

Catholic Schools Inspectorate inspection report for St Joseph Catholic Primary School Pontefract

URN: 138947

Carried out on behalf of the Right Rev. Marcus Stock, Bishop of Leeds on:

Date: 22-23 November 2023

Overall effectiveness

The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school.....

2

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.....

2

Religious education (p.5)

The quality of curriculum religious education.....

2

Collective worship (p.7)

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

2

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

✓

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

✓

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

Fully

Summary of key findings

What the school does well

- High levels of pastoral care are providing all pupils and staff with a place where they can live out the school's mission, 'to love and serve with joy'.
- The staff and academy council are deeply committed to the Catholic Life and Mission of the school, placing this at the centre of their decision making and working hard to improve it.
- Pupils make a positive start to their religious education in the Early Years and Key Stage 1 classes.
- The school enjoys a flourishing partnership with the local parish community and works in partnership with other schools in the Bishop Konstant Catholic Academy Trust and with the wider Diocesan family.
- The quality of prayer and liturgy has a strong impact on the daily lives of staff and pupils.

This Catholic Schools Inspectorate inspection was carried out under canons 804 & 806 of the code of canon law. For maintained schools and academies in England it fulfils the statutory requirements of s.48 of the Education Act 2005. For maintained schools and academies in Wales it fulfils the statutory requirements of s.50 of the Education Act 2005.

What the school needs to improve:

- Embed the outcomes of the recent review of the school's mission statement through continued partnership working with all stakeholders.
- Deepen pupils' religious knowledge and understanding through effective questioning and feedback in all its forms.
- Provide greater opportunities for more lengthy written responses in religious education, enabling pupils to develop their independence and produce work of a consistently high quality.

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:.....

2

Pupil outcomes

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

2

Provision

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

2

Leadership

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

2

The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school is good. Pupils live out, and bear witness to, the school's mission statement: 'to love and serve with joy'. From their earliest years they demonstrate a secure understanding of the mission and some pupils can articulate how this is translated into the daily lives of all at St Joseph's school through the language of the virtues. They are happy and feel secure at school. Staff and pupils speak warmly about being part of a 'family' within the school. Positive relationships in the school ensure that the pupils develop a secure sense of their worth as members of the St Joseph's community. Pupils show a deep respect for all in their school and wider parish community. Pupils' responses about their understanding of different faiths are celebrated within school. Pupils respond readily to the demands of Catholic Social Teaching through their support of a variety of local, national and global charities. A small number of pupils are actively engaged in the chaplaincy opportunities provided the school.

All stakeholders have worked in partnership to review and renew the school's mission statement. Pupil voice was strong during this process and the resulting statement is centred around the language of the virtues. Staff are committed to witnessing to the mission statement across the curriculum but its impact on the Catholic life is not yet fully understood by all stakeholders. There is a strong sense of community and everyone is welcomed in a spirit of hospitality. The parish priest, governors and other visitors to the school are appreciative of this warmth of welcome. Staff are very positive role models, the highest levels of pastoral care are in place for pupils, and there is a deep commitment to ensuring that the most vulnerable members of the community are supported and encouraged to flourish. The vibrant displays

and high-quality religious resources ensure that the school environment bears witness to its identity and mission. Chaplaincy provision is developing in the school. Pupils undertake their roles as mini-vinnies and collective worship leaders with joy and pride. The school's spiritual, moral, social and cultural curriculum is providing staff and pupils with effective tools for growth in these areas. The provision for relationship and health education meets statutory and diocesan requirements. The school has adopted the 'Life to the Full' scheme of work and staff have received relevant training.

The dedication of the senior leaders and governors bears witness to the Church's mission in education. They pursue this mission with joy, enthusiasm, and determination. The mission is viewed by leaders and all governors as a core responsibility. Governors are committed to their role and, as a result, the school works in partnership with the diocesan bishop. Parish links are strong, staff and pupils lead and participate regularly in parish liturgical celebrations, and the parish priest is a frequent visitor to the school. The school is valued by most of the parents. However, a more pro-active approach for engaging with those who are hard to reach has yet to be developed fully. Bespoke support is provided for some pupils and families through the work of the learning mentor. The school's self-evaluation, led by the head teacher and religious education leader, is based on regular monitoring and analysis. Governors receive information about developments in the Catholic life of the school. However, there is limited evidence that governors provide effective challenge to leaders when considering this information. Carefully planned professional development is enabling new staff to develop and secure their knowledge and understanding of Catholic life and mission when they join the school.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade:.....

2

Pupil outcomes

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education.....

2

Provision

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

2

Leadership

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

2

Pupil outcomes in religious education are good. Pupils enjoy learning in religious education and talk about their learning positively. Pupils of all ages are secure in using subject-specific language, due to learning that is rooted in the *Religious Education Curriculum Directory (2012)*. Not all pupils take pride in their religious education work and therefore progress in some books is not secure. In some of the lessons observed there is not an emphasis on pupils knowing more or remembering more. Across the school, groups of pupils can orally articulate their developing knowledge and use it to reflect spiritually and to think ethically and theologically. However, the tasks chosen by teachers to capture this knowledge do not always provide the pupils with scope to express themselves independently and with required detail.

Teachers are committed to the value of religious education and celebrate the pupils' successes within lessons. When teaching is at its best, pupils are fully engaged in their learning due to the high expectations set and carefully considered use of resources by their teachers. Those with additional needs are well supported by experienced support staff and, therefore, their developing knowledge and understanding is captured accurately. Secure teacher subject knowledge and well considered planning, linked to accurate assessment, in some classes ensures that those pupils make steady progress. In weaker lessons, lengthy periods of teacher talk were observed, leading to passive pupils and support staff being underused. Effective questioning in some classes is increasing the pace of pupils' acquisition of key knowledge. Feedback systems are not consistently applied across school and therefore pupils do not always have a clear understanding of what they need to do to improve. Pupils are given limited opportunities in lessons to reflect on how their religious knowledge can impact on their daily lives. However, when required to complete this reflection through homework projects, the

pupils show creativity and deep understanding. The study of religious art, use of debate and role play and animated Bible stories are resulting in high levels of engagement in some lessons. Pupils in the Early Years can retell the story of the Annunciation through the completion of a breadth of well-planned creative activities that focus on key vocabulary. The use of scripture as a source to support pupils' ideas and knowledge is evident in the lessons for the oldest pupils. However, the taught progression of these skills is not embedded in the teaching across the whole key stage.

All leaders ensure that the school curriculum for religious education is a faithful expression of the *Religious Education Curriculum Directory*. It is comparable to other core subjects in professional development, resourcing, timetabling and staffing. Senior leaders scrutinise work samples and report their findings to governors. Professional development is provided for staff in relation to spiritual formation and subject knowledge in religious education. The subject leader for religious education, supported by the head teacher and deputy head teacher, has a clear vision for quality teaching and learning and a high level of expertise in working to securing this vision. Teachers readily acknowledge the positive impact of her support and coaching on their practice. She also shares her expertise to the benefit of other schools in the Bishop Konstant Catholic Academy Trust. Leaders and governors' self-evaluation of religious education is informed by monitoring and analysis. The strategic action taken as a result of these activities has led to good outcomes overall.

Collective worship

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

Collective worship key judgement grade:.....

2

Pupil outcomes

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

2

Provision

The quality of collective worship provided by the school

2

Leadership

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

2

Pupils respond well to experiences of prayer and liturgy at St Joseph's school. Across the age groups they participate reverently in silent reflection, community prayer and joyful singing. Pupils work collaboratively with others and undertake liturgical ministries with increasing skill, understanding and confidence. The school ensures that the pupils use the virtues as regular themes within their worship. From their youngest years, pupils lead and experience celebrations of the word which include well-chosen scripture passages, meaningful visual focal points, spontaneous and traditional prayers and moments of quiet reflection. Liturgies provide the pupils with clear guidance for their daily lives rooted in the teachings in the gospels. Planned opportunities for pupils to reflect on the impact of this guidance on their moral and spiritual development is embedded in the liturgical practice of the school.

Prayer is woven into the daily life of the school with senior leaders ensuring that it is appropriately planned and responsive to key issues in the local area and globally. In some areas of school pupils are experiencing a broad range of ways to pray which then impacts positively on the quality of their planning and delivery of pupil led worship. Pupils from the school attend the church for Mass each week. They take a lead in the sacramental celebration with confidence and reverence. Links with the parish are very strong, the parish priest is a very regular visitor to school and his contribution to school life is valued by the staff and pupils. Staff, including senior leaders, are skilled in leading prayer and worship. They are good role models to other staff and pupils. St Joseph's benefits from the diocesan music programme giving pupils the opportunity to learn new hymns and sing well. Areas are provided throughout the school for individuals to pray, however these are not used to their full potential. School is developing opportunities for parents to be involved in the prayer life in

school and within the parish.

A graduated policy for prayer and liturgy is in place and staff use this as a guide. Pupil evaluation of worship is embedded in the older years. The opportunities to celebrate Mass on a frequent basis as well as taking part in other events such as the Advent and Easter liturgies are well appreciated and central to the school's calendar. Leaders and governors prioritise resources of time, staffing and money to ensure there are many opportunities for prayer within the school. As a result of professional development, staff across the school are skilled in leading prayer and worship. Leaders and governors have reviewed the quality of prayer and liturgy by observing worship and seeking the views of pupils. However, at present these reviews are not rigorous enough to move the school to outstanding.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Joseph's Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	138947
Full postal address of the school	Newgate, Pontefract, West Yorkshire WF8 4AA
School phone number	01977 701493
Name of head teacher or principal	Mrs Velayudhan Tomlin
Chair of governing board	Mr Alan Richards
School Website	https://www.sjp.bkcat.co.uk/
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	Bishop Konstant Catholic Academy Trust
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy
Age-range of pupils	3-11
Trustees	Diocese of Leeds
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	March 2017
Previous denominational inspection grade	Outstanding

The inspection team

Mrs Alixena Lubomski

Lead inspector

Mrs Madeleine Bannister

Team inspector

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