quality.
- Religious Education not only has a high profile but is at the heart of the school curriculum and daily life in and around school. They understand how Religious Education has an impact on all aspects of school life. As a result, behaviour for learning is outstanding.
- Standards of attainment for the overwhelming majority of pupil groups and classes are in line with diocesan averages and often above.
- Pupils are confident when talking about their learning and demonstrate very positive attitudes. Pupils are increasingly religiously literate and their knowledge, skills and understanding are developing well in relation to their age and ability. They are developing a range of skills and can apply these to everyday life.

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

- Teaching is consistently good with some outstanding practice evident. Staff have high expectations of quality and presentation of work and as a result pupils achieve well over time. They take care to engage pupils and this impacts positively on pupils' enjoyment, engagement and motivation.
- Where teaching is outstanding, teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and are able to guide learners to their next steps in learning through skilful questioning. Support staff are effectively deployed and contribute positively to pupils learning.
- Quality marking and regular assessment mean that teachers are aware of where each child needs to go next in their learning. Pupils are given the frequent opportunity to respond to teacher's feedback and do so consistently.
- Teachers use praise effectively to provide encouragement and support for all pupils throughout the school. Consequently, pupils strive to try their very best.

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

- The Religious Education coordinator has a very clear vision and sense of direction for what is needed to move the school forward. She is highly effective in promoting the high profile of this subject amongst staff and governors, who are kept informed of the priorities identified to bring about further improvement.
- The school makes effective use of professional development opportunities in-house, to mentor and guide new staff and to ensure accuracy of assessments, as well as through the diocese and the local authority.
- Tracking systems enable the school to ensure that different groups of pupils achieve equally well. This information is used to good effect by teachers who know their children's next targets for improvement.
- Sacramental preparation is truly outstanding, is exemplary in its inclusivity for the whole school community, and carried out in accordance with diocesan policy. It is highly valued by parents and pupils.
- Governors are regular visitors to the school, the Religious Education governor meets regularly with the coordinator for this subject, and they are committed to the development of the school and to the continuing development of children's religious knowledge throughout school.
- The Religious Education curriculum meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference and contributes very effectively to the pupils' spiritual and moral development.

SUMMARY OF INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

HOW EFFECTIVE THE SCHOOL IS IN PROVIDING CATHOLIC EDUCATION:

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CATHOLIC LIFE:

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

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

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

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COLLECTIVE WORSHIP:

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

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The quality of provision for Collective Worship.

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RELIGIOUS EDUCATION:

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

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The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education.

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

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SCHOOL DETAILS

School name	St Joseph's RC Primary School
Unique reference number	111684
Local authority	Stockton
This Inspection Report is produced for the Rt. Reverend Séamus Cunningham the Bishop of Hexham and Newcastle Diocese 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.	
Chair of governors	Peter Walker
Executive head teacher	Miss Mary Tate
Date of previous school inspection	June 2011
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