



St Joseph's RC Primary School

Mill Lane, Gilesgate, Durham, DH1 2JQ

School Unique Reference Number: **114273**

Inspection dates:	03 – 04 February 2016
Lead inspector:	Mrs Liz O'Hehir

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

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

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

- It is a very welcoming family community where the well-being and personal development of each child is at the heart of its mission.
- The Catholic Life of St Joseph's is outstanding. Governors, senior leaders and staff have high expectations and a shared vision with regard to the Catholic mission and ethos of the school. This mission is lived out daily by both staff and pupils providing the whole community with opportunities to develop and grow in faith together.
- The Collective Worship of the school is outstanding because it is central to the life of the school. Staff and pupils, led by inspirational leadership, plan and lead high quality acts of worship where all pupils act with deep reverence and respect.
- Religious Education is outstanding. Leaders and staff know their pupils well. They skilfully craft teaching and learning outcomes that engage and enthuse pupils ensuring progress and achievement is at the highest level.

FULL REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

- St Joseph's is a smaller than average primary school situated on the outskirts of Durham City and serves the parish of the Durham Martyrs.
- There are 140 pupils on roll arranged into six classes.
- A large majority of the pupils are baptised Catholics and are mainly from a White UK heritage.
- A small minority of pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The number of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is higher than the national average as is those who receive additional learning support.
- The executive headteacher has responsibility for St Thomas More RC primary school which is also part of this parish.

WHAT DOES THE SCHOOL NEED TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- Improve the quality of teaching in Religious Education by:
 - Further strengthening subject knowledge for all staff
 - Continuing to develop expertise of all staff in assessment procedures in line with diocesan guidelines.
- Improve the provision for Collective Worship by:
 - Continuing to develop the skills and independence of all pupils to prepare and lead acts of Collective Worship

CATHOLIC LIFE

THE QUALITY OF 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.
- 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.

- The mission statement was recently consulted upon taking into account the views of pupils, parent and governors. Consequently, there is a deep sense of ownership and full commitment to the Catholic ethos and values intrinsic in their mission to "Live Fully, Act Justly."
- All pupils have a deep sense of belonging and almost all enthusiastically embrace the demands that entails. They, together with staff, parents and governors, are very proud of their reputation in the local community. Pupils are very aware of the needs of others both locally and globally, responding passionately to issues of social injustice through prayer, fundraising activities and service to others.
- Pupils take advantage of the opportunities school provides for their personal and spiritual growth. They care for each other and willingly take on lead roles in the school community as trained buddies, Mini-Vinnies and school councillors. Older pupils independently lead lunchtime prayer groups providing excellent role models and commanding the total respect and admiration of younger pupils.
- Relationships with parents, parish and the wider community are excellent resulting in a variety of activities which improve the school's provision. Pastoral care is outstanding. Parents commented that "it's like one big family with no rivalry". They appreciate the way staff, "always go one step further to help". As a result, pupils are happy, confident and secure in their own stage of spiritual growth.
- All pupils demonstrate respect and show reverence to the rites and traditions of their faith. They are proud of their religious identity and there is enthusiastic and active involvement in parish and diocesan celebrations. Pupils understand the importance of respect for others, regardless of faith tradition.

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

- People are at the heart of this nurturing, family community. All are valued and welcomed. Faith is modelled and staff work tirelessly to put the school's inclusive mission into practice. The mission statement is reflected in every aspect of the school's work which has been shaped through the involvement and input of the whole school community.

- The school is a prayerful community and the learning environment reflects the school's mission and celebrates the school's Catholic character with vibrant displays and prayerful spaces.
- Policy and practice evidence an explicit commitment to all in society, particularly the most vulnerable and needy. Strong relationships and mutual respect between leadership, staff and parents are a feature of the school. As a result, pastoral care for pupils is outstanding. Parents, governors and staff affirmed this high level of pastoral care, they offered personal and emotional accounts of support they have received.
- Pastoral programmes alongside Personal, Social Education (PSE) and Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) refer to Catholic teachings and principles. These cater for the needs of all pupils with staff playing an active part in delivery to ensure the best possible outcomes for pupils.
- Senior leaders promote the highest standards of moral and ethical behaviour deeply rooted in Gospel values and the teachings of the Catholic church. This permeates the school and as a result, pupils' behaviour is exemplary.

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

- There is a sense of deep commitment of all leaders to the Church's mission. The executive headteacher and head of school lead by example and act as a source of inspiration to the whole community. They are active and visible in school, parish and community ensuring that pupils are given the best possible experience in order to grow in faith and spirituality.
- School self-evaluation is rigorous and leads to well-planned, targeted improvements. Leaders, including governors, know their school well and give high priority to the development of Catholic Life. The Catholic ethos is palpable throughout the school and strong leadership together with shared purpose energises all to ensure the best possible outcomes for pupils.
- Staff, particularly those who are new to the school, are very well supported. They are very appreciative of the support given to them as they progress on their personal journey of faith.
- School, home and parish work very closely together. Key representatives are highly visible and well-respected in this inclusive community. The welcoming nature of the school, outstanding pastoral care and effective communication have led to increasing numbers of parents engaging with the school and returning to church.
- Governors make a significant contribution to the Catholic Life of the school. They are passionate about the school's mission and their role. They are highly visible in school and actively involved in evaluating Catholic Life, ensuring pupils are always at the heart of what they do. They provide appropriate challenge and support to the leadership.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

THE QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

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- 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.

- From a young age pupils are deeply reverent and respectful during Collective Worship. Pupil engagement and enjoyment is evident. They are inspired and enthusiastic and this ensures the highest quality response. Singing, participation in prayers and responses are appropriately joyful and reverent.
- Pupils' involvement in Collective Worship is a central part of their experience in St Joseph's. They acquire skills of planning and leading Collective Worship progressively across the school developing increasing independence, confidence and expertise. They skilfully use prayer focuses, music and silence to create an atmosphere conducive to prayer because of skilful modelling by their leaders. Parents describe their involvement as 'breath-taking'.
- Older pupils choose hymns and scripture, prepare multi-media presentations, and write their own prayers and reflections in addition to using traditional prayers. They also plan and lead a weekly lunchtime prayer group.
- Pupils have an excellent understanding of the Church's liturgical year, its seasons and feasts enabling them to plan and deliver quality worship experience appropriate to their age and experience. This was very evident in the Collective Worship observed during this inspection and the dialogue with pupils and parents.
- Pupils have a deep sense of social justice and a well-developed understanding of their own and other faiths because of the well-designed curriculum that includes the use of visits and visitors of other faith communities. All of which contributes positively to their outstanding spiritual and moral development.

The quality of provision for Collective Worship is outstanding.

- Praying together is a natural part of the daily experience for pupils and staff and is valued by all. Parents and governors comment how much they value the school's Collective Worship which is threaded throughout the school and is universally cherished. High quality displays promote an ethos of prayer and provide good support for reflection.
- Staff prayer is an integral part of school activity. Staff and governors jointly participate in opportunities for retreats and reflection, developing their own faith and sharing and supporting the school ethos as a community going forward.

- Collective Worship is given a very high priority in St Joseph's. There is a well-established programme for weekly and daily worship that has a clear purpose, message and direction based on Sunday Gospel readings, 'Statements to Live By,' the Church's seasons, special feast days, events and the spiritual aspirations of pupils.
- Families are involved in pupils' religious development through the many celebrations and special events they enthusiastically attend in the school, church and the wider community. They speak highly of these occasions. Resources such as 'The Wednesday Word', which, they report, their children insist they share with them, and seasonal artefacts like travelling cribs encourage further engagement.
- There are strong links with the parish where pupils serve at Mass and take an active part in Sunday Mass and other worship.
- Leaders have an excellent understanding of the Church's liturgical heritage and are passionate that pupils have high quality experiences.

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

- The executive headteacher and head of school, who is also religious education leader, have excellent knowledge of how to plan and deliver quality Collective Worship and ensure this is shared with staff. As a result, staff develop great expertise in guiding worship and enabling pupil independence.
- Leaders are excellent role models and inspirational leaders. Their dedication and commitment is instrumental in the drive to provide high quality Collective Worship across the school that meets the needs of each child in their care.
- Leaders and managers have a thorough understanding of the Church's liturgical year, its seasons, rites and symbols, as a result Collective Worship is delivered in a way that is relevant to pupils in a contemporary context using a range of skills and high quality resources. Pupils' response to this provision is outstanding.
- Leaders ensure staff also receive formation in the development of spiritual and liturgical understanding and this is highly valued by staff.
- Leaders and governors have developed a rigorous monitoring and evaluation system for Collective Worship. There is a shared commitment to continuous development evidenced in the school improvement plan. Parents and pupils are consulted regularly about the quality of their experiences and report very favourably and passionately on them.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

THE QUALITY OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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- 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 outstanding.

- Pupils participate fully in their Religious Education lessons because teachers plan creative tasks using a range of teaching strategies to engage and enthuse them. As a result, pupils concentrate well and behaviour for learning is outstanding.
- Teachers have high expectations of their pupils, they know them well and have an accurate understanding of their starting points based on prior learning. Work is differentiated and tasks are well-matched to pupils' age and ability.
- Pupils talk confidently about their levels and attainment in Religious Education because "teachers talk to us about our lessons". Teachers' marking and feedback is of good quality and pupils are routinely given opportunities to reflect and respond.
- Religious education is at the heart of the school curriculum. It is taught both discretely and in a cross-curricular way. Pupils acquire knowledge quickly and in depth, linking their learning in Religious Education to other subjects. They are able to interpret sources and symbols, to understand nuance and subtlety enabling them to reflect on their learning. The vast majority of pupils engage with religious ideas and integrate them into their daily lives.
- There are no perceivable differences between different groups of pupils. As a result almost all pupils are making good progress and attainment is in line with diocesan averages. For some pupils this is above.

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

- Teaching is always good and much is outstanding. Teachers have great passion for the subject and a high level of confidence and expertise. This is communicated well to pupils. They employ a wide range of creative teaching strategies, including the use of drama, role-play, art, media and environments together with the use of visitors and visits, to motivate and enthuse all pupils.
- Teachers have excellent subject knowledge. They have high expectations and know their pupils very well. Teaching assistants are used very effectively to support individual and group learning. They are fully involved in planning and evaluating Religious Education. All adults use questioning skilfully and maintain good pace in order to promote learning and to challenge thinking.
- The school uses the 'Come and See' curriculum for Religious Education. Planning is based on systematic assessment and a thorough understanding of pupils' starting points. Lessons

have a clear focus and as a result pupils acquire knowledge quickly and are very secure in their learning. Teachers critically evaluate their lessons in order to determine the next steps for individuals or groups.

- Pupils know and understand their targets through the high quality of teacher feedback. Pupils are encouraged to reflect on their learning, recording it formally in their Religious Education books or informally, through discussion. In this way any misconceptions are addressed and learning is deepened.

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

- Leaders and managers are well-informed by current developments in Religious Education and provide excellent role models for their colleagues. Their knowledge of best practice and current developments in Religious Education ensure that staff are increasingly skilled and share their vision for continuous improvement.
- Leaders and managers provide strong leadership and conduct a wide range of monitoring activities that are carefully planned to determine the impact of provision.
- The Religious Education coordinator provides outstanding support to teachers so that planning ensures high quality experiences that meet pupil needs, guaranteeing good learning and progression.
- Rigorous tracking of pupil progress ensures that no pupil is left behind and that timely action can be taken to prevent underachievement. School self-evaluation is thorough and robust and is integral to the school improvement plan. Key governors are highly visible in the school and appropriately challenge and support the leadership. Governors are well informed of standards and speak confidently about pupils' attainment.
- Book scrutiny and pupil discussion are a regular feature of the monitoring cycle. In addition to the diocesan moderation and training, the school works collaboratively with cluster schools to quality assure the accuracy of their pupil assessment data.
- The personal and professional integrity of the leadership inspire whole-hearted commitment from staff, pupils and parents. Consequently, Religious Education not only has a high profile, it is at the heart of the curriculum and daily school life. The wide range of links that the school has locally and globally provide outstanding enrichment activities to promote pupil's learning and engagement and this has a profound impact on pupils' moral and spiritual development.
- Sacramental preparation is given a high priority by leaders and is fully embedded into the Religious Education curriculum. It is highly valued by parents and pupils.

SUMMARY OF INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

HOW EFFECTIVE THE SCHOOL IS IN PROVIDING CATHOLIC EDUCATION:

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CATHOLIC LIFE:

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

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

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

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COLLECTIVE WORSHIP:

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

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The quality of provision for Collective Worship.

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

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The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education.

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

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SCHOOL DETAILS

School name	St Joseph's RC Primary School
Unique reference number	114273
Local authority	Durham
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.	
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Executive head teacher	Mrs Angela Boyle
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