



# Archdiocese of Birmingham

## Section 48 Inspection

### ST JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Rocky Lane, Nechells, Birmingham B7 5HA

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Inspection date	4 <sup>th</sup> & 5 <sup>th</sup> December 2017
Reporting Inspector	Dominic Collins
Assistant Inspector	Bernadette Corbett

Inspection carried out under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

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Type of school	Voluntary Aided
Age Range of pupils	4-11 years
Number on roll	208
Appropriate authority	The Governing Body
Chair of Governors	Mary Baines
Telephone number	0121 464 8140
E-Mail address	enquiry@stjosb7.bham.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	November 2012
DFE School Number	330 3339
Unique Reference Number	103436

<b>Headteacher</b>	<b>Alison Treadwell</b>
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Previous inspection:	Outstanding
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This inspection:	Outstanding
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DIOCESAN EDUCATION SERVICE



## **Evidence**

- The inspection was carried out by two Diocesan Inspectors.
- The focus of the inspection was on the quality, leadership, and impact of the school's provision of Catholic life, collective worship, and religious education (RE).
- The inspectors observed teaching across four RE lessons to evaluate the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. All of these lessons were conducted jointly with the headteacher or acting deputy headteacher.
- The inspectors completed a work scrutiny and held discussions with pupils to evaluate their understanding of Catholic life, worship, and the impact of teaching on their learning over time.
- Meetings were held with the chair of governors, the headteacher and the RE leadership team, parish priest and parents.
- The inspectors attended a whole school Mass, a school assembly and undertook a learning walk to look at aspects of learning and teaching in RE, the presentation of the Catholic life of the school and pupils' behaviour.
- The inspectors reviewed a range of documents including the school's self-evaluation, data about pupils' attainment and progress, Analyse School Performance (ASP) data, the school development plan, teachers' planning, and learning journals.

## **Information about the school**

- St Joseph's is a one form entry Catholic primary school that serves the parish of St Joseph's.
- The school is situated in the Nechells Ward, an inner ring area of Birmingham, where there is a very high level of socio-economic deprivation.
- The percentage of Catholic pupils is currently 33%.
- The percentage of pupils from a minority ethnic heritage group is significantly above the national average.
- The percentage of disadvantaged pupils is significantly above the national average.
- The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) is above the national average.
- Attainment on entry is significantly below age related expectations.
- Owing to the promotion of the RE subject leader to a headship, St Joseph's headteacher has undertaken the interim role of RE subject leader from September 2017 pending a new appointment.
- Since the last inspection, the school has invested in building improvements, including a new library extension and the establishment of a beautiful chapel.

## **Main Findings**

- St Joseph's is a welcoming and inclusive Catholic school. Its outstanding Catholic life and religious education is firmly centred on the school mission in action which strives to provide the very best outcomes for its pupils.
- This vision is shared by the school leadership, governors, chaplaincy and a dedicated staff team, who place the spiritual and moral development of pupils as their highest priority.
- Through the inspirational leadership of the headteacher, the school has developed a comprehensive Catholic community infrastructure with Christ at the centre.
- The school fosters very positive relationships with families. This has had a significant impact on their response to the individual needs of pupils.
- The overall effectiveness as a Catholic school is outstanding. Consequently, pupils are able to thrive and enjoy their learning.

## **THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL**

### **Catholic life, collective worship and spiritual, moral and vocational development: provision and outcomes**

- The Catholic life of St Joseph's School is outstanding.
- St Joseph's is a happy, welcoming and inclusive school. Its excellent Catholic ethos is reflected in the positive attitudes of pupils, the high level of support and care given by all staff and the clear sense of purpose and spiritual direction of its leadership.
- Through the inspirational direction of the headteacher, the school has successfully developed a comprehensive and secure infrastructure of Catholic community with Christ at the centre. This provides a very positive environment, enabling all pupils to grow in their faith.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school. They are eager to learn and experience a stimulating and rich curriculum within an atmosphere of love, trust and security. As a consequence, pupils thrive here, and are able to develop and practice their faith as maturing Christians.
- The immediate impact of the strong Catholic character of St Joseph's is evident on entering the school.
- The school mission and Catholic virtues are prominently featured together with devotional areas to St Joseph and Our Lady. A beautiful stained glass window of the Holy Family epitomises the warmth and spiritual guidance within the ethos of St Joseph's School.
- Informative religious displays and journals reflect the strong sense of community, where all pupils are valued and fully integrated into the vibrant Catholic life.
- A major strength of St Joseph's School is the shared vision of all staff, brought about by their enthusiasm and mutual support. They are a cheerful, dedicated and highly effective team who know the pupils well and speak with 'pride' in the way they are able to contribute to their spiritual and moral development. They are excellent role models for pupils and, by example, demonstrate a strong commitment to the Catholic ethos of the school.
- Clear policies and structures are in place which provide support to ensure the highest levels of pastoral care is given to all pupils.
- All staff recognise their responsibility to vigilantly guide pupils throughout the day, thus ensuring that they aspire to the high expectations made of them.
- Pupils are immensely proud of their school. This is reflected in their positive attitudes, exemplary behaviour and the way they express their Catholic identity.
- The quality of relationships within the school is excellent. Pupils show trust, kindness and genuine care and respect for each other.
- Pupils know how much they are valued as individuals and realise that they, too, have a duty of awareness and consideration for all members of the school community.
- Pupils respond positively to the school ethos, driven by the Gospel message. They have a clear understanding that we are all equal as children of God and recognise the importance of showing love, reconciliation and compassion for our neighbour as this forms the essential foundation of Catholic community.
- Guided by the principles of its mission, which underpins all aspects of the school's work, St Joseph's successfully promotes values that positively shape the character and moral perspective of pupils in following the ways of Jesus.
- Although there is a high level of mobility, pupils new to the school are supported well and quickly settle within an atmosphere of friendship and security.
- Awareness of the needs of others and a developing understanding of different cultures and beliefs, in school and the wider community, has a high priority in the life of the school.

- Pupils can relate the teachings of Jesus to their daily lives. They understand what it means to have a personal vocation, that God is calling them to use their special gifts and talents in the service of others. When questioned, members of the pupil spiritual council readily declared: *'You can't just say that you follow Jesus. You need to act on it and show you are a true disciple.'* *'Care for each other as a community.'* *'Treat people politely and with respect.'* *'Make people happy – smile at them.'*
- Pupils are eager to engage in a variety of responsibilities to support the Catholic life of the school. For example, the school has established a very effective pupil council, providing pupils with a voice to project their views. A liturgy group has also been formed to develop and lead collective worship.
- The contribution pupils make to the evaluation process through school council representation, questionnaires and discussions, are valued and encouraged. Their perceptive responses enable the school leadership to evaluate the quality and impact of Catholic life in accordance with the principles of its mission.
- It is evident that providing opportunities to encourage pupil empowerment does much to promote their personal, moral and spiritual development and self-esteem.
- The school has a high profile within the local community and works in close partnership with parents and carers, fostering a very positive relationship with them. This is an outstanding strength of the school.
- Parents are invited to take an active part in the life of the school. Invitations to assemblies, weekly Masses, school events, termly inspire workshops and consultation evenings are very well supported.
- The headteacher is a director and trustee of affiliated organisations based in the locality, which offer a range of support and advice to residents, thus encouraging greater community cohesion. This has a positive impact on school families. In addition the school engages the services of a family support worker, school nurse and speech therapist. The school also supports families through the fair funding initiatives.
- The school is very successful in being an active community of love and service. Parents speak warmly of their family relationship with school, through the welcome they always receive and the care, support and encouragement their children enjoy each day.
- St Joseph's is an integral part of the parish community and strong links are established.
- Chaplaincy support is excellent. The parish priest visits school regularly and knows the school well. He is a key partner in the planning of Masses, collective worship and sacramental preparation. His valuable support and guidance makes a significant contribution to promoting and developing the Catholic life of the school.
- Catholic life is enriched by opportunities for pupils to benefit from and contribute to a variety of high quality religious experiences. For example, Year 6 visit Alton Castle and there are class visits to places of Catholic heritage and centres of worship for other faiths. There is a special Mass and celebration in school to focus on the month of Our Lady and a whole school Lenten preparation of music, prayer, reflection and meditation.
- In 2014, the *'Caritas Christi in Urbe'* (CCIU), The Love of Christ in the City, group of schools was formed with a common aim to nurture the faith for all members. St Joseph's was one of the original members of this group that has now grown to eleven Catholic primary schools and two Catholic secondary schools working in partnership.
- This partnership has offered excellent opportunities for pupils and staff to enhance

Catholic life across the schools, forging friendships, sharing liturgies and retreats and developing the skills of staff and governors. This has proved to be an extremely successful innovation, providing excellent benefits for all concerned.

- Two members of staff per year are able to access a Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies course based at Maryvale Centre funded by the partnership group. A CCIU Citizenship Pupil Award, based on the fruits of the Holy Spirit, has also been introduced.
- Celebration of the sacraments are a central feature of the school year. Preparation takes place during RE lessons for all children, enabling those children who are not baptised Catholics to support their friends. Pupils, parents and carers, together with the parish priest, are all involved in sacramental preparation. A special Mass of commitment is celebrated together.
- The school has adopted the Catholic School's Pupil Profile. There is a focus on promoting two virtues each half term, highlighted during celebration assemblies. The school is successful in guiding pupils to recognise that by aspiring to understand and practice the Catholic virtues they are fulfilling the message of the Gospel values.
- Staff and pupils alike speak highly of the school and celebrate successes and achievements with pride.
- The quality of collective worship provided by the school is outstanding. Inspection evidence validates the school's own self-evaluation.
- Prayer and worship is an integral part of the school day and there are many opportunities for staff and pupils to pray and reflect together.
- Prayer and worship underpins the Catholic life of the school and is nourished by the example and commitment of all members of staff.
- Pupils' response to collective worship is outstanding. They are attentive and reverent in prayer and understand the importance it has in their daily lives.
- As well as their sound knowledge of traditional prayers, pupils understand that prayer has a variety of purposes and can take different forms. They demonstrate a genuine eagerness to share these together, as a class or in a whole school setting. Pupils are able to compose and express their own prayers and petitions confidently.
- In order to support and encourage pupils, staff ensure that collective worship is conducted in a calm, reflective atmosphere. Music, lighting, visual resources and opportunities for spontaneous response are used to good effect.
- The 'pray as you go' classroom based lunchtime reflection is a very moving and prayerful experience.
- The Angelus is said daily in Key Stage 2 at midday, and in Year 4 this is sung.
- Celebration of the Eucharist is given the highest priority. Mass is celebrated in school each week. St Joseph's has been given permission by the Archbishop to keep the Blessed Sacrament on site. The school has a beautiful chapel in the central hall in which the tabernacle is kept.
- Mass celebrated in school during the inspection was a joyful experience, reflected by the reverent participation of the pupils who served, read and sang joyfully. The children were attentive to the parish priest, who engaged them fully by his interactive, child-centred homily. Pupils are involved in evaluating collective worship and they are invited to reflect on their participation in the Mass.
- Pupils are guided to lead worship and do so with enthusiasm and a high degree of independence. A spiritual council has been established to develop, plan and lead collective worship throughout the school. Every child from Years 1-6 is on a rota to lead the prayer for their class each day.

- Class prayer bags are available to encourage family prayer at home. Feedback from families shows that they are enjoying the opportunity to pray together.
- Collective worship is exceptionally well organised, planned and monitored by the RE team and parish priest. A termly collective worship timetable is prepared in accordance with the liturgical calendar.
- Each classroom has a prominent, high quality religious focus, where there are images and information about the lives of the saints and their example in relation to the practice of the virtues. There is also a copy of the school prayer book and traditional prayers of the Church. Pupils are also able to display and share their own prayers and reflections.
- In addition to the school chapel and Our Lady of Lourdes devotional area, a beautiful prayer garden offers further stimulation for pupils to reflect and pray in a peaceful setting.
- There is compelling evidence to confirm the vibrant Catholic life of St Joseph's School. This takes the form of a comprehensive collection of correspondence, photographs, films and evidence of evaluations.
- The School's Catholic life video, from the end of the academic year, is displayed at parent/carer evenings, workshops and events to celebrate the Catholic life of the school.
- Prayer is embedded in the daily life of the school community where evangelisation is at its heart. Catholic life and collective worship make a very powerful contribution to the spiritual and moral development of the pupils and reflects the strong Catholic character of the school.

## **LEADERSHIP**

### **Leadership of Catholic life and Collective Worship**

- Leadership and management of Catholic life and collective worship is an outstanding strength of the school.
- The school leadership is deeply committed to the Church's mission in education. As a consequence of establishing a systematic, whole school approach to self-evaluation, it is extremely successful in promoting the continuing development of this mission.
- The headteacher sets high standards and expectations for all members of the school community and inspires a staff team who are able to project their professional views confidently. As a consequence, the monitoring of Catholic life as a shared responsibility is very effective.
- Leaders and governors are ambitious for the future development of the school. They are passionate about providing the best possible Catholic education for all pupils and are constantly seeking ways to improve provision. This unity forms a powerful combination that has led to a focus on ensuring continued success.
- Through a cycle of carefully planned recruitment, the headteacher and governors have secured additional staffing appointments appropriate to the ongoing development needs of the school. This has ensured stability for the pupils and has a very positive outcome on their learning and the Catholic life of the school overall.
- All newly appointed staff are very well supported and fully inducted in their roles and responsibilities in the Catholic life of the school.
- The headteacher leads a dedicated RE team comprising the acting deputy headteacher and senior leaders. Together they operate an extremely effective collegiate model of management, thus consolidating and strengthening self-evaluation and continuing

development.

- Self-evaluation is a constant focus for all areas of the school's work. It is based on a thorough knowledge and awareness of the school and the dedicated commitment to its mission by all involved.
- The governing body give generously of their time and are totally dedicated to supporting and encouraging the school's mission. They are strategic in the way they utilise their range of skills and extensive experience.
- Governors know the school well and they perceive monitoring its spiritual direction as their key priority. Policies are monitored annually to ensure the Catholicity of the school is implicit in all documentation.
- In addition to their frequent visits to the school, governors are kept fully informed of how the school witnesses to Christ, through meetings and detailed reports from the headteacher and RE team.
- At the start of each governors meeting a variety of pupils' work in RE and evidence of Catholic life activities are available for governors to share.
- Governors maintain active involvement in continuing school improvement and work closely with the leadership team to monitor progress and development while at the same time offering the necessary level of challenge. They are fully involved in the regular monitoring cycle of all aspects of Catholic life, collective worship and RE.
- Through their participation in lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' work in RE and learning walks, governors have a clear understanding of how the evidence of those monitoring outcomes form the basis of ongoing improvement planning.
- In view of the rigor in conducting these integrated processes, the school is extremely successful in the self-evaluation of its Catholic life and RE. Outcomes reveal an accurate profile of strengths and areas for development. The evaluation of all monitoring outcomes are shared with staff and governors and form the basis of a comprehensive development plan.
- The current RE Action Plan, reflects the outcomes of a whole school review of RE and spirituality conducted by the RE leadership team and governors. This is a very useful working document that is broken down into specific priorities. As planning reviews are conducted termly, any intermediate actions required are implemented quickly. Consequently, improvements are rapid.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

### **Leadership, outcomes from and provision for religious education**

- The leadership and provision for religious education is outstanding and as a consequence pupils make outstanding progress.
- Systems used by the school leadership and governors for monitoring and evaluating the school's work in RE are extremely effective.
- In view of their regular and rigorous application within a planned cycle, monitoring outcomes give an accurate profile of the quality of RE provision and the impact of teaching on pupils' learning.
- The school is successful in the practice of self-evaluation. It is directly centred on sharing outcomes and agreeing subsequent actions that are focused and effected through observations, scrutiny of lesson planning and pupils' work, learning walks and assessment data.
- The quality of teaching is a constant focus towards improving pupil outcomes. A cycle of formal lesson observations is established, in order to maintain quality assurance and

monitor the high standards expected.

- The teaching in RE is consistently effective, evidenced by records of good and outstanding teaching over time. RE lessons observed during the inspection were characterised by crisp, informative planning built upon pupils' prior learning, clear learning objectives and well matched activities.
- Collaboration by staff is strong and they are well supported by the RE leadership team and school chaplaincy.
- Teachers communicate their faith through their enthusiasm and thorough subject knowledge. They employ a wide range of appropriate teaching strategies, including individual and collaborative work to ensure lessons are interesting and fully engage all pupils. As a consequence, pupils are highly motivated, display an excellent work ethic and are eager to achieve. Outcomes for pupils are outstanding.
- Marking is personal and progressive. Pupils receive good quality feedback and guidance of how to improve their work.
- Learning is further enhanced by the outstanding quality of relationships throughout the school. Pupils' behaviour for learning during lessons is excellent.
- The positive guidance given by the excellent classroom support staff enables all pupils to engage fully. More able pupils are encouraged to tackle higher level challenges and work more independently.
- The tracking of pupil progress is very effective and is a significant strength of the school. This is due to a culture that has been embedded by the RE leadership team, where all staff are alert to identifying progress of individual pupils and providing appropriate interventions when required.
- The CCIU partnership schools follow the same assessment cycle which ensures a broader dimension and more effective moderation of attainment in RE.
- Pupil progress and attainment relative to their starting point is outstanding, even though pupil baseline data upon entry to Reception Class reveal low academic, spiritual and emotional levels of development. In order for gaps to be addressed, there is a strong presence of experienced staff in Reception and throughout Key Stage 1.
- Meticulous analysis of assessment data show that pupils are given a very positive start and make outstanding progress in their religious education across each Key Stage.
- Pupils' knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith develops well for the majority at each age related stage. Older pupils are encouraged to reflect on their own spiritual development and respond well to opportunities to offer their opinions and consider those of others.
- Pupils are happy, confident learners and clearly enjoy their RE lessons. The quality of work in their books is very impressive and they are justifiably proud of their achievements.
- The RE curriculum complies with diocesan requirements and is successfully adapted to meet the needs of all learners.
- Relationships and sex education is taught in an age appropriate way in accordance with the teachings of the Catholic Church.

## **Recommendations**

### **In order to improve the school should:**

- Enhance the collaborative work within the CCUI partnership to support vulnerable schools.
- Share the skills and expertise of the spiritual council throughout the school.