



## Catholic Schools Inspectorate inspection report for St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Billingham

URN: 142736

Carried out on behalf of the Most Rev Malcolm McMahon, Archbishop of Liverpool and Apostolic Administrator  
of the diocese of Hexham and Newcastle on:

Date: 8-9 June 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.....

1

### 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.....

1

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

x

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

x

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

Fully

## Summary of key findings

### What the school does well

- The school motto, 'Walk in the light of Christ,' permeates school life and is a touchstone which inspires pupils to take positive action to help others.
- Pupils are well-nurtured, know they are loved and thrive in the supportive care of staff.
- Staff develop and sustain strong relationships with families; there is a well-developed sense of community where all are valued.
- Pupils plan and lead liturgical prayer with great confidence and deep reverence; they relish opportunities to lead and are enthusiastic participants.

- Inspirational leadership ensures there is an embedded culture of care for one another and for our common home.

What the school needs to improve:

- Ensure that the planned relationships and health education curriculum is progressive and coherent, and ensure parents remain fully informed of curriculum content and resources used.
- Ensure staff have a thorough understanding of age-related expectations (expected outcomes), so that assessments of pupil attainment in religious education are accurate and inform planning.
- Ensure there is secure, consistent staff subject knowledge so that tasks set in religious education lessons reflect the learning intentions of the planned curriculum and accelerate progress.

## 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:.....

1

### Pupil outcomes

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

1

### Provision

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

1

### Leadership

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

1

Pupil outcomes in Catholic life and mission are outstanding because pupils know they are valued, recognizing school as a safe place where they can flourish. They are proud to be part of St Joseph's school. They recognise the school's Catholic character and understand their responsibility to care for themselves, others, and the world around them. Pupils are respectful to one another and warmly welcome new members to the community. They can articulate that they follow the teachings of Christ and, consequently, they behave kindly and treat others with dignity and respect. They can see that the school motto, 'Walk in the light of Christ,' informs actions in school. In response they seek ways to support those in need. Because the school's curriculum supports Catholic Social Teaching, pupils are inspired to 'do what we can to look after people who don't have what we have.' Pupils act as 'Community Ambassadors' with a mission to 'make a difference' in their town and their support to the local community is highly valued. Charitable acts are undertaken enthusiastically; pupils are proud of their contributions.

The quality of provision is outstanding. The motto is clear and staff ensure it underpins all provision; it therefore significantly impacts the mission of the school. Staff are exemplary role models in the way they nurture those in their care, and in the support they give to one another. The behaviour of pupils is managed sensitively. Expectations are high and pupils are given the care they need to respond positively to those expectations. Staff ensure the school is a place of welcome, hospitality and kindness. Parents highly value the care shown to all pupils, especially those in greatest need. All staff eagerly 'go the extra mile' in their pursuit of sustaining a nurturing environment for all. Parents appreciate the culture of the school. One parent stated, 'All children are included and feel valued. My children are very well supported

and are listened to.' Staff ensure that the school environment reflects its Catholic character and celebrates the traditions of the Church. Spaces are readily available for pupils experiencing difficulties so that they can regulate their behaviour; they are consequently treated gently and with dignity. Provision for relationships and health education meets statutory requirements and is rooted in the Church's teaching. Parents were consulted when the policy was reviewed. However, parents are now not aware of what pupils learn in this area and would like clear information about the resources used in lessons.

Leaders are outstanding in the ways in which they promote and evaluate the Catholic life and mission of the school. Because they invest time in getting to know those in their care, they have a deep understanding of the lived experiences of pupils. They give the school's mission the highest priority and are excellent role models, ensuring the Catholic character of the school is central. They have embedded effective policies for the management of pupils and have ensured that the curriculum includes opportunities to reflect ethically and spiritually. They prioritise opportunities for the school community to contribute to charitable acts, promoting a sense of altruism and stewardship. Effective monitoring procedures ensure that leaders, including governors, are fully aware of the provision for the Catholic life of the school. Links to the parish and wider community are well-sustained and leaders work collaboratively with other schools for the good of all. The headteacher inspires staff. She is recognised by parents as exemplary in the care she shows. Staff feel affirmed; they are treated with dignity and their well-being is sensitively supported. Consequently, they are well-placed to serve their pupils.

## 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

Pupils enjoy religious education lessons. The curriculum is progressive and promotes interest and enthusiasm. Consequently, pupil outcomes in religious education are good. Pupils, including those with specific needs, make sustained progress. As appropriate to their age, pupils recognise how the actions of believers are influenced by their faith. They are able to talk about some of the key figures in the history of the People of God and have some understanding of the roles of people in the Church. By the end of key stage two, pupils demonstrate some knowledge of scripture and can describe religious symbols and actions. Behaviour in lessons is good and no learning time is lost. Pupils complete their work carefully and they are proud of their books. They display independence in their learning and are able to express an opinion, using some religious vocabulary accurately. They seek to improve their learning and respond to feedback so that standards are at least in line with other subjects. However, the tasks set in some lessons do not match the learning intention, and therefore pupils do not always have the opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge fully.

The provision of religious education at St Joseph's is good. Teachers recognise the importance of religious education and provide varied opportunities for pupils to capture their learning. They use questioning to provoke deeper thinking and encourage pupils to justify and explain their thoughts. Because staff celebrate success and affirm responses, they motivate pupils and encourage them to reflect on religious concepts. They demonstrate fidelity to the 'Come and See' religious education programme and adapt teaching to ensure pupils have equitable access to the curriculum. Parents value the provision for religious education and one stated, 'The academic environment is an excellent one.' Another parent was pleased that learning is memorable and stated, 'My son is teaching me a lot in regard to religious education.' In the most successful lessons, teachers have a deep understanding of curriculum concepts and age-

related expectations. Consequently, lessons are pitched appropriately. However, this is not consistent across the school and some tasks set do not allow pupils to demonstrate higher order thinking and do not provide opportunities for pupils to respond to the learning intention of lessons. Feedback does not always relate to the religious content of lessons and consequently, does not promote religious literacy. There are, therefore, missed learning opportunities.

Leaders, including governors, monitor the provision for religious education systematically. They visit lessons, review work, and seek feedback from pupils and, as a result, have an accurate understanding of the strengths in teaching and learning. They provide relevant feedback to staff when progress is slower than expected in lessons, so improvements are made. To support staff development, leaders model and co-teach lessons to build the knowledge and understanding of less-experienced staff. Leaders have identified that there is some over-reliance on suggested tasks in the curriculum programme, which has resulted in missed learning opportunities in some lessons. Consequently, they have implemented in-school moderation processes and, more recently, collaboration with other schools. As a result, consistency and accuracy in assessments is improving. The religious education lead teacher has developed a curriculum progress map and a revised progress tracking tool to further address concerns. However, there are some inconsistencies in how assessment is used to inform planning. The lead teacher maintains a culture of support which is greatly appreciated by colleagues. Leaders have embedded relevant recruitment and induction processes, giving due regard to staff understanding of the religious education curriculum. This, along with ongoing appropriate professional development, builds staff confidence and competence in teaching religious education.

## Collective worship

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

Collective worship key judgement grade: .....

1

### 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

The outcomes for prayer and liturgy at St Joseph's are outstanding. Pupils are confident in planning and leading liturgical prayer. They participate enthusiastically and are able to reflect on how worship enhances their life. Prayer is meaningful and punctuates the school day, encouraging the spiritual development of pupils. There is a sense of reverence and pupils enjoy weekly opportunities to join the parish for Mass in school. The liturgical formation of pupils is prioritised and the Church's traditions and rituals are well-embedded from nursery onwards. Scripture relating to the liturgical year is central to the prayer life of the school. There are some opportunities for creative and spontaneous prayer which supports the development of personal prayer styles. One pupil commented, 'Our prayers help us to think about what we do after we leave [worship.] We try to live out what Jesus taught us in the Gospel.' Pupils undertake ministries enthusiastically and they are able to evaluate their liturgical experiences.

Because staff prioritise the provision for collective worship, there is a deeply embedded rhythm of prayer across the day. Staff are skillful in supporting pupils to plan and lead liturgical prayer and they act as excellent role models. Teachers provide some opportunities for varied prayer styles and so pupils are able to explore their personal spirituality. Adults work with pupils to prepare prayerful foci in classrooms which provide opportunities to reflect on the liturgical year. Scripture is central to prayer and liturgy, and pupils respond well to reflect on their own beliefs and actions. Parents highly value the opportunity to worship with pupils and recognise the rich prayer experiences offered to their children. One parent explained that, through the prayers within school, 'they learn what's important and how to treat other people around them'. Staff have an ongoing commitment to promote parish links. A member of the parish stated that the community is 'enhanced by the contribution made by pupils. The staff make sure the children know they belong to the parish because they belong to the school.

Staff support the preparation of pupils for the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist, alongside the parish, and this is celebrated joyously across the school community.

Leaders have implemented the collective worship policy effectively and ensure that the prayer life of the school is meaningful and reflects the liturgical year. Their leadership is outstanding and consequently collective worship is a celebration of the school's mission. Professional development days and staff meetings provide opportunities for staff to develop an understanding of how to model the leadership of collective worship and how to support pupils to plan and lead liturgical prayer. Senior leaders are inspirational to colleagues. They carefully plan opportunities for prayerful celebrations in line with the liturgical year and in response to local, national and international events. The parish highly values the work of leaders and recognises their contribution to the liturgical formation of pupils. Leaders facilitate weekly parish Masses in school and consequently, the prayer life of the school is embedded in the wider parish. Governors monitor the provision for collective worship alongside the headteacher, as part of the self-evaluation cycle. Because they have an accurate awareness of the school's strengths and needs, they ensure that investment is made in resources to enhance collective worship. They also ensure that there are opportunities for Eucharistic celebrations on Holy days and at key times in the Church's year.



## Information about the school

Full name of school	St Joseph's Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	142736
Full postal address of the school	Low Grange Avenue, Billingham, Cleveland, TS23 3NN
School phone number	01642 560056
Name of head teacher or principal	Ruth Whyte
Chair of governing board	Judith Waugh
School Website	<a href="https://stjosephsbillingham.bhcet.org.uk">https://stjosephsbillingham.bhcet.org.uk</a>
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	Bishop Hogarth Catholic Education Trust
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy
Age-range of pupils	3 to 11
Trustees	Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	October 2015
Previous denominational inspection grade	2

## The inspection team

Barbara Reilly-O'Donnell

Lead inspector

Michael Ewing

Team inspector

## Key to grade judgements

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