

**INSPECTION REPORT**

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**Inspection carried out Under Canon 806  
and in accordance with Section 48 of the Education Act 2005**

**Name of School**                      **St Joseph’s RC Junior, Infant and Nursery School Oldham Road, Shaw, Oldham, OL2 8SZ**

**Inspection date**                      **Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> December 2018**

**Reporting Inspectors**                      **Mark Mountcastle, Sue Molloy, Carl McIver**

Type of school	Primary
URN	105719
Age range of pupils	3-11
Number on roll	234
Appropriate authority	The Governing Board
Chair of Governors	Julie Bailey
Headteacher	Garry Needle
Religious Education Subject Leader	Sandra Dickinson/Catherine Simpson
Date of previous inspection	20 <sup>th</sup> November 2013

<b>The Inspection judgements are:</b>	<b>Grade</b>	Explanation of the Grades
Overall effectiveness of the school	3	1 = Outstanding 2 = Good 3=Requires Improvement 4 = Inadequate
Catholic Leadership	2	
The Catholic Life of the school (incorporating Welcome, Welfare and Witness)	2	
Religious Education (incorporating Word)	3	
Collective Worship	2	
The following pages provide reasons to support these judgements		

## **CHARACTERISTICS AND CONTEXT OF THE SCHOOL**

Saint Joseph's RC Junior, Infant and Nursery School is a one form entry school serving the parish of St Joseph's, Shaw where the majority of children reside. There are currently 234 children on roll and 91% are Roman Catholic. The school is very popular in the area and is oversubscribed each year. Pupil mobility is very low. The proportion of Pupil Premium pupils is lower than the national average at 10.2% and there are 33 children on the SEND register, with 6 in receipt of an Education, Health and Care Plan. The current headteacher has been in post for the last 20 months. Many of the staff have been in post for a long time and numerous are also parents and parishioners at St Joseph's. The majority of children are white British (87%).

## **THE KEY STRENGTHS OF THE SCHOOL INCLUDE:**

- **There is an embedded culture of welcome throughout St Joseph's and a strong sense of belonging in the community**
- **The children are fantastic ambassadors of St Joseph's and they cultivate an atmosphere of love, care and respect**
- **There are very strong links between the families, school and parish**

## **OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL IS REQUIRES IMPROVEMENT**

St Joseph's is a very happy, welcoming school where all the children feel valued, loved and cared for. There is a very strong sense of community. Links between home, school and parish are very positive and a real strength of the school. The headteacher and priest, who visits daily, are major factors in the warmth of welcome and belonging. The welcome and care shown goes far beyond school and they support many charitable initiatives, both locally and further afield. The children are rightly proud of their achievements and standing in the community. The quality of Collective Worship is developing well and plans are in place to include the children far more in the planning and delivery of liturgy and prayer. The children are given leadership roles but this needs to be developed so they have a real impact on the quality of Collective Worship taking place. The impressive children at St Joseph's are one of its key strengths but they have so much more to give and are so willing to be involved. The quality of Religious Education at St Joseph's requires improvement and therefore this informs the overall judgement for the school. The quality of teaching and learning along with the standards of children's work all need to be improved. The teachers, who are very willing and work so hard, need to see outstanding practice in Religious Education so the very obvious potential of the children can be realised. In addition, the school needs to implement more rigorous processes for monitoring and evaluating Religious Education to inform their self-evaluation of the school. The Religious Education subject leaders are very good at highlighting areas for development but the pace of change needs to be developed to increase standards to where they need to be.

## **THE QUALITY OF CATHOLIC LEADERSHIP IS GOOD**

The current headteacher has been permanent in post for 20 months following an internal promotion from assistant headteacher. He is ably supported by a very experienced senior leadership team who together have provided strong and stable leadership in a difficult time of change. The headteacher is ever present around school and greets all the children and families on the drive in the morning with a happy hello and warm smile. He knows the community very well and is a major factor in the very strong links between school, home and parish. Leaders are passionate about serving their community and are held in high regard by the parents and governors of the school. The headteacher is becoming more astute at highlighting areas for development and now needs to ensure that he continues to drive improvements particularly in the quality of teaching and learning. The governing board are very supportive of the school and help contribute very effectively to the Catholic life of the school. They are rightly proud of their very welcoming and inclusive school but now need to develop more robust systems of monitoring and evaluating other aspects of school life; particularly standards of teaching and learning. By increasing their understanding and awareness of standards of attainment and achievement in Religious Education they will be better placed to provide greater challenge to school leaders and staff in ensuring that all children are challenged and are working appropriately within the relevant curriculum and at age related standards.

### **THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL (incorporating Welcome, Welfare and Witness) IS GOOD**

St. Joseph's provides a warm, welcoming environment where everyone in the school community feels valued and respected. Many generations of families have attended the school. Diversity at all levels is celebrated. Pupils are happy and confident to bear witness to their faith. There are strong home-school links and excellent forms of communication. Families appreciate the efforts of the hardworking staff and the warm welcome they receive on the drive each morning from both the headteacher and pastoral leader. Strong attendance of families is evident at school events, including assemblies and Sacramental Programme meetings, as well as at parent information workshops. The bond between school, home and Parish is strengthened by the parish priest's daily visits to school to meet with staff and children. All in the school community are extremely proud to belong to St. Joseph's. Pupils and staff undertake charity work across the school supporting CAFOD, Cancer Research, Chernobyl Lifeline and many other charities. Aspects of the mission statement are at the heart of the school, children feel safe and secure and are encouraged to be themselves. As one child stated, 'we are all individuals but together we shine as stars!' All pupils have the same opportunities and families with financial difficulties are discretely supported. A Just Giving page has been set up to send a pupil to America to accompany her father on pioneering treatment for a brain tumour. During the time of the inspection over £1500 had been raised. Staff give freely of their time to deliver a wide range of extra-curricular clubs. Older pupils act as buddies and support younger pupils at lunchtimes. Children commented that they would like to develop this role further to support the teachers at playtimes. The pastoral leader works closely with outside agencies and ensures bespoke support and guidance is readily available.

### **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (incorporating Word) IS REQUIRES IMPROVEMENT**

The mission statement at St Joseph's has recently been reviewed and the majority of it is lived out by the whole school community. It is clearly evident around school, on displays and within policies and the children can articulate very well that they are STARS. It is very visual and easy to remember, although elements of Religious Education and Word in particular need to become fully embedded. Pupils have a working knowledge of some aspects of Scripture and the younger children demonstrated confidence in understanding the Christmas story; however the older children are not given enough opportunity to develop their knowledge of Sacred Scripture and how it can impact on modern life. Too often in the children's books stories are just retold and real opportunities are missed to develop concepts; for example throughout the school children talked a lot about being kind but the true meaning was not unpicked for the older children. The children are very willing and able but need to be given the opportunities to deepen their learning and experiences. Often, in curriculum Religious Education, the children are not challenged to extend their learning and although some big questions are beginning to be asked this practice needs to be developed. The children, who are so eager to learn, should be trusted to take ownership of their learning journey; teachers and staff need to develop the confidence in them that they so rightly deserve. The children at St Joseph's are capable of so much more. The Religious Education subject leaders know their subject well and have highlighted areas for development in teaching and learning but the pace of improvements needs to be developed to bring standards in Religious Education to where they should be.

### **COLLECTIVE WORSHIP IS GOOD**

The children are given many opportunities to pray together in Collective Worship in classes and assemblies. The parish priest is also a daily visitor to school and reinforces the importance of being a prayerful community. The children are very willing and enthusiastic in all sessions observed. The younger ones in Key Stage 1 shared some very good discussion and open thinking about the Advent story but as the children move through the school the opportunities to develop their prayer and thoughts become more limited. Overall, Collective Worship sessions observed were of a good quality, being well planned and delivered; however on occasions they were too teacher led and therefore lacked input from the children and quality time for reflection. The next steps are for more creativity in the use of resources and how the children can be at the heart of leading their own prayer and worship regularly. The season of Advent can be particularly inspiring during Collective Worship and the older children are ready to extend their learning and understanding to explore challenging and thoughtful dimensions of Jesus' life. In two different key stages, activities were observed regarding the symbolism of the Advent wreath but progression was lacking as the older children simply repeated what the younger children already knew. The children in St Joseph's are very able and have the skills to extend their thinking; they just need to be gently guided and the staff will be amazed by their results. The pupil chaplains and other pupil leaders have a deep enthusiasm for their roles and moving

forward they will thrive on being given exciting responsibilities and challenges in taking St Joseph's forward in a very positive way.

#### **AGREED AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT**

- **The teaching and learning of Religious Education needs to improve rapidly and become more engaging, creative and fit for the needs of all the pupils, including at greater depth**
- **To provide opportunities for all staff to visit other schools and see first-hand good and outstanding practice**
- **To provide more in-depth training and support for staff and children in preparing and leading Prayer and Worship**
- **To develop a more accurate system for the school's Catholic self-evaluation, including all leaders and governors in a more rigorous process**