



Catholic Schools Inspectorate inspection report for
St Joseph's Catholic Academy, Norton

URN: 146679

Carried out on behalf of Canon Peter Leighton V.G, Diocesan Administrator of Hexham and Newcastle on:

Date: 16-17 February 2023

Overall effectiveness The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school.....	1
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.....	1
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	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
The school is fully compliant with all requirements of the diocesan bishop	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
The school has responded to the areas for improvement from the last inspection	Fully

Summary of key findings

What the school does well

- Christ is at the heart of St. Joseph's School. The mission statement is lived and witnessed. Pupils understand and embrace the distinctive Catholic identity which makes their school unique.
- In religious education, pupils produce work of a consistently high quality and with excellent presentation. Pupils enjoy their learning and, as a consequence, behaviour in lessons is outstanding.
- Prayer spaces in school are well-planned, beautifully resourced and purposeful. Time and attention are given to ensure that these spaces are used effectively by pupils and staff meaning that prayer and liturgy is central to the life of the school.

- The school has worked hard to establish very strong links with the parish, parents and the wider community which helps pupils to participate more fully in the Catholic life and prayer life of the school.
- The chaplaincy provision is at the heart of the mission of St. Joseph's. Every member of the school community benefits from the dynamic and well-planned chaplaincy programme. The spiritual and moral development of pupils and staff are given the highest priority.

What the school needs to improve:

- Develop a high level of teacher subject knowledge, which is supported and monitored effectively by leaders, to ensure consistency in the quality of teaching and learning across the school.
- Ensure that the differing needs of all pupils are met by well-planned religious education lessons and by skilful questioning, to identify precisely where groups of pupils are in their understanding.
- Offer further opportunities for spontaneous and creative prayer and ensure that the requirements of the new Prayer and Liturgy Directory are met.

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. This is evident in pupils’ active participation which significantly enhances the life of the school. They willingly contribute to the many and varied leadership roles on offer and highly value the school’s chaplaincy provision. The Pupil Chaplaincy Team are an inspiring witness to how pupils seek opportunities to grow in virtue. Pupils are articulate and enthusiastic when discussing the extent to which they contribute to, and benefit from, the Catholic life and mission at St. Joseph’s. One pupil commented, ‘We want to show other people how much we love God’. Pupils are happy, confident and secure, demonstrating that they are unique and cared for as individuals. The behaviour of pupils is exemplary throughout the school. Pupils show a deep respect for themselves, for others, and for our common home. They gladly embrace their responsibility to serve those in need knowing that ‘little things can make a big difference’. Pupils have a clear understanding that the school community is committed to following the teaching and example of Jesus. They describe how they are inspired by their house saints and class saints to, ‘follow in their footsteps’ and confidently talk about their charitable links and fundraising efforts. They take a leading role in responding to the demands of Catholic Social Teaching.

The quality of provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school is outstanding. Christ is at the heart of St. Joseph’s. There is a lived sense of community which is evident in the quality of the relationships and the strong culture of welcome. Staff provide high levels of pastoral care for pupils and additional support to the most vulnerable. They are excellent role models. Staff embrace the mission statement and readily implement it across the curriculum and the whole of school life. They show dedication and enthusiasm when participating in, and contributing to, activities which reflect the mission of the school and service to the wider community. The school environment is a testament to the school’s identity and mission through carefully chosen, explicit and very effective signs of the school’s Catholic character. The care and attention given to the quality of sacred and prayerful spaces in

school contribute effectively to the spiritual development and formation of each member of the community. The provision for relationships, sex, and health education is carefully planned, alongside creative and enhanced enrichment opportunities which effectively meet statutory and diocesan guidelines.

Leaders are outstanding in how they promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life and mission at St. Joseph's. They are energised, joyful and determined and are a source of inspiration for the whole community. Policies and procedures reflect the priority given to the Catholic identity of St. Joseph's. There is a flourishing, supportive and active partnership between the school and its local parish. Parishioners, and especially those in most need, value the outreach support and communication from the school through many varied and creative ways of engagement, 'putting concern into action'. This demonstrates the school's commitment to care for and to serve those in need and is described as 'paving the way for a successful return to worship after the pandemic'. Parents have a thorough understanding of the school's mission and are highly supportive of it. The school has very effective strategies for engaging with parents who describe their children as, 'cared for, safe and valued'. Parents speak highly of the compassion demonstrated by leaders, especially the head teacher, who continues to 'strengthen the school community', ensuring Christ is at the heart of the school.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade:.....

1

Pupil outcomes

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education.....

1

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.....

1



Pupil outcomes in religious education are outstanding because pupils make consistently good progress by knowing more and remembering more. Pupils speak confidently about what they have learned in religious education and show notable independence in their learning. They enjoy their learning, concentrate well, and are interested learners. Pupils produce work of a consistently high standard across all ages, phases and abilities aligned with age-related expectations. Relative to their age, pupils are religiously literate and can use religious vocabulary appropriately. Their presentation is of a high quality which motivates them to take pride in their performance and outcomes. Behaviour in lessons is outstanding because almost all pupils enjoy religious education. Through an updated system of self-evaluation and teacher marking and feedback, pupils understand how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. They are encouraged to deepen their knowledge and demonstrate their understanding. From their starting points, pupils make notable progress. By the end of Key Stage 2 they know, understand, and remember well. Pupils have a deep knowledge and understanding of religious beliefs, traditions, and scripture which they articulate confidently. Through a variety of creative tasks, with appropriate scaffolding, support and challenge, pupils develop excellent knowledge, understanding and skills that exemplify the learning required by the *Religious Education Curriculum Directory for Catholic Schools 2012*.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in religious education is good. Teachers are committed to the value of religious education and they communicate this enthusiasm effectively to their pupils. Planning is linked to ongoing assessment so that pupils can learn well. Religious education is the core of the whole curriculum. Most teachers have sound subject knowledge and all work hard to plan lessons, adapt tasks and teach to support inclusion. Good quality resources, including the use of support staff, are used effectively to optimise learning for most pupils. Clear links are made to prior

learning during the 'interleaving' session of the lesson. A research-based teaching and learning strategy has been embedded throughout the whole school. Teachers recognise the impact religious education has on the moral and spiritual development of pupils. Therefore, time is given for reflection in lessons. One pupil commented, 'I enjoy learning about Jesus' life, what He's done for us and thinking about what we can learn from Him'. Provision is not yet outstanding as teacher subject knowledge is not consistent or embedded throughout all phases. Some inaccurate subject knowledge leads to misconceptions in learning.

The leadership of religious education is outstanding. The subject leader has a clear understanding of curriculum expectations and standards, which are comparable to other subjects. Leaders ensure that religious education has full parity with other core curriculum subjects and that a wide range of enrichment activities promote pupils' learning and engagement in this area. Leaders ensure that religious education is carefully planned to meet the needs of nearly all pupils and each phase is structured to build on and enhance prior learning. The next steps are to ensure that subject knowledge is embedded into daily practice and that changes to monitoring reflect this. There are clear structures in place to induct new members of staff so teachers feel well-supported. Members of the Local Governing Committee are regular visitors to St. Joseph's and are kept fully informed of developments in religious education within the school. They are extremely supportive, but also confident in their ability to challenge and guide where necessary.

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

Pupil outcomes in collective worship are outstanding. Pupils fully participate in and respond to the experiences of prayer and liturgy provided by the school. These engage pupils deeply and they can clearly articulate how these experiences have inspired them to act. This was evident during a day of prayer, linked to a world event, which was planned and delivered by the pupils. They demonstrate that they can undertake liturgical ministries with confidence, understanding and skill. Through a balance of traditional and creative prayer, and spontaneous and planned activities, pupils respond with a deep sense of reverence, respect and attentiveness. The stillness and calmness felt throughout school during a time dedicated to pupil-led liturgical prayer is inspiring and a true witness to the school's provision for liturgical formation. Pupils across the school lead and participate in prayer with confidence. Relative to their age, they plan worship, initially with support, but this develops through the phases so that Key Stage 2 pupils lead prayer and liturgy independently. They work collaboratively with others, including the school chaplain, to prepare creative and well-constructed experiences of prayer. Pupils say it makes them feel happy to talk to God, so they can learn to be more like Jesus.

The quality of collective worship provided by the school is outstanding. The school provides creative prayer spaces which are used effectively by the pupils and staff. The pupils describe St Joseph's S-P-I-R-I-T room, 'The Poustinia', as a place where they 'listen to God'. Prayer and liturgy is central to the life of the school. Staff, including senior leaders, are inspiring models of exemplary practice to other staff and pupils. In Key Stage 2, staff are highly skilled in helping pupils to confidently plan and lead well-constructed prayer and liturgy. A session dedicated to staff prayer was skillfully led by the RE Lead. Well-chosen scripture passages, linked to the liturgical season form the heart of prayer and liturgy. There is a naturally embedded daily pattern of prayer and a creative balance between routine and innovation. There is a flourishing partnership between parents, families and the local parish. They are included in the prayer life of the school at every opportunity and this is valued and cherished. One parent said, 'I enjoy and appreciate the opportunities given to regularly attend Mass'. Another parent

said, 'I love the way the school has taught my child about RE and prayer; he loves to share his songs, prayers and liturgical dances when he comes home'. In partnership with the parish, pupils in Year 4 are very well prepared for receiving the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist.

The leadership of collective worship is outstanding. Leaders, including governors, have a developed understanding of the different levels and skills of participation that are reflective of the age and capacity of pupils. They have a clear strategy for building upon these skills as pupils progress through school. Leaders place the highest priority on the professional development of all staff. As a result, all staff understand the centrality of prayer and liturgy to the life of the school and witness to its place and purpose. A varied programme of prayer and liturgy is embedded across the year and significant days in the Church's year are prioritised in the school's calendar. Together these are woven seamlessly with the needs of the community to promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for collective worship. Leaders, including the Pupil Chaplaincy Team and the lay chaplain, are highly effective in planning and leading experiences of prayer and liturgy. Engaging, high quality accessible and meaningful opportunities are provided for the whole community.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Joseph's Catholic Academy, Norton
School unique reference number (URN)	146679
Full postal address of the school	Ragworth Road, Norton, Stockton-on-Tees TS20 1HR
School phone number	01642 360401
Name of head teacher or principal	Gill Dowson
Chair of governing board	Peter Walker
School Website	stjosephsnorton.bhcet.org.uk
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	Bishop Hogarth Catholic Education Trust
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy
Age-range of pupils	3-11 years
Trustees	Diocese
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	20 – 21 June 2016
Previous denominational inspection grade	Outstanding

The inspection team

Claire Garbutt	Lead inspector
Lisa Stokoe	Team inspector

Key to grade judgements

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