

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

URN: 142374

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Bishop of Middlesbrough

13–14 March 2024

Summary of key findings

Overall effectiveness

The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school

Catholic life and mission (p.3)

How faithfully the school responds to the call to live as a Catholic community at the service of the Church's educational mission

1

Religious education (p.5)

The quality of curriculum religious education

1

Collective worship (p.7)

The quality and range of liturgy and prayer provided by the school

1

The school is fully compliant with the curriculum requirements laid down by the Bishops' Conference

Yes

The school is fully compliant with all requirements of the diocesan bishop

Yes

The school has responded to the areas for improvement from the last inspection

Fully

1

What the school does well

- The school faithfully and enthusiastically responds to the call to live as a Catholic community at the service of the Church, and to embody its own mission, following Jesus' command to 'Love one another as I have loved you'.
- The behaviour and attitudes of pupils across the school, from the very youngest to the oldest is exemplary. Pupils are polite, hardworking, confident, respectful. They know that they are safe and cared for by all staff. They know that God loves them as unique individuals.
- Prayer life in the school is vibrant and varied. Pupils are engaged and participate with focus and enthusiasm.
- Teaching across the school is at least good, with some outstanding. As a result, pupils make good progress and leave the school at least at expected levels. A particular strength is the faith knowledge pupils develop as they move through the school.

- Leaders, especially the executive head teacher and the head of school are highly committed and inspirational guardians of the mission of the school.

What the school needs to improve

- Strengthen the existing links and activities with the parish and local community, establishing effective systems for monitoring and measuring their impact.
- Build high profile participation and independence in older pupils, especially as leaders in Catholic life and prayer experiences, so enabling them to enhance, share and model their collaborative and mentoring skills with, and between, other pupils.
- Ensure that religious education lessons are always distinct and have a special identity, when compared to other subjects, so that they include moments of awe, wonder, spirituality, curiosity, excitement, enjoyment and independence from pupils, enabling them to flourish in the learning of their faith.

Catholic life and mission

How faithfully the school responds to the call to live as a Catholic community at the service of the Church's educational mission.

Catholic life and mission key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

Provision

The quality of provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school

Leadership

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



This is an outstanding Catholic school, where pupils and staff embrace their mission to 'Love one another, as I have loved you'. Pupils are happy, confident and secure in the practice of their faith. They have an impressive understanding of Catholic social teaching, responding to opportunities to serve others in need, with energy. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive. Most recently, the mini-vinnies group have supported MacMillan Cancer, the Genesis Project, Children in Need, The Poppy Appeal, CAUSE, Nite Light, CAFOD and the local care home. They also contribute to the Friday Eco-Shop, which is a significant help to some families, and even the collection of crisp packets for recycling as insulation blankets for the homeless. Pupils show a deep respect for each other and for those from a different faith. Their behaviour is excellent in lessons and throughout the school. Prefects, the head boy and head girl, lead chaplain and other older pupils demonstrate high levels of leadership skill and act as exemplary role models for younger pupils. The chaplaincy group supports whole school prayer life effectively, with the support of adults. Their independence and active contribution towards initiating ideas themselves, could be further developed.

The mission statement is rooted deeply in the Word of God and is reviewed annually. Pupils know it and are reminded of it throughout the day. Staff are extremely skilled at ensuring that the core values of the school, including Catholic social teaching, are consistently part of the classroom dialogue. The school prayer, and song, often accompanied by the welcoming and inspiring school video, or led by pupils signing the words, also helps to create a tangible atmosphere of high-quality relationships, high expectations of behaviour, and a generosity of welcome for everyone, especially the more vulnerable. A perfect example of this atmosphere was witnessed, when one younger pupil held another pupil's hand throughout an assembly, to

help him remain calm and feel secure, despite finding large group gatherings difficult. The school community also benefits from the weekly visits of the school's dog, Stanley. His gentle nature helps settle and reassure more vulnerable individuals. Staff are inspirational role models for pupils to follow. They are committed to ensuring the best for their pupils. The internal space of the school proclaims its Catholic identity with pride. The Chaplains, who are pupils from older classes, support the celebrations and prayers organised throughout the Church's year. Relationships, sex and health education, introduced after parental consultation, is taught through the Ten:Ten scheme.

Leaders work hard to ensure Christ is at the heart of everything they do. Governors are active in evaluating performance and outcomes. Policies and procedures are guided by the Catholic identity and mission of the school. The parish priest, whose service is very much appreciated, is regularly in school. Leaders do their best to support parents as the first educators of their children. The Catholic life newsletters provide a significant source of information for parents, alongside other social media and communication apps. Resourcing for more vulnerable pupils and families is a priority. Leaders work hard to ensure that pupils know their obligations to consider the common good, and take care of our common home, the earth. Staff wellbeing is a high priority. Newer members of staff speak very positively about the induction process and the welcome they have received. The school makes links between what is taught in other subjects and a Catholic understanding of the world. A strong feature of the school's self-evaluation processes is the involvement of pupils. Professional development for staff is very effective; ensuring that subject knowledge is excellent. Links with the local community and parish are undertaken, but they are not systematically measured for their impact.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

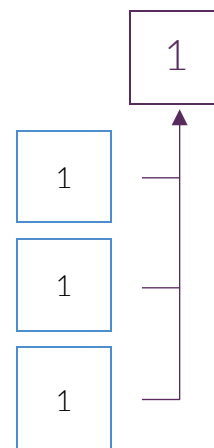
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

Provision

The quality of teaching, learning, and assessment in religious education

Leadership

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



Pupils develop an excellent knowledge of their faith. From their relative starting points, they make good progress through the early years and in older classes they are consistently remembering, using, and reflecting on prior knowledge. Work presentation in books is very good. Pupils understand how well they have done and what they might need to do to improve. Attainment is at least in line with national expectations. Behaviour and attitudes are exemplary. They can readily refer to scripture and parables such as the stories of Zacchaeus, Saul's conversion, the Prodigal Son, or the story of Holy Week. They can debate the challenges of trying to love an enemy and consider the details of the Last Supper including how it is remembered in parts of the Mass. They can talk about the life of particular saints. In lessons pupils concentrate and apply themselves. The school is currently introducing a revised strategy for the teaching of all subjects, including religious education. The impact of this change is being monitored, so that it is not applied too rigidly, and does not diminish the creativity, uniqueness and specialness of learning about our faith, ensuring the engagement and enjoyment of pupils is maintained.

Staff subject knowledge is at a very high level. Expectations are high in lessons. Questioning is rigorous, ensuring accurate answers from pupils. Where teaching is particularly engaging, pupils are active, and given opportunities to collaborate, and participate in discussion topics with others and their teachers. They also enjoy role play, games, art, singing, the use of media, and independent investigation. Pupils value the various rewards and incentives they are offered to live up to their mission, work hard, behave and care for others. Teachers accurately monitor and evaluate individual pupil progress in a highly organised and systematic way. This leads to regular reviews of achievement and the careful adaptation of teaching, or the support provided to pupils, to help them make better progress. Teachers and support staff across the school are adept at including moral and spiritual messages into lessons. They also include moments where

pupils are given the chance to make sense of the world, to reflect on events and ideas around them, and to consider how they might be able to make a difference. In one class, pupils were trying to apply their understanding of Catholic social teaching to the needs of a homeless person, a refugee family, and an elderly neighbour.

Leaders, including governors and the trust, ensure that resourcing is appropriate, and the content of the curriculum complies with the Religious Education Directory. Resourcing has full parity with other subjects, in terms of funding, timetabling, and professional development for staff. Leaders, especially those directly responsible for leading religious education, demonstrate extremely strong commitment and expertise. They know their school very well and their work supporting and training staff means that teaching is at least good and sometimes outstanding. Leaders have contributed to the improvement of practice in other schools within the trust and the executive head teacher plays a significant role within the trust supporting another school directly and sharing her experience and expertise in others. Pupils visit the local care home regularly, sharing books with residents and making cards for them at Christmas. The chaplaincy and mini-vinnies teams take part in the annual cenotaph ceremony in Middlesbrough and attended a Diocesan celebration of their work, at the Cathedral. Pupils are involved in evaluating the provision made by the school and in a recent survey, made it clear that they would appreciate more of these types of enrichment activities. Leaders' self-evaluation is accurate.

Collective worship

The quality and range of liturgy and prayer provided by the school

Collective worship key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

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

1

Provision

The quality of collective worship provided by the school

1

Leadership

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

1

1

Pupils, including those who have special needs, respond to experiences of prayer and liturgy in extremely reverent, thoughtful and respectful ways. They sing their own school song and favourite hymns with gusto. Singing during an inspirational prayer liturgy in one of the youngest classes, was awesome. Older pupils were very happy to sing, 'You've got a friend in me' and 'Laudato Si' without any notice and without any accompaniment, when asked to do so by one inspector. The school has recently adopted a new approach to the way they provide opportunities for prayer. This has exposed pupils to a wider variety of prayer forms, such as examen, prayer journaling, prayer breathing, lectio divina. A particularly effective guided meditation was observed in a lower Key Stage 2 class. Inevitably, this change has required a greater reliance on adults modelling and leading, so that pupils can learn to lead them in the near future. Where appropriate, pupils still have the skills to be highly confident in planning and leading prayer, for example in the weekly stay and pray sessions, or when supporting a whole school collective worship.

Prayer is an integral part of the school day. The use of scripture is consistently used across the school in all forms of prayer. In the most effective experiences pupils are given appropriate moments of reflection, meditation, silence, and opportunities to sing or listen to contemplative music. Although during the inspection, and for reasons already explained, pupil leadership of prayer was rarely observed, nevertheless pupils can and do demonstrate the ability to do this reliably and with enthusiasm. All staff members are exemplary model of practice and participate enthusiastically in the prayer life of the school. They support pupils with confidence and help them understand the liturgical traditions and norms of the Church's year. The attractive, bright, organised and colourful internal space is used effectively, and provide pupils with places to pray. The outside prayer garden is frequently used and the planting of trees, a hedge and raised beds

is a positive enhancement. The school works hard to encourage families to be involved in the prayer life of the school and parish. The stay and pray sessions, led by pupils, are an excellent provision which parents appreciate. However, more links need to be developed and systematically measured for their impact.

The school's approach to prayer across the school has been carefully formulated and is widening the variety of forms of prayer experienced by pupils. Leaders have a clear understanding of what they want to achieve with the new approach to prayer, and staff are keen to see it flourish, and to include pupils more in planning and leadership. Leaders have ensured that celebration of the Eucharist in the parish church, next to the school, is regularly accessed. Holy days, feast days, and other key moments in the liturgical year are celebrated. The school leads on the preparation of pupils for first sacraments, with the parish priest supporting parental instruction. All staff, including non-Catholics, understand the centrality of prayer and formation in the life of the school and are fully supportive of it. Pupils can plan and lead prayer in different forms, but this is a developing area because of the newness of the school's current strategy. Leaders have ensured that resources for prayer and liturgy, are a high quality. A strength of the school is the increasing inclusion of pupils in the evaluation of various aspects of school life, including prayer and worship.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Joseph's Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	142374
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	8063340
Full postal address of the school	St Joseph's Catholic Primary School Marton Road Middlesbrough TS4 2NT
School phone number	01642819252
Headteacher	Elizabeth King – Executive Headteacher
Chair of Local Governing Body	Angela McCann
School Website	https://stjosephs.npcat.org.uk
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	Nicholas Postgate Catholic Academy Trust
Phase	Primary
Type of school	Academy
Admissions policy	N/A
Age-range of pupils	3-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	July 2018
Previous denominational inspection grade	1

The inspection team

Mark Brennan

Lead

Madeleine Bannister

Team

Key to grade judgements

Grade	England	Wales
1	Outstanding	Excellent
2	Good	Good
3	Requires improvement	Adequate and requires improvement
4	Inadequate	Unsatisfactory and in need of urgent improvement