



THE CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF
ARUNDEL & BRIGHTON
EDUCATION SERVICE

Denominational Catholic School Inspection Report

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

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School Unique Reference Number: 13112

Headteacher:	Mr Tom Collins
Chair of Governors:	Mr David Barrett
Lead Inspector:	Mr Damian Fox
Associate Inspector:	Mrs Gill Askham
Inspection date:	20 October 2021
	Previous Inspection: 1
Overall Effectiveness	This Inspection: 1
Catholic Life:	1
Religious Education:	1
Collective Worship:	1

Summary of key findings for parents/carers and pupils/students

St Joseph's is an Outstanding Catholic school because:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Leadership at all levels is outstanding. Leaders demonstrate a distinct understanding of their role in providing a school that ensures every member of the community is valued. Respecting the dignity of each individual as a child of God is their fundamental purpose and is realised in all aspects of school life. All pupils are happy knowing that they are safe and well cared for.• Leaders and managers are driven by a passion for the welfare and formation of each person within the school community.• The Way the Truth and the Life is at the core of the school's spiritual journey. It underpins every aspect of school life.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pupils respect and value the Catholic tradition of the school. By their words and actions, they bear witness to the school's mission to 'capturing hearts, inspiring minds and awakening souls.'• Pastoral care has a profound impact on the lives of the whole community. It reflects the school's long-term aspirations for the academic, moral and spiritual growth of each pupil.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• High quality acts of collective worship are an integral part of the school's daily activities.• Pupils value and enjoy the range of opportunities to experience prayer as a school and individually.• Pupils enthusiastically respond to the opportunity to prepare and lead acts of worship.

FULL REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Joseph's is a large Catholic Primary School situated in the Guildford Deanery of the Diocese of Arundel & Brighton. It serves pupils aged 2.5 – 11 years, with a Section 27 Governor run Nursery provision. The school serves the Catholic Parish of Guildford: one parish made of four church communities and served by a team of three priests, of whom Monsignor Tony Barry is the moderator and associated clergy governor.

There are 630 pupils on role with waiting lists in all year groups. The demographic is wonderfully diverse. The school is in the highest 20% of schools nationally for pupils with English as an additional language (30%) and has a large number of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds. The school is an established inclusive school, with around 2.7% of pupils with an EHCP, higher than the national average of 1.6%.

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is much lower than the national average at 7% (compared to 23% nationally).

WHAT DOES THE SCHOOL NEED TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- Ensure the sustained implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the newly adopted Cultural Development Plan.
- Ensure pupils understand how to achieve greater depth of understanding within the process of self-assessment in religious education.

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 of the Catholic life of the school.
- How well leaders and governors 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 school is a warm and welcoming community from the first moment of contact. This is sustained through the strong sense of purpose that pervades the life and work of the school, creating a strong and distinctively Catholic ethos. Pupils benefit greatly from the genuine warmth and sense of harmony throughout every aspect of daily life.

Pupils play a highly effective and visible part in strengthening the Catholic life of the school. They understand each person is a unique and special individual made in God's image. From the beginning of their time at the school, pupils learn to show respect and consideration for others. Pupils recognise and respect that they are all different from one another but share a common humanity.

Pupils have a leading role in modelling Christian values. Behaviour in class and around the school is exemplary because of the genuine Christian family they belong to. They are happy and really love their school and teachers. They feel safe and are secure in the knowledge that there is always someone to talk to if they have a worry or a problem.

Strong pastoral care is evident in all aspects of the school. Pupils particularly appreciate the Junior Pastoral Post Box and the Infant Worry Monsters. Through these resources, they know they can share their worries, confident that teachers will always respond promptly and confidentially.

Through the Spiritual Council, pupils' ideas have resulted in an impressive outdoor prayer garden. The design reflects their interest and their understanding of the importance of a prayer space for everybody. The prayer garden was opened in response to pupils' suggestions. It offers a beautifully quiet place for private prayer and group reflections.

Parents and carers value the partnership with the school. They recognise the value of the school's inclusive approach and know pupils are flourishing academically and spiritually.

The quality of provision of the Catholic life of the school is Outstanding.

The school prayer stands as the mission statement. It is central to the life of the school and is fully embraced by pupils in their daily school life. It encapsulates the school's expression of its distinctive Catholic identity and mission. It has a visibly direct impact on the lives and relationships throughout the school.

Classes across the school design and display a mission charter at the beginning of each new school year. Pupils are fully aware of the statement and what it means for them. The charter is a living reality. It changes and develops as circumstances throughout the year lead pupils to a deeper understanding of their personal expression of the school mission. This is evident through discussions with pupils and the many displays in classrooms.

Pupils begin their new religious education books by annotating a copy of the school prayer with a more personal and intimate expression of an understanding of their role. This is evident in the range of pupils' books, displays and the harmonious relationships at all levels.

From the moment pupils and visitors enter St Joseph's School, they are welcomed into a community that proudly proclaims its Catholic identity. Religious images and displays, such as the paintings of saints that adorn the walls, reflect the Catholic purpose of the school. The prayer grottos and outside prayer garden add to the provision of quiet, spiritual places for pupils to pray individually and in small groups.

PSHE is mapped across the curriculum with RSE to ensure pupils develop an understanding of how they keep themselves and others safe while recognising and marvelling at the wonder of God's creation.

The most effective provision is the presence of staff within the community. By their actions and relationships with pupils, they model the values inherent in the mission statement, the Way the Truth and the Life. Pupils speak warmly of the trust they have in teachers.

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life of the school is Outstanding.

Leaders and governors are wholly committed to the continual pursuit of a distinctly Catholic community. Leaders and managers are outstanding in their promotion and evaluation of the Catholic life of the school. They are energised by their responsibility to give staff, pupils and parents/carers, a school that teaches the faith and provides genuine care for all members of its community.

Governors and the Headteacher form an effective partnership. They work together to ensure St Joseph's remains an outstanding faith community. The Cultural Development Plan and minutes of meetings show rigorous monitoring and evaluation. Governors know the strengths of the school and the areas for development.

The Headteacher's personal faith and his commitment to the pupils has a significant impact on them. They appreciate his presence in the school and the care he gives. He puts living the school's mission at the forefront of everything he does. Parents/carers also confirm and appreciate his impact on their children.

The Headteacher is ably supported by senior leaders. Staff greatly value the care they receive that ensures they are supported. The Headteacher and his Senior Leadership Team, make daily "check-ins" with teachers and support staff, to ensure that they know they will have an opportunity for a pastoral conversation. The Headteacher also timetables weekly briefings with staff teams to ensure that all members of the community have an opportunity to engage with him.

The school engages well with parents/carers to the benefit of all its pupils. They have a very good understanding of the school's mission and are very supportive of it. Parents/carers particularly noted the influence of the school on the lives of their children and their understanding of the faith.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

THE QUALITY OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

- How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education.
- The quality of teaching and assessment in religious education.
- How well leaders and governors 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 achieve a high standard in religious education. School data shows that by the end of Key Stage 2 most pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and disabilities, make at least their expected level of progress whilst many secure high levels of attainment and progress.

Observations and conversations with pupils show that levels of understanding in religious education have been sustained despite lockdown circumstances. The quality of pupils' current work is outstanding. It shows pupils are making good progress and are immensely proud of their learning.

Pupils say they enjoy their lessons hugely because of the range of teaching strategies teachers use to engage and enthuse them. Pupils in all key stages articulate a high level of motivation to learn as a result of the praise and encouragement they receive for their work and attitude.

During the inspection, pupils displayed good, and in most cases, outstanding, age-appropriate standards of religious literacy.

The quality of teaching and assessment in religious education is Outstanding.

Pupils of all abilities are making sustained progress in religious education as a result of high-quality teaching that is never less than good and is often outstanding. Consistently inspiring and well-planned learning across all classes was exemplified in nearly all lessons.

Relationships between teachers and pupils are outstanding and pupils' behaviour for learning in lessons is exemplary. There is marked pupil enthusiasm and enjoyment in lessons. As a result of encouragement from teachers, pupils are confident in sharing their learning with each other.

In all lessons, teachers have high expectations of their pupils. They ensure appropriate challenge and support for pupils in lessons. Tasks are differentiated and well matched to pupils' age and ability to ensure that all pupils can access learning.

Pupils confidently work together, and individually, as a result of highly effective lessons that are characterised by excellent teacher subject knowledge.

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for religious education is Outstanding.

All classes receive the full allocation of 10% of curriculum time for religious education.

Leaders and governors are deeply committed to improving standards in religious education. Governors are kept fully informed through their visits to the school and by receiving written and verbal reports from the Headteacher. The Chair of Governors meets with the Headteacher regularly to evaluate the quality of teaching and learning and to review next steps to improve it further.

The management of religious education is very strong and has a positive impact on the life of the school. The religious education leader and the Headteacher work closely together to ensure religious education has a very high profile throughout the school and continues to make a significant contribution to the educational mission of the Church.

The prominence of religious education in the Cultural Development Plan demonstrates the commitment of experienced and knowledgeable senior leaders.

The religious education leader is currently coaching another member of staff in the role so that a succession plan is in place. Every year group team has an 'RE Expert' who shapes the plans with the teachers in their year group to ensure high quality teaching and learning is maintained.

Leaders have an accurate knowledge and understanding of the quality of teaching and learning in religious education as a result of regular scrutiny and evaluation. This includes learning walks, scrutiny of pupils' books, observation of lessons and moderation of work. Developmental feedback is given to staff, which has a direct impact on improving the quality of teaching and learning.

Governors review the school's 'Religious Education' and 'Relationships and Sex Education' policies on an annual basis.

Staff who are not Catholic are well supported and they feel confident in asking for support and guidance when necessary.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP / PRAYER AND PRAYER LIFE

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- How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's collective worship and prayer life.
- The quality of provision for collective worship and prayer life.
- How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for collective worship and prayer life.

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How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's collective worship and prayer life is Outstanding.

Acts of worship engage all pupils and inspire them to reflect and pray individually and as a school community. Pupils respond reverently and respectfully when at prayer. They respond enthusiastically to the many opportunities to experience and participate in prayer and worship every day.

Pupils' understanding of their role reflects the impact of the school's deeply spiritual ethos. This was evident in the class-based acts of worship that were prepared and effectively led by pupils. The atmosphere created enabled all pupils to respond with quiet reflection and singing. Movingly, every pupil and teacher signed as they sang.

Pupils enjoy the opportunities to prepare and lead acts of worship, irrespective of faith. They recognise that prayer is part of the daily rhythm of school life. Pupils research prayers and readings according to the weekly theme.

They acknowledge that living in a praying community has a profound effect on the spiritual development of all, irrespective of ability or faith background. This is evident from visiting clergy who confirmed that pupils pray and worship with sincerity and integrity.

Of particular note is the way pupils are comfortable and at ease with silence and stillness. This was evident from the very youngest pupils and all staff are to be commended for developing this in pupils. Throughout the school, pupils shared their hopes and concerns for themselves and others by writing thoughtful prayers and reflections, which could be seen in their books and on displays.

The quality of provision for collective worship and prayer life is Outstanding

Collective worship is central to the life of all pupils and staff. There is a rich and well-planned programme of assemblies, religious celebrations and liturgies that put collective worship at the heart of school life. The extensive range of opportunities to pray, serve to offer outstanding provision for all key stages.

Collective worship has a clear purpose, message and direction. Daily acts of worship follow the theme of the week which is set by the Headteacher. Themes reflect a deep understanding of the liturgical year. Pupils are appreciative of the many prayer assemblies because they offer highly effective spiritual experiences.

Holy days of obligation and special occasions are marked with Mass, for example, the start of a new school year and St Joseph's Day. During lockdown, pupils were able to participate in virtual Masses including the Deanery Advent Mass.

Music and pupil-led readings and prayers are effectively used to help all pupils understand how they might live by the message of Jesus.

The direct impact of this outstanding provision is that the pupils at St Joseph's are being helped to develop their own personal prayer life and relationship with God. Every class has a focal area for prayer and without exception these are attractive, relevant and well-integrated into the prayer life of the class. The lovely prayer garden in the grounds of the school is regularly used by pupils. Infant pupils, for example, quietly and respectfully joined the Bible reading session with the Headteacher.

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for collective worship and prayer life is Outstanding.

Leaders and governors are deeply committed to the provision of highly effective liturgical celebrations. They have an expert understanding of their responsibility to provide spiritual and liturgical opportunities in line with the Church's liturgical year.

Governors know the school extremely well. They monitor and evaluate the provision for collective worship through their regular visits to the school. They demonstrate a profound understanding of the value of prayer and how it is creating a genuine prayerful community. The manner in which they fulfil their role provides highly effective support to staff and pupils.

The Headteacher is passionately committed to building an authentic Christian community in partnership with governors and staff. He has ensured that prayer and worship are an integral part of each day and are inclusive of all pupils.

The impact of effective leadership at all levels is evidenced in the way pupils enthusiastically lead class and whole school acts of worship. Pupils witness models of outstanding practice.

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 governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life of the school.

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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 governors monitor and evaluate the provision for religious education.

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Collective Worship and Prayer Life

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How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's collective worship and prayer life.

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The quality of provision for collective worship and prayer life.

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How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for collective worship and prayer life.

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