

# DIOCESE OF MIDDLESBROUGH

Inspection of Religious Education  
Collective Worship  
and  
The Catholic Life of the School



**School:** St. Joseph's R.C. Primary School

**Address:** Rosecroft Lane  
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**Headteacher:** Mrs. A. Toward

**Chair:** Mr. M. Lowe

**Date:** 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> June 2014

**Inspector:** Mrs A Parr

  

**Date & Grade of last Inspection:** February 2009 Good

**Overall Grade for this Inspection:** Good

## INTRODUCTION

This inspection was carried out under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005.

The report of the inspection is produced for the Bishop of Middlesbrough (Code of Canon Law 804 and 806) and for the governors of the school. The Inspection reviews, evaluates and plans further improvements in the school's witness to the Catholic faith and Curriculum Religious Education. This process begins with the school's own self-evaluation. The Inspection schedule follows criteria set by the National Board of Religious Inspectors and Advisers.

### What Inspection Grades mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding Catholic school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a Catholic school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Requires Improvement	These features, though of adequate quality, require improvement to be good.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate Catholic school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils.

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## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

St Joseph's is a slightly smaller than average sized Primary School situated in a small town within a rural location. It serves children from St Anthony's Brotton, St Joseph's Loftus and Our Lady Star of The Sea, Staithes. Pupils come from a broad range of socio-economic backgrounds. Some children travel a considerable distance to attend the school and a proportion travel by bus. The percentage of children eligible for free-school meals is below the national average. The school has provision for 2 year olds, a Nursery and seven single year classes. The average Attainment on entry to Nursery is below national expectations. Approximately 51% of the pupils are baptised Roman Catholic and 26% are of other Christian denominations. Almost all children are of white British nationality; some have an ethnic minority background. The number of children who have support or who have a Statement of Special Educational Need is slightly below average. 70% of teachers are Catholic and 45% of Classroom Support Staff are Catholic. The school has an established leadership team: the Head Teacher took up post in 2008 and the Assistant head in April 2009. The parish priest serves all three parishes and the school.

## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION**

- The Inspector observed 6 lessons and 5 acts of Collective Worship
- The Inspector held discussions with: the School Council; informally with pupils in lessons, at lunchtime and on the way to assemblies; two governors including the Chair; a group of parents; the Chaplaincy team; Religious Education subject leader; several meetings with the Headteacher
- The Inspector considered all the written documentation provided by the school, including the previous Section 48 Inspection Report, teachers' planning, tracking data, children's books from each class and ability group, monitoring and assessment and moderation records.

**Pupil Catchment:**

Number of pupils on roll: **171**

Planned Admission Number of Pupils: **30**

Percentage of pupils baptised RC: **51.13%**

Percentage of pupils from other Christian Denominations: **26.2%**

Percentage of pupils from other World Faiths: **0%**

Percentage of pupils with no religious affiliation: **22.67%**

Percentage of pupils with special needs: **14.93%**

**Teaching Staff:**

Full-time Teachers: **9** (1 on maternity and 1 long term sick)

Part-time Teachers: **1**

Percentage of Catholic Teachers: **70%**

**Support Staff:**

Full-time Classroom Support Staff: **0**

Part-time Classroom Support Staff: **11**

Percentage of Catholic Classroom Support Staff: **45.45%**

Percentage of teachers with CCRS: **3 members working towards**

Percentage of learning time given to R.E: **10% in all year groups**

Parishes served by the School: **St Joseph's Loftus, St Anthony's Brotton, Our Lady Star of the Sea, Staithes**

# 1. OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

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## MAIN FINDINGS

St Joseph's is a good Roman Catholic School with some outstanding features.

The Catholic Life of the school is outstanding. The school offers a welcoming environment through the immaculate and attractive displays about the Religious Education curriculum, parish events, prayer and the Church's year. This makes its Catholic mission immediately apparent to the whole school community and to all visitors. The school's Mission Statement centred around the motto 'Christ Be Our Light In Life, Love and Learning' makes a stunning entrance display and has been worked on by all the children in school so that they understand its meaning for them and can explain it at an age-appropriate level. Parents are extremely supportive of their school and speak with warmth, affection and appreciation of all that it provides for their children in every respect – academically, spiritually, morally and socially. They value the family atmosphere and the Catholic values and practices it promotes. They commend the work of the Head Teacher, teachers and all the adults who are part of the school community. There are many and varied opportunities for Collective Worship, both adult and pupil led, in which the children participate with obvious enjoyment, respect and reverence. Effective Chaplaincy provision which links home, parish and school is working well.

The provision for Catholic Education is good. Children are patently very happy at St Joseph's. They are proud of their school and have a positive attitude to learning; they enjoy Religious Education lessons and can speak about why they are important and why they enjoy it. Pupils' attainment is good and progress accelerates as children reach upper Key Stage Two. Teaching and learning are good overall with some outstanding teaching observed. In all lessons, teachers show a love of the subject and a desire to enthuse children with that same love; they use interesting and engaging resources and strategies. However, variability in the quality of marking and response time means that children are currently not progressing in their learning as well as they might in some year groups.

Leadership and management of the Catholic life and Religious Education in school are good. School Leaders are increasingly outward looking and value the support and guidance received through diocesan training and moderation meetings around 'Come and See' which have helped to improve teaching and standards. Governors know the school well, are determined to bring about its continued improvement and are confident in their roles. The Head Teacher is supported by a committed teaching and support staff

### **What the school needs to do to improve further:**

#### 1. Continue to raise attainment in Religious Education through:

- Embedding and developing the current feedback and marking practices so that pupils know how to improve their work and are given time to respond to next-step marking.
- Providing more precise success criteria or guidance for pupils so that they can improve their productivity and the quality of their work.

#### 2. Consolidate and extend the improvements made in monitoring and tracking by:

- Continuing to moderate pupils' work more systematically, in-house and in-cluster to support improvements in teaching.

## 2. PUPILS

### **How good outcomes are for pupils, taking into account of variations between groups.**

Pupils at St. Joseph's take on a variety of responsibilities and participate thoughtfully and constructively in the outstanding Catholic Life of the school.

They are able to articulate the mission statement with reference to their own beliefs and actions and to that of those around them. They understand 'Christ Be Our Light' because they know that "Jesus is the Light of the World" and that "we are witnesses to Him". They know that this "helps us in our choices in life" and "helps us to be kinder" (members of the School Council). Pupils in a range of classes spoke enthusiastically and seriously about how they live this out by responding to the needs of others through, for example, the Shoebox appeal, fundraising for CAFOD, Fairtrade activities, Nightstop, as well as contributing to parish groups such as the SVP by gathering food parcels. Children are instrumental in organising and running such initiatives.

Through specific groups, such as the Beat Bullying Team and Playground Leaders children assume and fulfil their responsibilities to look after each other, especially the more vulnerable children in school. During the Inspection, as part of the Anti-bullying Ambassador programme, children led a presentation to Y5. The resulting discussion showed a high level of respect and responsibility for others and an awareness of the consequences of their own actions. As part of the Behaviour Policy, rights and responsibilities are articulated throughout the school and children are knowledgeable about them. Effective follow-up circle times where children have the opportunity to discuss the weekly Statements of Belief help them to contribute to the common good in the school.

On the playground and in the classroom, pupils enjoy being with one another. Children feel safe and are "like one big family": Y3 pupil. This was strongly echoed by a cross-section of parents. There are strategies in place to deal with any concerns pupils may have such as the Worry Well which older pupils find helpful and reassuring.

Children are engaged with and proud of the Catholic character of the school. They are keen to describe their participation in and knowledge of their parishes, of the religious traditions and links between parish and school, such as their parish Saints, the recent Marian procession and First Holy Communion Mass. Such engagement and involvement is enhanced by a small but devoted Chaplaincy Team who have worked successfully with the staff and parish priests to involve the children in the Catholic Life of the school and parishes.

Children's response to Collective Worship is good. Children act with reverence and are keen to participate in it, even the youngest of them. In whole-school and year group Collective Worship, a variety of music, drama, actions and visual resources are effectively used to inspire the children and enhance their spirituality. For example, the children take some ownership as they gather, being led reverently into the hall by the 'Leading Lights' children to make a prayerful focal point around the statue of the school's patron saint. Some year groups are taking on responsibility for preparing their own Liturgies, with differing levels of teacher support. They are increasingly using the form of Gather, Word, Response and Mission. They enjoy incorporating a variety of prayer styles, artefacts and locations of their own choosing; the new prayer garden is a favourite choice: in Foundation Stage Two children had wanted to tell the story of how Noah was a 'good friend' to Jesus (linked to the current Religious Education topic). After the Liturgy to which they all contributed, they were able to re-tell the story in their play by re-building a model of the Ark and talking about being a good friend of Jesus. A class Liturgy independently prepared by Y6 pupils incorporated a litany and a formal 'Eternal Rest', sensitively and prayerfully included at the request of a classmate for her Grandad who had died recently.

Children generally concentrate well and enjoy their Religious Education lessons. Most of the children spoken to were able to speak about specific aspects of lessons or particular pieces of work they had enjoyed: two Y1 pupils enjoyed the regular outdoor role-playing of scripture

they had been using in lessons whilst Y5 pupils said that their teacher made lessons “fun and exciting”. Y6 pupils described group-work and hot-seating and could explain how it helped them to progress in their learning.

Standards which pupils achieve in their final key stage are broadly average and improving as teachers strive to further refine the match of level descriptors to activities in lessons; consequently the rate of progress improves as children progress through the school. Progress is particularly noticeable in upper key stage two: challenging activities draw on a range of sources and strategies to completely engage children, prompt higher levels of thinking and address both Attainment Targets through discussion and written work. In lower year groups children could articulate their religious knowledge better than they could write it in the tasks set: “this (lesson) is important because God talks to us in it all and then we have to talk to Him”. “If everyone does Jesus’s law of peace then there would be no wars and no fighting”: Y2 pupils.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life of the school</li> </ul>	<b>1</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education</li> </ul>	<b>2</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How well do pupils respond to and participate in the school’s Collective Worship</li> </ul>	<b>2</b>

### 3. PROVISION

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#### How effective the provision is for Catholic education

The quality of teaching and how purposeful learning is in Religious Education is good overall with some evidence of outstanding teaching.

Assessment procedures have developed effectively over time and are now being used to plan lessons to meet the needs of pupils with activities matched to the levels of attainment. The precision of this matching is variable in lower Key Stage Two. All teachers use “Can I?” questions to frame lesson objectives and driver words are given prominence in classrooms. All teachers also use ‘Big Questions’ on immaculately presented topic displays containing a mix of children’s work and resources. These whole-school approaches vary in their effect upon pupils’ learning depending on the expertise and skill of the teacher planning and delivering the lesson, although children’s post-it note responses to the ‘Big Questions’ were often reflective and insightful. Where there is outstanding teaching, teachers are aware of pupils’ capabilities and plan lessons to challenge, excite and enthuse the most able whilst ensuring the least able are fully engaged with activities they can relate to and are supported by the teacher or teaching assistant: in a Foundation Stage One lesson the teacher made enthusiastic and joyful use of images, text, actions, singing, praying and crafts to provide a delightful set of well-matched learning activities; a child with disabilities was superbly supported by an adult and given especially prepared resources for his use. Similarly in Upper Key Stage Two classes, excellent use was made of a recording of Martin Luther-King and film of a pilgrimage to Lourdes to present higher order questions and stimulate much purposeful paired and group discussion before beginning well-differentiated written tasks using a range of sources, including scripture.

Work has been done on improving the quality of marking and feedback and this is beginning to have an effect on children’s understanding of levels and what they need to do to improve: “I think we are trying to be level three because we have to give reasons”: Y2 pupil. However pupils are not always given time to respond to questions to move their thinking on.

The extent to which the Religious Education curriculum promotes learning is also good.

‘Come and See’ is firmly established and the school makes good use of the scheme’s resources and also resources its own materials and facilities to maximise the learning. The Chaplaincy team have been instrumental in providing religious artefacts and prayer tables to enhance curriculum Religious Education in all classrooms which are well-used. Teachers plan lessons well so that children are regularly required to use skills from other curriculum areas both basic and higher: the Y2 class were using root words to work out the meaning of religious vocabulary; Y3 used enjoyable skimming/scanning and highlighting techniques and Y4 made good use of inference and deduction skills during paired work on Scripture. In all classes teachers plan for speaking and listening in a variety of ways so that children can articulate well; this is well-supported by Teaching Assistants’ skilful questioning when working with lower ability children. The Religious Education curriculum fully meets the requirements of the Bishops’ Conference and the school has responded to recent initiatives and developments at Diocesan level, participating in training and co-operation at Diocesan and cluster level

The quality of Collective Worship provided is outstanding; it is central to the life of the school and is a key part of every school celebration.

On a practical level this has been well-resourced by the Chaplaincy Team. Through a well-planned programme of liturgies, assemblies, Masses and other liturgical celebrations which are appropriately matched to the pupils’ stage of development, pupils are given many opportunities to participate and lead in a range of Acts of Worship. During the inspection children sang joyously, prayed sincerely and reverently and were enabled to reflect silently.

These experiences greatly enhance the spiritual and moral development of the pupils. One parent spoke about her children as having a ‘moral conscience’ and another said “my child understands forgiveness from coming here”. The Chaplaincy Team provide opportunities for voluntary prayer through the Rosary ‘Club’ and prayers during Liturgical Seasons such as Stations of the Cross.

Provision for the Catholic life of the school is also outstanding as it has the highest priority; it impacts significantly on the children’s behaviour and relationships with each other through the school’s behaviour policy and rewards systems. The welcoming entrance, hall, corridors and classrooms are unmistakably and proudly Catholic and the mission statement is echoed throughout the school. Displays and prayer areas are attractive, well-organised, well-resourced and well-used. A special feature is the specially commissioned mosaics of the Parishes’ Saints; the children were involved in the research and design of them and are very proud of them. Families feel fully involved in the pupils’ religious development through school’s weekly newsletters, the Wednesday Word and the Come and See newsletter. Children contributed to a St Joseph’s prayer- book which each child has received and taken home. Parents said that there is always something going on to which they are welcome and felt that the Mission Statement “comes out at home” and through the regular charitable activities in which children are involved. They felt that the variety of their children’s needs were well met whatever their background or abilities. There is a strong sense of community which permeates the school and exists amongst and between all adults and children in the school community.

• The quality of teaching and how purposeful learning is in Religious Education	<b>2</b>
• The extent to which the Religious Education curriculum promotes pupils’ learning	<b>2</b>
• The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school	<b>1</b>
• The quality of provision for the Catholic life of the school	<b>1</b>

## 4. LEADERS, MANAGERS AND GOVERNORS

### How effective leaders, managers and governors are in developing the Catholic life of the school

Leadership at St Joseph's is good.

The leadership team of the Head Teacher, Assistant Head and Religious Education Co-ordinator is deeply committed to the Church's mission in education so that they provide a curriculum with spiritual and moral development at its heart. This is clear from the School Improvement Plan which prioritises developments in the Catholic ethos of the school and in Religious Education. The school's Self-Evaluation Document accurately reflects the action points being addressed through the School Improvement Plan which, in turn, have been derived through monitoring strategies and analysis of the findings.

School life centres around the Catholic life of the school including collective worship. Outcomes for pupils have clearly improved over the last few years as the quality of provision has been given priority and therefore improved; children respond positively and with enthusiasm to the many and varied acts of worship and are proud of their Catholic school. The Catholic life of the school has been promoted and developed well, particularly by the Head Teacher, to include the families who belong to the school in many different ways; – there is good parental involvement which consequently results in improvements for pupils.

The leadership and management of Religious Education are good since outcomes for pupils are good. Evidence from the inspection indicates that outcomes will further improve due to a clear system of monitoring and evaluation strategies, not least teachers' own reflective practice. Since the last inspection, an efficient tracking system has been introduced by the Head Teacher which has considerably improved the monitoring of standards in Religious Education.

The subject leader, with good subject knowledge and a strong personal faith, has led some constructive in-house professional development as 'Come and See' has been introduced and consolidated within the school. There is also clear commitment and determination on the part of the leadership team to improve the quality of teaching and outcomes for pupils. However there is some disorganisation in the management and administration of the subject which needs addressing if improvements are to be implemented cohesively.

Governors meet with the Head termly to discuss and monitor the School Improvement Plan. They are well-represented at school and parish events and are very supportive of staff. At the same time they are knowledgeable about standards in Religious Education at the end of Key Stage Two and are keen to challenge the school to continue to improve. Currently the school is going through a time of change as it prepares for the formation of the Academy; there have also been a number of unavoidable changes in the governing body and parish priests which has affected the rate of progress of improvements. Nevertheless, all issues for improvement in the Catholic Life of the school and in curriculum Religious Education have been, or are still being, addressed; progress has been made against all of them. Based on this progress and the evident commitment of the Head Teacher, Assistant Head and the governors seen during the Inspection, the school has good capacity to ensure that outcomes will continue to improve. The current Chair of governors and Religious Education governor have a good grasp of the school's current position and have the sense of vocation, ability and commitment to encourage, challenge, and support the Head Teacher in further improvements.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How well leaders, managers and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life of the school, including collective worship, and plan improvement to outcomes for pupils</li> </ul>	<b>2</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How well leaders, managers and governors monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education and plan for improvement to outcomes for pupils</li> </ul>	<b>2</b>

