



St Joseph's RC Primary School

Village Lane, Washington Village, Tyne and Wear, NE38 7HU

School Unique Reference Number: **108850**

Inspection dates:

08 – 09 May 2018

Lead inspector:

Carolyn Duffy

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

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

St Joseph's RC Primary School is an outstanding Catholic school because:

- There is a very strong sense of a supportive, inclusive and caring community where the mission of Catholic education is palpable in every aspect of school life. Behaviour is exemplary and pastoral care for all pupils ensures that the needs of pupils are quickly identified and supported.
- Pupils enjoy and are influenced by their Religious Education lessons. They are keen to do well and improve their knowledge and understanding and make good progress.
- Prayer and worship are deeply embedded and are at the very heart of the school. All pupils of all faiths are reflective, enthusiastic, reverent and thoughtful in their worship and prayer.

FULL REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This is an average sized primary school serving the parish of Our Blessed Lady Immaculate, Washington. There are over 90% of pupils of white British heritage with 6% from other ethnic backgrounds. The school has approximately 90% of pupils who are baptised Catholics and a further 4% from other Christian denominations. The proportion of pupils identified as having a special educational need is well below average at 8%. The school offers a breakfast club together with a variety of other school clubs and opportunities, which are well supported, by parents and pupils.

Priorities from the last inspection have been addressed and there is a continuous drive for improvement.

WHAT DOES THE SCHOOL NEED TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

■ Improve teaching and learning in RE by:

- providing more opportunities to challenge pupils leading to raised achievement.

- providing a more cohesive approach to marking and feedback to ensure that it is consistently applied across school.

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.

- Pupils make an outstanding contribution to the Catholic Life of the school. They are a driving force; involved in shaping and evaluating the very many projects in which pupils engage in living out the school mission statement 'to provide a caring and learning community in which the contribution of each is recognised and developed'. One year five pupil described what they felt about being a pupil in a Catholic school, 'We are here to do a job; we are here to spread the word'.
- They talk confidently and proudly of the many charitable initiatives within school and the contribution they have made. For example, pupils' personal research is frequently used as the catalyst to begin a charitable activity. Recently, a group of year five pupils independently spent a considerable amount of time researching the need for mosquito nets by various groups in different parts of the world. They planned and created a PowerPoint presentation to show other pupils and followed that with a fundraising initiative. Pupils have been involved in other charitable works, for example, operation Christmas Child, CAFOD and Fairtrade activities.
- Behaviour of all pupils is exemplary and pupils talk easily about how they deal with any issues or problems that arise.
- There is a strong sense of personal responsibility about choices made and how staff support pupils in managing difficult situations. For example, pupils described how they would always involve an adult if they needed to but sometimes they are able to resolve disagreements themselves. They described that the staff expect them to behave well and they need to demonstrate justice and forgiveness to each other, as they would expect to be treated similarly.
- Pupils readily contribute their ideas and responses to the work of the school and their school mission statement. The senior leadership team has already planned a complete review of the school mission statement for the next term.

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

- St Joseph's is a vibrant, joyful, faith community where the school mission statement is lived by all of the community. It is evident all are valued and the contribution from each individual is celebrated. Evidence from all sources including pupils, parents, governors, priest and staff describe the deeply positive experience they have as a result of belonging to this faith community.
- Equally, all staff are deeply committed to ensuring that pupils experience the love of God. This is evident in their behaviour and actions as role models, their relationships with pupils, parents, the parishioners and other adults with whom the school has regular contact. Senior leaders give each and every member of the school community who is in need full support and pastoral care.
- Within classrooms, corridors and external areas, the school environment joyfully reflects the school's mission and identity with a variety of displays and spaces for prayer and reflection together with a wide range of informative displays about the work of the pupils. For example pupils have contributed to a very powerful display which stemmed from their involvement with the parish mission, 'The Unbroken Chain'. This includes photographs of pupils forming a living chain, beautiful lanterns to 'guide the way', stained glass windows and other sacred artefacts. These displays demonstrate pupils' full participation in and understanding of the Catholic Life of the school.
- All policies including behaviour, relationship and sex education and personal, health and social education are rooted in Gospel values and have been planned and implemented in conjunction with parents, priests and partnership schools to support pupils.

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

- The school's leadership is outstanding. The headteacher, senior leadership team and governors demonstrate a deep commitment to Catholic education and the Church's mission for all pupils and their families in school, in the parish and beyond. For example, a 'challenge group' involving governors challenges the headteacher and other leaders to ensure that all aspects of the school are all deeply rooted in the mission of the church, that their policies and practices reflect their school mission statement and that all that can be done, is done, to ensure the best outcomes for pupils in this Catholic school.
- The headteacher is a role model for the school's mission and demonstrates a very strong commitment and witness to her faith and responsibility as a leader. She will retire at the end of the academic year and, through effective succession planning, she has ensured that the new headteacher will continue to develop this authentic ethos and faith journey for staff and pupils.
- Governors and the senior leadership team collaborate closely to evaluate the schools strengths and areas for improvement. The governors' challenge group is rigorous and this leads to a coherent programme of well-planned improvements to further develop the school. As a result, staff and pupils' understanding of the school's mission is outstanding.
- Staff are actively encouraged to undertake the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies (CCRS). A commitment to undertake this is now asked of staff newly appointed to the school and there are plans to ensure that more teachers complete this course over time.

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

- Collective Worship engages all pupils and they demonstrate calm and prayerful responses, palpable enthusiasm and joy. Pupils are extremely reverent when listening to the Word of God and reflective when thinking about what that means for them in today's world. All pupils engage in and take turns to lead meditation on a regular and frequent basis. This is also a powerful prayer time when the still and quiet atmosphere conveys the depth of their heartfelt thoughts and responses. For example pupils in reception were deeply engaged in a meditation session which was led by a pupil from the class. Other pupils' eyes were closed as the leader spoke in a quiet voice repeating a line of scripture each time shortening the scripture by a word. This created a powerful sense of prayer and focus.
- Pupils regularly work in small groups to plan, prepare and lead Collective Worship. They demonstrate skills and experience appropriate to their age. This is well embedded within the school and pupils take increasingly more responsibility as they move through the school. Pupils are accustomed to following a structured format and are confident in using music, scripture, silence and other religious artefacts in their liturgies with increasing skill.
- From the youngest pupils, there is an excellent understanding of the Church's liturgical year, special feasts and liturgical colours. Pupils in nursery were able to talk about their 'Mary' table and the 'blue bag' they take turns to take home, as one opportunity to pray at home with their family. One parent informed the teacher that her child had run in excitedly from playing outside so that she could write a prayer for Mary.
- Pupils eagerly participate in a range of opportunities for prayer and reflection offered by the school or by the youth worker, who is shared by a number of schools and the parish. For example, these include the regular daily Rosary group and a 'walk of prayer stations' around the internal and external aspects of the school dedicated to a prayer journey with Mary. Pupils also enjoy the use of a spiritual garden and dedicated outdoor prayer space, which is being developed to use in times of joy and sadness.
- Respect for other faiths is also central to St Joseph's and pupils were able to describe sensitively and with genuine enthusiasm how other world faith festivals such as Eid and Hanukkah are celebrated. One year two pupil related that she is a Muslim and she loves learning about faith. She enjoys helping to set up a prayer space, lighting candles, reading the bible and talking about what she believes with her friends.

The quality of provision for Collective Worship is outstanding.

- Collective Worship is central to everything in school and all key celebrations include a liturgy. Pupils describe prayer and worship as a daily experience and as something which sets the school apart from other schools. Three pupils who joined the school mid-year described how they really enjoyed what the school offers and that they never had the opportunity to take part in anything like meditation or liturgies before. Opportunities for pupils to be involved in Collective Worship take place frequently throughout the week as a whole school, in individual classes and on a voluntary group basis.
- All Collective Worship has a clear purpose, message and direction. The school uses Statements to Live By as the basis for the majority of school Collective Worship and each class takes the message from the liturgy back to their classroom where it is placed in a prominent position for all to see, read and reflect upon. Pupils readily describe how this influences their behaviour on a day by day basis as they see the statement and think about it frequently.
- Staff pray together on a regular and frequent basis and have opportunities for their own spiritual development through reflective time together. This spiritual time is an essential part of their ongoing formation as leaders of Catholic Education and provides an opportunity for them to support each other and provide inspiration to each other.
- There are frequent opportunities for parents, governors and parishioners to share in Collective Worship with pupils throughout the year and attendance is outstanding.
- Governors and the headteacher have been astute in their recruitment and have 92% Catholic teachers. Together with regular opportunities for training and sharing of good practice, staff have an excellent understanding and knowledge of the church's liturgical heritage and are skilled in promoting and modelling high quality liturgies for pupils. Senior leaders mentor staff new to the school so that their knowledge and skill increases rapidly. Teachers also model parts of the liturgy for pupils as they begin to take on the role of planning and leading and this decreases as pupils become more confident and skilled.
- The Religious Education coordinator is highly skilled and regularly updates the staff on any diocesan wide developments to promote or enhance liturgy.

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

- Senior leaders are highly experienced and share their knowledge of how to plan and lead high quality liturgies for pupils. They are excellent role models, have expert knowledge of the church's liturgical seasons, rites and traditions and lead the pupils to an ever-deepening relationship with God.
- The headteacher is highly visible in this role as are other members of the school staff who all take a role in leading whole school worship.

Leaders and managers frequently monitor the quality of Collective Worship. Pupils, parents and staff provide feedback on their experiences and leaders value these and act swiftly to improve and extend provision and opportunities for staff and pupils in school. For example, a book is used to collect comments from other pupils and staff whenever a class group leads worship. One parent commented, 'What a wonderful way to spread the message of love. Well done to everyone in year one'. Another reflected on a liturgy

focusing on the power of the Holy Spirit, 'As always, we can all learn something. Good way to start the day'. As a consequence pupil response is outstanding.

- Support for staff to further their own knowledge and experience is given high priority and time and resources are allocated to ongoing formation. New staff are mentored in leading worship and continuing professional development is given a high priority and appropriately resourced. In addition, leaders ensure that high quality experiences of Collective Worship for pupils are given the highest priority by including these in performance management reviews.

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.

- Pupils are highly motivated, engaged and enthusiastic about Religious Education. They can explain its value and describe it as one of the best lessons they have. They are keen to do well and improve. For example, pupils in key stage two were diligently engaging in group and paired work discussing the fruits of the Holy Spirit. As a result they were able to develop a range of skills and apply these to reflect on meaning and consider the effect of these gifts and religious teaching on their own lives.
- Behaviour in all classes is exemplary and there was no disruption to lessons. Pupils moved around the classroom quietly and listened respectfully to each other and adults in the rooms.
- Most pupils are making progress in lessons and over time. They quickly acquire knowledge, are secure in their understanding and are able to identify links with previous learning. They enjoy improving their work but are not always given time to do so.
- Standards of attainment at the end of key stage one, in year four and at the end of key stage two are in line with diocesan average.
- Pupils' books evidence a very good quantity of work and a good standard of attainment, although there is evidence of inconsistencies in differentiation, marking and feedback between year groups.

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

- The majority of teaching is good or better with some aspects outstanding, for example, teachers subject knowledge, and as a result, most pupils and groups of pupils are making good progress over time.
- Teachers' good subject knowledge and effective use of Come and See together with Diocesan curriculum plans, ensures pupils are offered an interesting curriculum experience. There is evidence of best practice in differentiation, marking and teacher feedback across the school but this is not consistent across all year groups.
- Teachers are beginning to use their own creative ideas to engage pupils as well as a high level of visual prompts to support pupils' learning. Senior leaders have already identified the need to increase the range and variety of differentiated strategies to engage pupils in order to increase the proportion of pupils achieving a higher level of attainment.

- Assessment is used throughout lessons to check pupils understanding. Marking is regular and there is evidence of teachers providing additional questions to prompt pupils to improve their work with further detail or information. However, pupils are not always able to respond.
- Time is well used together with additional targeted adult support, ensuring good progress for most pupils.
- Praise for achievement and effort is central to all lessons and pupils talk animatedly about how well they have done and how they feel confident in their learning.

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

- The Religious Education coordinator is highly committed, has excellent subject knowledge and expertise. This has had a significant impact upon the quality of Religious Education. As a member of the senior leadership team, she has used every opportunity to implement Diocesan advice and guidance to support colleagues in their teaching, offer continuing professional development and lead the assessment of Religious Education.
- The governors are regular visitors to school and have formed a challenge group. Monitoring and evaluating Religious Education forms an integral and regular focus of this group. The Religious Education coordinator regularly views teaching and assessment and feeds back to the headteacher who in turn informs governors. This rigorous and systemic review process feeds into the school improvement plan and results in the school having a robust and insightful understanding of its strengths and areas for development. As a result planning for improvement in Religious Education is coherent, rigorous and relevant. The coordinator knows the strengths and areas for improvement and is able to plan effectively to make improvements in a timely and effective manner. This leads to improving outcomes and more rapid progress for pupils and groups of pupils.
- Leaders actively encourage and support teachers to complete the CCRS. St Joseph's is committed to ensuring that all teachers are skilled to a very high level and now has 33% of teachers who have completed the course with two teachers presently having completed their first year of CCRS. This has ensured that teachers' subject knowledge is good or better.
- Pupil tracking systems are well embedded and kept continually under review to ensure that data is robust, relevant and used effectively to plan to meet individual pupil's needs ensuring continuity and progression.
- Sacramental preparation is given a very high priority, fully embedded in the curriculum and delivered in the parish by a member of staff who is also a catechist of the parish. This is fully in line with Diocesan guidelines.

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

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP:

1

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

1

The quality of provision for Collective Worship.

1

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

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.

2

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

1

SCHOOL DETAILS

School name	St Joseph's RC Primary School
Unique reference number	108850
Local authority	Sunderland
This Inspection Report is produced for the Rt. Reverend Séamus Cunningham the Bishop of Hexham and Newcastle Diocese 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	Mr Mark Jakeway
Head teacher	Mrs Christine Jary
Date of previous school inspection	March 2013
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