

Catholic Schools Inspectorate inspection report for St. Joseph’s Catholic Primary School, Upton

URN: 105068

Carried out on behalf of the Right Rev. Mark Davies, Bishop of Shrewsbury on:

Date: 24th-25th November 2022

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	✓
The school is fully compliant with all requirements of the diocesan bishop	✓
The school has responded to the areas for improvement from the last inspection	Fully

Summary of key findings

What the school does well

- The Mission Statement “Together in Christ we learn to love and love to learn” is thoroughly at the heart of St. Joseph’s Catholic Primary School. It is lived out in all that they do and impacts directly on the whole ethos of the school community. As a result, pupils enjoy their religious education and their response to the Catholic life and mission of their school is outstanding.
- Pastoral care and support is rooted in the ethos of the school. All in the community feel valued and know that the school’s Catholic mission statement is a living reality, directly impacting on relationships at all levels. Pupils feel safe and loved and fully appreciate belonging to this community.

- The inspirational and visionary leadership of the head teacher, together with a strong leadership team and very effective team of teachers and support staff ensure that good and outstanding teaching continues to help all pupils to make good, and sometimes outstanding progress. Pupil achievement is good but with outstanding features in the overall religious education provided by the school.
- A strong and very effective governing body is fully active in the life of the school and governors are an integral part of the mission statement. This informs all their actions especially in the recruitment of staff, professional development support and pastoral support for all. Leadership is therefore outstanding.
- Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of school and value its Catholic ethos, head teacher and staff, pastoral support, and the religious education all the pupils receive. One parent from another faith culture commented, "I have seen a lot of beauty and kindness in your religion." An accurate summary of an outstanding school.

What the school needs to improve:

- Develop further the pupils' self-evaluation of their work so that they can more accurately plan their next stages of understanding and development, complementing their discernment skills.

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



Pupils express huge pride in being members of this Catholic community saying how the mission statement, "Together in Christ we learn to love and love to learn," is central to all they do. From its last review, the mission statement is the direct input of pupils. They are enthusiastic and joyful about their active part in all aspects of the Catholic life and mission of the school. The mission statement is visible and lived throughout the school. It is regularly reviewed for its impact in school and beyond. Pupils clearly express how valued and cared for they feel and that Gospel values are at the heart of their community. "We are all different, but we are all loved by God," one pupil remarks. Pupils understand and embrace their personal responsibilities, recognising that Gospel values are at the heart of this community. Parents say, "I cannot praise this school enough as my son is learning life skills based on Catholic values" and "Both my girls talk excitedly about their religious education with enthusiasm and wonder." Pupils clearly gain confidence from their leadership roles within the school community. They recognise that Catholic Social Teaching guides them in supporting causes that promote justice for all, and that protect God's world. At a local level the Mini Vinnies, work alongside the SVP, in reaching out to the elderly community. In the wider world, the school supports those in need through Caritas. The school provides support for their community with food banks and parcels of food. The mission statement is fully embraced by staff and governors, it informs all their actions, and they recognise its impact on all relationships throughout the school community. One staff member said, "Our mission statement describes our school perfectly!"

Pastoral care is at the heart of the school and is a true example of the mission statement in

action. All staff and pupils speak well of how they feel supported and cared for. The senior leadership team and governors work hard to provide the highest level of pastoral care. A staff member has a specific role to support the pastoral needs of the pupils, and this impacts significantly on the wellbeing of all. The relationships and sex education policy is successfully established and fully reflects diocesan guidelines. The head teacher works hard to implement the bespoke personal, social and health education policy. This is extremely effective, reflecting the mission statement and diocesan guidance throughout.

The head teacher is an inspirational Catholic leader whose energy and commitment are evidently appreciated by staff, governors, and parents alike. The leadership team is energised by her vision for the school. Equally, the governors speak of their deep commitment and vision for the school, and the place they have in supporting the Catholic community here. This is particularly evident in how their vision guides their own leadership skills, ensuring all recruitments are faithful to the Catholic ethos of the school. Staff and governors work hard to support the local church and its mission and actively promote a strong working partnership within the parish community. Parent, pupil and staff responses to the questionnaires are overwhelmingly positive about the Catholic community of which they are a part.

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.....

2

Provision

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

1

Leadership

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

1



Almost all pupils are developing a secure knowledge in religious education. During stories of the Annunciation, pupils are able to empathise with the feelings of Mary and Elizabeth. In other lessons about placing trust in God and about justice, pupils are able to speak with confidence about the importance of compassion. They are equally effective at reflecting on what this means for them in today's world and their behaviour with each other. Some pupils ask incisive questions, indicating a personal desire to deepen their learning, though this is not evident in all lessons. All pupils, regardless of their different starting points are making good and, in some cases, outstanding progress. Pupils with particular needs are carefully targeted with support ensuring they too can access the same religious education objectives. Behaviour throughout is outstanding. Pupils listen attentively and respectfully to the adults and to each other. They are enthusiastic about religious education, many saying it is their favourite subject. They settle quickly and positively to the tasks and challenges set them. The pupils' books are excellently presented and reflect the high status of religious education, and how well they are able to respond to their work.

Marking in religious education is consistent with other subjects and response time is given to help pupils consolidate and develop their understanding. Teachers display a high level of confidence in religious education. The inspectors observed nothing less than good and some outstanding teaching throughout the phases. Teachers use questioning skillfully to accurately identify pupil understanding. Learning assistants work closely with the teaching staff to support all pupils, sometimes going through the learning objectives with pupils before the main lesson. The staff work hard to develop their questioning techniques, and this has a real impact on deepening the pupils' understanding. Planning is carefully constructed and

collaboration between staff is a significant feature. Creative approaches to the teaching of religious education ensure every opportunity is used to engage pupils and strengthen their faith development. Drama, discussion and links to others subjects are clearly seen throughout the school.

Staff recognise the mutual support they gain from each other. They value the impact it has on their own spiritual development and how this helps them to lead and be role models for the pupils. Leaders and governors ensure that the *Religious Education Directory* and the school curriculum is faithful to the bishop's vision for the diocese. High quality professional development is a central feature of supporting all staff in their roles as Catholic educators. Governors are invited and often join staff on training days. Extensive use is made of training provided by the diocese. Monitoring and assessment ensure that all staff and governors know their school well. They show an exceptional understanding of their school plan for the future. They know that self-evaluation is at the core of future developments in religious education. The inspirational leadership of the head teacher, the strong leadership team, fully supportive staff and the visionary approach of the governing body ensure the school continues to seek excellence for all.

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

A range of opportunities for prayer and liturgy is a strength of the school and is evidenced in the natural rhythm of the prayer through each day. Undoubtedly, this is a school in which prayer is at the heart of all they do. Pupils are fully engaged and responsive. Pupils lead prayer and liturgical prayer effectively and with immense confidence. All pupils value moments of quiet reflection. Pupils participate well in the traditional prayer life of the Church and confidently prepare their own prayers and responses. From Foundation Stage to Year 6, pupils embrace prayer and liturgy appropriate to their age. Prayer, including the Angelus, is part of the rhythm of each day and full use is made of meditative silence, prayerful reflections, and joyful singing. The prayer council reflects how skillful the pupils are at leading prayer. They know the Church's liturgical year and how this is an integral part of the prayer and celebration throughout the year. Parents are invited to join the school community in prayer. In an assembly led by Year 5 pupils on justice they are able to skillfully bring together their work on Oscar Romero, Rosa Parks, and Martin Luther King, with reflections on dramatised passages from Scripture, and reflection of how this impacts their daily lives. Several children articulate that justice begins with each of us. Similarly, a prayer reflection on the theme of hope by Year 4 pupils, effectively demonstrates their independence with their selecting of prayers, readings from scripture and composition of their own musical response.

Mass is regularly celebrated with classes, enabling all children to know the responses of the liturgy of the Mass. Singing is key to the joyful responses pupils make, and parishioners value the presence of pupils when they attend Mass in the parish. Prayer spaces and reflective spaces are present throughout the school. Dedicated prayer spaces are placed in the corridor and outdoor garden area. A prayer room has recently been re-sited to a more prominent

position. A garden area is specifically used by pupils to think more deeply about caring for the environment in response to Pope Francis's encyclical, *Laudato Si*. The school policy on prayer and liturgy is an accurate reflection of the practice in school. It is published on the website for parents to see and is under regular review, alongside the school's mission statement. Senior leaders and staff work hard to ensure that sacramental preparation is a true partnership between home, school, and parish. Regular celebrations take place throughout the year. As a result, parents and their families feel a real sense of belonging to a worshipping and prayerful community. One parent comments, "The school has a lovely community feel with faith at the heart".

The head teacher and senior leaders provide exemplary leadership, placing prayer and celebration at the heart of the school. All staff meetings have prayer at the heart. Staff value this time to develop their own faith. One member of staff says, "All we do centres around the Catholic ethos...there are many opportunities to develop our spirituality with prayer and reflection." The school supports family prayer within the home. Advent, Lent, and other significant liturgical events are linked to prayer cards, rosary bags, and Lenten reflections to be used in the home. School newsletters always make reference to prayer and reflections, and make links with the liturgical year. Governors give the highest priority to prayer and liturgy, as reflected in the actions they take and the support they give. For example, the budget has equal parity with other curriculum areas.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Upton
School unique reference number (URN)	105068
Full postal address of the school	Moreton Road, Upton, Wirral CH49 6LL
School phone number	0151 677 3970
Name of head teacher or principal	Mrs Claire Marrin
Chair of governing board	Mrs Nicola Robinson
School Website	www.stjosephs-upton-co.uk
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	Click or tap here to enter text.
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age-range of pupils	4-11
Trustees	Diocese of Shrewsbury
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	10 th March 2016
Previous denominational inspection grade	10 th March 2016

The inspection team

Kevin Toms	Lead inspector
Sue Lyonette	Team inspector
Name of inspector	Lead/team
Name of inspector	Lead/team

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