



St Joseph's Catholic Academy

Mill Lane, Hebburn, Tyne and Wear, NE31 2ET

School Unique Reference Number: **139878**

Inspection dates:	14 – 15 March 2019
Lead inspector:	Meg Baines
Team inspector:	Mark Henderson

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Catholic Life:		Outstanding	1
Religious Education:		Good	2
Collective Worship:		Outstanding	1

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

St Joseph's Catholic Academy is an outstanding Catholic school because:

- It is a welcoming school with an atmosphere of faith, spirituality and care for everyone in the community.
- The quality of Catholic Life is outstanding because staff and students embrace the school's mission statement. Students are inspired by and respond to a range of opportunities to live out their faith. The strong ethos evident in school has stood the test of time and change providing the community with a sense of continuity.
- The quality of Religious Education is good. Students respond well to dynamic teaching. This is motivating them to improve standards and make progress. Leadership within the department is outstanding and is having a positive impact on outcomes. Teaching in Religious Education, in the majority of lessons, is outstanding.
- The quality of Collective Worship is outstanding and can be found across and at the heart of the school. The lay chaplain, local clergy, curriculum lead, staff and students all have opportunities to take part in planning and delivering meaningful Collective Worship.

FULL REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

- St Joseph's Catholic Academy is an above average sized mixed 11-18 academy. Pupils come from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds.
- 80% of students are identified as white British.
- The proportion of students eligible for pupil premium is 22%. This is above the national average.
- The proportion of students with disabilities and special educational needs is slightly below the national average at 20%.
- 58% of students are baptised Catholic with 22% identified as other Christian. Half of all teachers are Catholic.
- The head of school has been in post since September 2018 and the majority of his senior leadership team are new to the post. The school now has an executive headteacher.

WHAT DOES THE SCHOOL NEED TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- Improve outcomes in Religious Education for students at key stage 4 and 5 by:
 - continuing to focus on high level planning and delivery of good quality lessons.
 - ensuring that the school meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference in offering 10% of curriculum time at key stage 3.
- Clarify the role of the lay chaplain by:
 - securing a chaplaincy mentor.
- Develop greater opportunities for students and staff to experience quiet prayer by:
 - looking for ways to create times and spaces for quiet reflection in the school day.

CATHOLIC LIFE

THE QUALITY OF THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

1

- 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.

- Students and staff have embraced the school's mission statement, 'In our school, may there be prayer, learning and humour, hard work, faith and friendship'. It is very evident in their lessons and in the way the students treat each other.
- Students behave well outside the classroom showing respect for themselves and others, and behaviour for learning in the classroom is exemplary.
- There is a strong welcoming atmosphere. Students are proud of their school and the role it plays in the local community. Students are alert to the needs of others and they try to do what they can to address them by taking part in a range of charitable events within school and beyond.
- Students are provided with opportunities for personal and social development and have age appropriate relationship and sex education sessions. They embrace the opportunities provided by the school and are confident of their own stage of spiritual and emotional development.
- The different faiths of all members of the school community are recognised. A chapel and separate prayer room are available for use. Staff and students spoke of a sense of personal worth and demonstrated respect for each other. There is a student chaplaincy team who work with the community enhancing opportunities for others to benefit from the Catholic Life of the school.
- Students spoke affectionately about their school, demonstrating a genuine pride in belonging to the St Joseph's Academy community.

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

- A clear and effective mission statement which expresses the educational mission of the Church has been written by students. The way it is seen by students and staff as the heart of everything that is done in the school is inspirational. There are five headings to the statement which is writ large around school. They are prayer, learning and humour; hard work, faith and friendship; respect; use our gifts and encourage others; peace.
- Staff are committed to the implementation of the mission statement across the curriculum. They actively support it through staff prayers, retreats and through their continuous professional development and induction programmes. There is a strong sense of

community. This can be seen in the strong relationships between staff and the senior leadership team. Staff believe that their well-being is a genuine focus for senior leaders and this is reflected in the relationship between adults and students, who respect and like their teachers.

- High standards of behaviour are promoted by the school. Students' behaviour is very good outside the classroom and behaviour for learning in the classroom is outstanding.
- A strong and tangible commitment to Catholic social teaching is engrained in the school. Students spoke about 'fairness' and the need to do the right thing, demonstrating a respect for human dignity.
- The school has shown a commitment to supporting the community through their charitable giving. Supporting agencies such as Hebburn Help (local food bank), Operation Christmas Child and Dementia Care, thereby serving the local community in very practical ways.
- There are signs and symbols around the school of the Catholic character of the school.
- Chaplaincy provision is effective in offering support for promoting the Catholic Life of the school. The lay chaplain liaises effectively with local clergy, leads retreats and takes a lead at 'the Source' and 'the Event'. There is some confusion as to the role and duties of the lay chaplain who currently gives freely of his time in a range of areas of school life.
- Effective structures are in place to support the most vulnerable students in school.
- A newly implemented house system underpins the new pastoral structure. Houses are named for northern saints to reinforce the school's Catholic identity. The rewards system is used to great effect with 'credits' being awarded for contribution to the Catholic Life of the school or Collective Worship.
- The school caters for the pastoral needs of the staff. For example, the staff school improvement group created several initiatives such as Happy Mondays, involving a positive news story to start the week, Christmas tea party and treats at staff briefing every Monday. The new leaders at St Joseph's are committed to listening to the staff and supporting their well-being.
- Programmes for personal social and health education and relationships and sex education, devised by the school in line with diocesan guidelines are taught weekly. Years 12 and 13 study core Religious Education and follow a cleverly planned programme designed by the school called Pope Francis Laudato Si, Silver and Gold Award.

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

- Leaders at St Joseph's are deeply committed to the Church's mission and bear personal witness to this through the way they treat others and in the lead they take in staff prayers, assemblies and liturgies. Leaders and governors see Catholic Life as a core leadership responsibility. Members of the senior leadership team said, 'the mission statement is at the heart of everything we do'.
- Leaders and governors regularly monitor the Catholic Life of the school and analyse data from parental and student voice surveys to look for ways to target improvements. Examples of this are spirituality drop down days and the new sixth form Pope Francis Laudato Si Award as well as the creation of a student chaplaincy team.
- Leaders are role models for Catholic Life at home and further afield. St Joseph's leads several events across the diocese; some based at school, some in other schools in the diocese. For example, Event and Event Roadshow. Leaders also run annual training for staff

on what it means to work in a Catholic school and Catholic Ethos in the curriculum.

- There is evidence to show that continuous professional development (CPD) is happening and is having an impact on the Catholic Life of the school. Staff evaluations highlight how useful and enjoyable it has been. New staff are fully inducted to working in a Catholic school and are supported in ways tailored to the needs of the individual.
- Governors play a key role in the evaluation of Catholic Life and planning for improvement. They are passionate about the school's mission and are supportive in the on-going development of and strengthening of the Catholic Life of the school.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

THE QUALITY OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

2

- 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 good.

- While most students from a variety of start points make good progress, recent results indicate average attainment. Last summer results at GCSE were in line with national averages but below the diocese. In 2018 the A level results were below expectations with improvements expected this summer. This has been a key departmental priority.
- Religious Education remains the highest performing subject in school and the school's progress figures do not reflect the standards of teaching and the enthusiasm there is for this subject among the student body.
- Pupils, relative to their age and ability, are religiously literate and use their knowledge to think ethically and theologically.
- During lessons students were actively engaged, showed a great level of enthusiasm for their subject and have a clear understanding of where they are in terms of their personal progress. Most knew what to do to improve. One student said, 'our teacher couldn't do any more to help us, he is brilliant'.
- Behaviour for learning is outstanding. Lessons are seen as enjoyable and important.
- Attainment in Religious Education is good. Most students, except those with additional needs, achieve at least in line with national data at the end of key stage 4.

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

- Teaching of Religious Education at St Joseph's is outstanding. Teachers are consistent in their planning, preparation and evaluation of work. There was a high level of energy and enthusiasm seen in the lessons observed and a great deal of creativity, fun and enjoyment ensures that the many learning styles are catered for. A wide range of pedagogies is employed in order to address the varying needs of the students across all key stages.
- Staff have a high level of experience and expertise. They share their practice across the department and as a consequence students are beginning to make good levels of progress.
- Students are involved in their own evaluations. They know how well they are achieving.
- Exceptionally high levels of concentration and involvement were observed.
- Teachers used their time effectively. There was evidence of well-marked work and annotated A level work. Feedback is a key factor in this department. Students are encouraged to respond to written and oral feedback ensuring understanding.

- During lessons teachers used questioning skilfully to elicit knowledge and encourage high level thinking from the students. Tasks were differentiated and other adults were used to support the needs of some learners.
- High quality resources were effectively used.
- Religious Education is viewed as a core subject by staff and students and high expectations are continually communicated to the students. They respond well to this.
- Religious Education is celebrated in a way unique to the Religious Education department, with Jesus merits and praise which is highly effective as a motivational tool.

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

- The head of school and governors are committed to ensuring that the Religious Education of every student is of the highest quality and that the curriculum meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference. To this end all key stages have the recommended curriculum time with the exception of key stage 3. There are plans to extend this in the near future.
- Leaders and governors ensure that the place of Religious Education on the curriculum has a parity with other subjects in terms of resources, CPD, staffing and accommodation. All lessons are in line with the National Religious Education Curriculum Directory. There is also a full time lay chaplain.
- Monitoring systems are in place. There is a senior leadership team link who meets and monitors data fortnightly. The curriculum lead and assistant lead meet daily for informal discussions. This monitoring is not yet yielding outstanding outcomes however the head and governors are committed to target planning as it is beginning to demonstrate an upturn in both progress and achievement.
- The curriculum lead brings a level of energy and enthusiasm to the role which is an inspiration to others. His outstanding teaching and expertise inspire not only the staff at St Joseph's but also further afield. His innovations and ideas are used very effectively to improve teaching and learning in Religious Education, consequently the teaching in Religious Education is mostly outstanding.
- Leaders ensure that the Religious Education programme is imaginative, thoughtful and effective in meeting the needs of the different groups of students. At all points it builds on prior learning.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

THE QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

1

- 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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2

1

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

- There exists an enthusiasm for Collective Worship which engages staff, students and visitors to the school. A very moving staff prayer was witnessed. Staff prayer begins the week followed by thoughtfully prepared acts of Collective Worship which follow a theme or in some instances in response to current events. Students either join in reverently or sit quietly and respectfully during such occasions.
- Students are experienced in planning and leading Collective Worship on both small and large scale. One session observed was a sixth form classroom assembly based on bullying. It was entirely planned, written and filmed by the students themselves and was very moving.
- In the whole school acts of Collective Worship observed, the students were respectful and some were visibly uplifted by the topic and prayers.
- Worship is experienced through lessons, class Mass and liturgy programmes. Students work with the lay chaplain to prepare Collective Worship and plan the hymns, readings, drama and prayers.
- The school has the support of two local clergy who take turns to say weekly Mass in the school chapel and whose presence is noted and appreciated by the students. They support the school in other ways by liaising with the lay chaplain regarding year Masses, liturgies and the use of the Emmaus room in the church building by the nurture group, as well as other groups. They work closely with the school on local charitable events and worship events.
- When questioned closely, a number of students were able to demonstrate a good understanding of the Church's liturgical year, describing acts and events which reflected this.
- Every month the school hosts 'The Event', an opportunity for students from St Joseph's and other schools in the diocese to come together for worship.
- Most students are comfortable and confident in their use of a wide variety of prayer which uses scripture and religious artefacts. For example year 7's 'Love your selfie' during the school retreat programme. Students at the other end of the age range are required to plan and deliver liturgies and prayers for Masses.

- Students are given the opportunity to experience worship through a variety of forms; musical praise and kinaesthetic worship. For example, 2.58 prayer - at the end of the school day, where prayer star jumps and prayer jogs can be seen.
- Placing prayer at the heart of the school's mission and therefore at the heart of school is having an impact on the spiritual and moral development of the students. Students can reflect upon this and recall their enjoyment and appreciation for having moments such as these at the centre of life at St Joseph's.

The quality of provision for Collective Worship is good.

- Praying together is part of the daily routine at St Joseph's. Collective Worship happens both formally and informally.
- The school uses themes for worship which largely reflect the church's liturgical year and are Catholic in nature. A number of guest speakers, for example Gram Seed, Padres Alex and Paschal come into school to lead the students and staff in worship. A full programme of speakers is in place for the remainder of the school year.
- Almost all the school community speak positively about prayer and worship in school. It is given a priority in terms of planning.
- Staff involved have good knowledge of the Church's liturgical calendar and its seasons and ensure that at the appropriate times students benefit from well-planned opportunities for worship.
- Staff are becoming more skilled at supporting the students in their preparations for such events and thereby help them to deliver good quality acts of Collective Worship. They begin the school year themselves by celebrating Mass at St James' Church.
- The school opens its doors to the community throughout the school year, inviting parents, governors and clergy to join in the celebrations at welcome Masses and at Christmas. The diocesan Youth Service collaborate with the school to run the monthly faith night event ('the Event') for students from around the diocese.

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

- Leaders and managers have an excellent understanding of how to plan for creative and engaging acts of Collective Worship, through events such as spirituality drop down days and daily prayer. Leaders at St Joseph's facilitate Collective Worship ensuring that prayer is regarded as relevant and meaningful.
- Leaders have extensive knowledge of the seasons of the Church, its liturgical year and festivals. They advise staff in briefings on Church guidelines. They attend diocesan training, thus deepening their own understanding of theology and liturgy.
- High levels of personal understanding and commitment to the Catholic faith enable staff to create prayer opportunities which are contemporary and relevant to the students.
- The head of school and other school leaders maintain a high profile during acts of Collective Worship. They are models of outstanding practice in school and across the diocese.
- A recent drive to accelerate the progress to greater numbers of students leading Collective Worship is reaping rewards. The school now has commissioned student chaplains and a thriving group is working toward the Pope John Paul II Award. During this inspection three

students received their awards at a ceremony.

- The spiritual development of staff is given the highest priority. There is a weekly spiritual briefing. Staff are encouraged to attend diocesan development training such as Eucharistic Minister courses and the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies. One member of staff is currently undergoing this. Whole school CPD and staff induction are a focus for leaders.
- Leaders and governors review Collective Worship as part of their self-evaluation procedures. They offer both challenge and support, ensuring that all statutory and canonical responsibilities are well met.

SUMMARY OF INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

HOW EFFECTIVE THE SCHOOL IS IN PROVIDING CATHOLIC EDUCATION:**1****CATHOLIC LIFE:****1**

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

1

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

1

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

1

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION:**2**

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

2

The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education.

1

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

1

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP:**1**

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

1

The quality of provision for Collective Worship.

2

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

1

SCHOOL DETAILS

School name	St Joseph's Catholic Academy
Unique reference number	139878
Local authority	South Tyneside
This Inspection Report is produced for the Rt Reverend Séamus Cunningham the Bishop of Hexham and Newcastle 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	Mrs G Kilgour
Executive head teacher	Mr Brendan Tapping
Date of previous school inspection	May 2014
Telephone number	01914282700
Email address	office@stjosephs.uk.net