



St Joseph's Catholic Primary School Hartlepool

URN: 148366

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of Bishop Stephen Wright, Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle
07–08 November 2024

Summary of key findings

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

2

The school is fully compliant with the general norms for religious education laid down by the Bishops' Conference

Yes

The school is fully compliant with any additional requirements of the Diocesan Bishop

Yes

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

Fully

Compliance statement

- St Joseph's Catholic Primary School is fully compliant with the general norms of religious education as laid down by the Bishops' Conference.
- St Joseph's Catholic Primary School is fully compliant with all requirements of the Diocesan Bishop.
- St Joseph's Catholic Primary School has responded to the areas for further development which were identified within the last inspection in 2016.

What the school does well

- The commitment that pupils show to the mission of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School is outstanding. The behaviour of pupils in and out of the classroom, their understanding of Catholic social teaching and the deep care and respect they show for each other is exceptional.
- The school leaders, and particularly the headteacher, are key to the recent, rapid improvements seen in many aspects of the school's work. Their resilience, dedication and relentless ambition for their pupils makes a vital contribution to driving the school's mission forward.
- The school's partnerships with parents, the parish and the wider community are strong. The school is particularly effective in supporting families, and parents place great value on the quality of pastoral support they receive.
- Pupils of all abilities, ethnicities and faith backgrounds enjoy religious education lessons; they take pride in their work and respond well in lessons.
- Prayer is central to the life of the school. Pupils and staff participate with respect and reverence. Parents value the opportunities provided by the school to join pupils in prayer and liturgy.

What the school needs to improve

- Support all teachers to further develop their subject knowledge.
- To ensure the religious education curriculum is adapted with consistency to meet the needs of all pupils.
- To provide a clear progression of skills for pupils to enable them to develop their leadership of prayer and liturgy.

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

Pupil outcomes

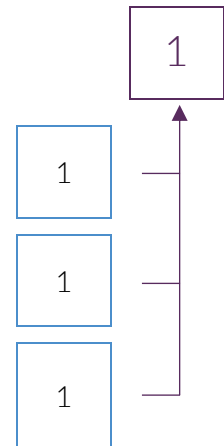
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

Provision

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

Leadership

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



Pupils at St Joseph's Catholic Primary School are happy, confident and feel secure. They have a strong sense of pride in belonging to this school and can articulate their deep understanding of the school's Catholic mission to, 'Love, live, learn and celebrate together by building God's kingdom with Jesus our Lord.' Pupils clearly understand that the school is committed to following the teaching and example of Jesus. They relish the opportunity to take on personal responsibilities, with many older pupils being involved in projects which help to develop Catholic social teaching. For example, pupils have been involved in developing design ideas for a prayer garden in the school grounds; they can make links between this work and the Catholic social teaching principle of caring for our common home. Pupils show deep respect for their own personal dignity and for each other. They welcome the diversity represented within their school and rightly see this as a strength. Behaviour in and out of the classroom is good and pupils show their care and respect for each other. They actively seek opportunities to help others and understand the reasons why they are called to support charities like the local foodbank, Cafod, and people within their own community.

The school's mission statement is a clear expression of the educational mission of the Church which inspires all members of the community. The mission, supported by Bishop Hogarth Catholic Education Trust's (BHCET) values and the statements of the week, has a tangible impact in shaping the success of the school across all aspects of school life. Staff are exemplary role models in bearing witness to the mission through the love, care and respect they show for pupils. The school works in partnership with parents and relationships at all levels are outstanding. There is a strong sense of welcome and of generous hospitality; this is particularly valued by families that join the school outside of normal admission points. The school values all members

without exception and the outstanding quality of pastoral care is supported by inspection evidence. An example of how the school goes the extra mile to support its families can be seen where school staff have liaised with a local charity to provide beds for pupils who otherwise would have to share. The school's inclusive approach celebrates the presence of their global family with families from various cultures and belief traditions enabled to live and pray in accordance with their own commitments.

The development of the Catholic mission at St Joseph's is seen as a core leadership responsibility by the headteacher, governors and BHCET leaders. As a consequence, the school's Catholic identity is a highly visible and a central feature of the school's success. The headteacher is a source of inspiration for the whole community. The school works closely with the BHCET family of schools and in partnership with the Diocese. Furthermore, they respond well to Diocesan policies. Links with the parish are strong and leaders are energised to ensure that this relationship flourishes. The headteacher works closely with the parish priest to prepare liturgies which are shared with other local Catholic schools. Parents report that they are fully supported and empowered by school leaders and powerful testimony of this support was heard during the inspection. All parents who responded in a survey say that the school supports them in their role as the first educator of their child. One parent summarised the views of other parents well, 'St Joseph's is an amazing school. The school is inclusive and diverse with a strong sense of community and family.' The school's self-evaluation is well-developed, rigorous and leads to well-planned improvements.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

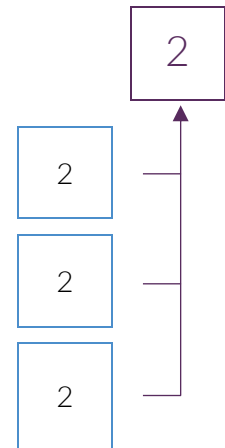
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

Provision

The quality of teaching, learning, and assessment in religious education

Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for religious education



Pupils enjoy religious education lessons. They take pride in their work and can speak with confidence about their learning. Pupils have secure knowledge, understanding and skills that reflect the learning required by the *Religious Education Curriculum Directory*. They make good progress from their varied starting points in knowing more, remembering more and doing more when measured against the planned curriculum. Pupils are religiously literate, work well in lessons and respond to challenges. They can use the knowledge, understanding and skills they acquire in lessons to reflect ethically and spiritually, particularly when making links to Catholic social teaching. Pupils' work is often presented well, and they strive to improve. They respond well to questions during lessons and have the opportunity to respond to further questions when their work is marked. Pupils show good understanding of what they have learnt when assessing their own learning. Behaviour in lessons is always at least good and pupils are engaged. They use a variety of resources to support their learning and, as they progress through the school, are increasingly adept at locating pieces of scripture in the Bible. Results are at least in line with other areas of the curriculum.

Most teachers have a strong subject knowledge, and all show a commitment to the value of religious education. As a consequence, religious education is seen as an important subject by pupils. Support staff are used effectively to help pupils in lessons. Teachers use skilled questioning within their lessons to identify pupils' understanding, and to challenge them to give deeper responses. Where learning is most successful, the pace is good, and teacher talk is limited and focused. Good work is celebrated in marking comments, house points and the award of certificates. Teachers are well-supported through training to develop their understanding of how pupils learn and to increase their subject knowledge. Planning of the curriculum has developed since the previous inspection, although there are inconsistencies in how planned activities are

adapted to ensure that all pupils are challenged appropriately. This results in some pupils not reaching their full potential. Teachers provide pupils with a range of creative tasks which offer the pupils opportunities to respond in a variety of ways including through artwork, role play and booklets. The relationships, sex and health education scheme is effective in helping pupils to learn about relationships in line with the teaching of the Church.

The religious education curriculum is compliant with the *Religious Education Curriculum Directory*. The time allocated to religious education matches expectations and the recent re-organisation of the school's timetable in Key Stage 2 has enabled greater quality in teaching and learning to be achieved. Leaders ensure that religious education has at least full parity with other curriculum subjects and high expectations are communicated effectively to staff and pupils. Leaders are committed to high quality professional development for the whole school and provide a wide range of opportunities. Given the recent arrival of new staff to the school, a continuation of the need for professional development is rightly recognised in the school development plan as a key factor in raising further the quality of provision. The headteacher has a clear vision for religious education and is an effective role model, working alongside teachers to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Leaders make sure that pupils are provided with engaging enrichment activities. The school's self-evaluation is planned, effective and accurate and leads to strategic action being taken to secure improvements in religious education. Governors are regular visitors to the school and are actively involved in strategic monitoring.

Collective worship

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

Collective worship key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

How well pupils participate in and respond to the school's collective worship

2

Provision

The quality of collective worship provided by the school

2

Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for collective worship

2

2

The school is a prayerful community where pupils join in with prayers appropriately and with growing confidence. Pupils respond well to the experiences of prayer and liturgy provided by the school. Furthermore, they show reverence and are respectful. They understand there are a variety of ways of praying, including the use of scripture, silence, meditation and liturgical music. Each class has a prayer area, and pupils access these and other prayer spaces which are strategically located around the school. For example, a prayer space on our common home encouraged pupils to pause and reflect on God's creation and to write a short prayer. These spaces reflect the liturgical year and help to reinforce pupils' understanding of liturgical times. Pupils are developing in their roles in planning class prayer and liturgy; most pupils can undertake liturgical ministries with confidence. Every class identifies two prayer leaders each week, a strategy which helps to promote leadership skills. Pupils have the opportunity to be involved in school Masses that take place throughout the year. Each class, in turn, has an opportunity to be involved and to plan prayerful liturgies to which parents are invited.

Opportunities for prayer and liturgy take place on a regular basis and are central to the life of the school. There is a daily pattern of prayer that reflects the rhythm of the prayer life of the Church. Prayer and liturgy experiences offer participants the opportunity to pray in a range of ways. Staff are models of good practice when leading prayer. There are opportunities for pupils to attend Mass on key feast days, significant celebrations and other events during the year. The partnership with parents to include them in the prayer life of the school is well-developed. For example, to encourage the faith development and prayer life of families, school have developed prayer bags which are taken home during Advent and Lent. This initiative has been very successful in involving wider families in sharing faith activities at home. The school makes imaginative use of spaces to promote prayer, and pupils often pause at these areas to reflect

and respond. These spaces are well-cared for and conducive to prayer. Pupils also have the opportunity to be involved in the parish family Mass on Sundays where they can actively participate in the liturgy.

The school's policy on prayer and liturgy provides effective guidance on the structure and content of prayer and liturgy. The school calendar is an effective tool for communicating themes over the school year. This clearly sets out the key events and celebrations of the Eucharist, themes from Catholic social teaching, statements of the week and BHCET values which are planned for the year. Whilst pupils are developing their skills of planning and leading as they progress through the school, there is not a clear, cohesive strategy for building up their skills. As a consequence, the expectation of what pupils can do, reflecting their age and capacity, is not well-defined. Staff are provided with good quality professional development and welcome the support they receive from school leaders. The headteacher is an inspiring leader of prayer and liturgy. She has a strong commitment to the Church's understanding of the relationship between participation and ministry. She supports others well to plan and lead prayer and liturgy opportunities. Leaders and governors regularly review the quality and impact of prayer and liturgy as part of the school's self-evaluation cycle. Pupils are involved in evaluating their experiences and their views are regularly sought by governors and staff.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Joseph's Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	148366
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	8053323
Full postal address of the school	St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Musgrave Street, Hartlepool, TS24 7HT
School phone number	01429272747
Headteacher	Debra Hargreaves
Chair of governors	David Tindall
School Website	https://stjosephshartlepool.bhcet.org.uk/
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	Bishop Hogarth Catholic Education Trust
Phase	Primary
Type of school	Academy
Admissions policy	Non-selective
Age-range of pupils	3-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	October 2016
Previous denominational inspection grade	2

The inspection team

Michael Ewing
Stephanie Brown

Lead Inspector
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