

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 larger than average sized primary school situated in an area of Middlesbrough where there is considerable social and economic deprivation.

St. Joseph's is part of St. Hilda's Multi-Academy Trust (MAT), which was formed in November 2015 and consists of ten local Catholic primary schools and a large 11-18 Catholic secondary school, Trinity College. The proportion of pupils with English as a second language is 20.7%; the proportion of pupils eligible for Pupil Premium is 26%.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION

Inspectors saw:

- ten Religious Education (RE) lessons across key stage 1 and key stage 2
- cross-curricular activities and RE lessons in Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)
- a wide-range of documentation, including, data, tracking, minutes of meetings, Diocesan Self Evaluation Document (DSED), RE leaders' file, school and peer-reviews,
- pupil work-books from every class
- Catholic Life file
- Collective Worship file
- previous S48 and S5 reports
- class-based Acts of Collective Worship
- whole-school Act of Collective Worship

In addition:

- meetings were held with: head teacher; senior leadership team (SLT); RE leadership team; governors; directors of St. Hilda's Multi-academy Trust (MAT); parents; pupil groups including Minnie Vinnies, chaplaincy, school council; 'Nurture Group' staff and pupils; class-teachers and teaching assistants
- discussions with class-teachers relating to work-book scrutinies

Pupil Catchment:

Number of pupils on roll: **300 + 26-place nursery**

Planned Admission Number of Pupils: **42**

Percentage of pupils baptised RC: **94%**

Percentage of pupils from other Christian Denominations: **3.7%**

Percentage of pupils from other World Faiths: **1.3%**

Percentage of pupils with no religious affiliation: **1%**

Percentage of pupils with special needs: **9%**

Teaching Staff:

Full-time Teachers: **14**

Part-time Teachers: **3**

Percentage of Catholic Teachers: **76%**

Support Staff:

Full-time Classroom Support Staff: **16**

Part-time Classroom Support Staff: **2**

Percentage of Catholic Classroom Support Staff: **77%**

Percentage of teachers with CCRS: **3**

Percentage of learning time given to R.E:

10% in all key-stages

Parishes served by the School:

St. Joseph's

1. OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

1

MAIN FINDINGS

St Joseph's is an outstanding Catholic school. The ethos which emanates throughout the school is one of welcome, harmony and calmness. Leadership at every level is outstanding. It is dedicated to ensuring that each pupil will have a happy and successful time during their years at school and that the education offered will be of the highest quality in every respect. All decisions are focused on achieving this aim and outcomes show that the school is very successful in doing so. Resources are allocated very fairly to all groups whether EYFS, the most vulnerable or the most able and all decisions have a sound basis in Gospel principles and therefore hold integrity. The school has high aspirations for every pupil and articulates this vision to the school community, which understands and shares this vision. The head teacher leads the school with a quiet determination and utmost professionalism. She understands the complexities of the local community and this contributes to the excellent relationship which the school enjoys with parents and the parish. The school is held in very high regard by parents. The environment, internally and externally, is managed with care and pride. It offers areas for prayer, play and stimulation. The behaviour of the pupils is exemplary. Pupils recognise that respect and reconciliation are the foundation of their behavioural expectations. Pupils demonstrate great pride their school and talk with enthusiasm about the many activities they are offered. Pupils at the end of key stage 2 show remarkable ability to empathise with one another and to articulate their achievements

Many pupils are heavily involved in a number of pupil groups, such as Minnie Vinnies, school council and chaplaincy. They have participated in CAFOD projects, homelessness and environment issues, as well as fund-raising for local and global projects. However, pupils' organisational and personal skills are not developed as fully as they could be and groups showed confusion at times over their focus. Overall, Collective Worship in the school is good and some is exceptional, where pupils showed a maturity beyond their years in their understanding and presentation of their Worship. The pupils' singing is an outstanding feature of the school and pupils show enormous pride and enjoyment in it. However, Acts of Collective Worship, can rely too much on a tried formula and can lack imagination. The variety of prayer-styles which pupils experience was limited. A system of monitoring and evaluation of Acts of Collective Worship and activities related to the Catholic Life of the school, which would find out the views of all members of the school community, is not fully in place.

Outcomes are high at the end of key stage two and progress across the whole-school is outstanding. Outcomes are good at the end of key stage one. Pupils enter Foundation Stage with often low entry points and under-developed language skills. Progress is therefore less rapid in the early years, but outstanding teaching ensures that pupils have a firm foundation to their learning. This forms the basis for the outstanding progress which pupils demonstrate at the end of their time in St. Joseph's. A high proportion of teaching across the school is outstanding and never less than good. The curriculum offered in the EYFS is outstanding. Staff use every learning area to stimulate pupils' language and skills where their imagination can flourish. Robust monitoring across the school, tracking of every pupil, alongside continual training for all staff, means that there is a lot of professional confidence amongst staff. Assessments are robust and generally very accurate. Staff know their pupils well and plan lessons accordingly. Pupils' attitude to learning is very good and pupils concentrate well in their lessons. An outstanding feature of the school is the care and expertise which is given to the most vulnerable pupils. Vulnerable pupils in the 'Nurture Group' are understood and cherished, leading to their outstanding progress in all aspects. Some excellent examples of creative and meaningful teaching was seen, especially where collaborative teaching and coaching methods were used. This approach was used to excellent effect, particularly in upper key stage two. However, collaborative teaching, using the excellent staff expertise, is not fully utilised in developing some staff.

What the school needs to do to improve further:

1 Ensure that there is consistency of outstanding teaching across the school in order to ensure consistency of outstanding outcomes for pupils, by:

- encouraging creativity in the teaching of RE
- engaging coaching techniques more frequently to improve teaching and learning;
- incorporating peer-working and collaborative teaching across the whole-school.

2. Further enhance the Collective Worship and Catholic Life of the school by:

- incorporating a consistent method of monitoring and evaluating Collective Worship and activities relating to the Catholic Life of the school
- including pupil, parent and parishioner views in all regular monitoring through questionnaires and/or pupil, parent and parish forums
- encouraging and developing creative opportunities in Acts of Collective Worship, such as drama, liturgical dance, art forms, personal memorabilia, etc.
- reviewing the prayer-life of the school in order to ensure that pupils experience all forms of prayer, both individual and collective

3. Extend pupil leadership in the Catholic Life of the school by:

- formalizing all pupil-groups in order to avoid confusion among pupils
- co-ordinating an annual time-table of activities relating to the Catholic Life of the school, including local, national and international projects.
- ensuring the outreach work of pupil groups is of the highest calibre by considering achieving prestigious awards such as 'Green Flag', International Schools, Global learning etc.

4. Maintain the momentum and drive for excellence which is apparent in the entire work of the school

2. PUPILS

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

The extent to which pupils at St Joseph's contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school is outstanding. They benefit hugely from the multitude of high quality opportunities which are offered to them by the school. This is demonstrated in pupils' attitudes to one another and in their responses to events around them. Pupils show a generosity of spirit in giving of their time and thought to the many activities in which they participate. Pupils are clearly involved in shaping the Catholic Life of the school through activities such as: the work of the 'Minnie Vinnies', which organises many charity events for CAFOD, visiting local nursing homes, preparing Christmas boxes and McMillan cancer coffee-mornings, environmental work in the school garden and their prominence in local Remembrance Day ceremonies. The school council also brings forward ideas to further enhance the pupils' lives at school such as 'Den Day' which helped them to empathise with the homeless. Pupils demonstrated a depth of maturity and understanding of one another when organising activities relating to the Catholic Life of the school and this was shown in the calm and easy manner in which they related to one another. Pupil behaviour is exemplary in all areas of the school and its grounds.

Collective Worship is good, and some is outstanding. Pupils participate fully and are respectful. Peer-leadership is very well established, particularly at the end of key-stage 2 where pupils prepared organised and led a very inclusive, meaningful and moving 'Farewell Liturgy' for the end of their time at St. Joseph's. However, not all Acts of Collective Worship observed were as stimulating. The school is moving away from a formulaic presentation of Collective Worship to one which is more creative and meaningful. Singing in the school is a particular joy and is of the highest calibre. Pupils obviously gain a great deal of fulfilment from their collective singing and incorporate it in their planning for Acts of Collective Worship. Pupils' involvement in the evaluation of Collective Worship is in its infancy.

Outcomes for all pupils in RE are high and pupils' progress is outstanding. Outcomes for pupils at the end of key stage 2 are outstanding. The very high achievement of the most vulnerable pupils is excellent and is an exceptional feature of the school. Extra resources provided via the 'Nurture Group', are allocated to pupils with additional needs. This results in happy, fulfilled pupils, regardless of ability, who work hard and enjoy their lessons, thereby making outstanding progress in all areas of the RE curriculum. Pupils' attitude to learning in RE is enthusiastic and searching. This was particularly apparent when pupils were exploring issues relating to the common good and to the Pope's encyclical on the environment.

Many pupils come into St. Joseph's with very limited language skills and from families where English is not always the dominant language used in the home. Progress is therefore less rapid in the earlier years, but the RE curriculum is carefully enmeshed into the whole EYFS curriculum. Pupils' understanding of the RE curriculum in EYFS is absorbed in a very relaxed and meaningful curriculum. This approach paves the way for the more formal RE curriculum and the outstanding progress and high attainment which is seen at the end of key stage 2.

• The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life of the school	1
• How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education	1
• How well do pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship	2

3. PROVISION

1

How effective the provision is for Catholic education

The pupils at St. Joseph's receive an outstanding Catholic education. Teaching is highly effective and there are some examples of outstanding teaching, particularly at the end of key stage 2, in EYFS and for those pupils with additional needs. The teaching observed was never less than good. The teachers at St. Joseph's show dedication to their pupils through their holistic knowledge of individual pupils and the depth of subject knowledge. In the best lessons, teachers ensured that RE was presented in a creative and meaningful way, but this approach is not replicated across all the school. The school has the highest aspirations for all of its pupils, and plans carefully for individual progress and success. The topic studied on the Pope's encyclical was of great interest to the pupils and it was apparent that pupils were using their learning in the home through encouraging re-cycling, walking where possible trying not to buy single-use plastic etc.

The school offers various opportunities to extend pupils' understanding of the RE curriculum as well as numerous opportunities to enhance pupils' social and moral development. These include the well-resourced and well-used creative outdoor area in EYFS. The youngest pupils showed great excitement and enjoyment when praying in the outside prayer space or playing in the 'tunnel'. Staff in the early years are continually looking for ways in which to present the RE curriculum in exciting ways and the learning space is filled with a myriad of ever-changing areas in which pupils can explore. The RE curriculum for older pupils is planned so that prior learning and attitude is taken fully into account. This means that there are few gaps in learning and therefore pupil confidence is high. The 'Nurture group is organised as a general learning space with additional resources made very specifically for individual pupils. It is a great credit to the whole-school, and particularly to the leadership, that the most vulnerable pupils in the school community are given such thought and care and therefore make the excellent progress that they do. Outside areas such as the garden and green-house are very important to the pupils. All activities consciously contribute to the spiritual and moral development of the pupils and align to the central mission of the Church in education.

An idea which came from the school council was to provide opportunities for pupils to empathise with the homeless, but this was then directed and co-ordinated by school staff. Homes were made from cardboard and scrap materials so that pupils could think about what it would be like to be homeless, even for a night. In the CAFOD project, 'Share the Journey', the Minnie Vinnie group organised a walk around the school, but pupils could only take what they could carry – which gave pupils a lot of food for thought. These projects give opportunities for pupils and their families to discuss local and global issues which pupils see and read about, but have not experienced directly. However, most of these opportunities are led by school staff and pupils are not given sufficient opportunities to organise and plan these events themselves.

Collective Worship is central to the life of St. Joseph's school. All celebrations and events include prayer and an opportunity for thanksgiving and praise. All classrooms have significant sacred spaces, which are cared for by pupils and used daily. School offers some different prayer forms, formal and personal. Reflective time is encouraged. Singing is joyful and of the highest quality and in which all pupils engage enthusiastically. Staff pray together and this time is important for staff as it enables them to be together, sharing Gospel messages and personal situations. All pupils participate in more formalised Acts of Collective Worship using the 4-part planning format and pupils are confident in planning, preparing and delivering this form of an Act of Collective Worship. However, not all opportunities are taken by school to enliven Collective Worship and not all pupils are mindfully engaged. Staff are not confident in

using their skills to devise more creative Acts of Collective Worship and so planning remains at a formulaic stage in too many areas.

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The quality of teaching and how purposeful learning is in Religious Education	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The extent to which the Religious Education curriculum promotes pupils' learning	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school	2

4. LEADERS, MANAGERS AND GOVERNORS

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

The leadership at St. Joseph's school is outstanding in all aspects. Leadership at every level is fully committed to Catholic education and to ensuring that all pupils, regardless of age, background or ability, will thrive, spiritually, academically and socially. Leadership has created a culture which enables pupils to recognise that they are important as individuals and that each of them is unique. This is the basis for the respect which all members of the school community show one another and the harmonious atmosphere which pervades the school. The head teacher demonstrates this ethos with humility and humour, and her leadership team follow her example. All decisions are based on the mission of the Church in education. This presents difficulty at times, for instance, in making decisions about the provision for the most vulnerable pupils, but leadership is unflinching in its quest for excellence for all. Governors and directors are fully involved in the financial management of the school in order to support the SLT in this quest. However, monitoring of the activities relating to the Catholic Life of the school is under-developed and opportunities for pupils to develop skills are missed. Pupil voice is an essential part of evaluating the Collective Worship and wider prayer-life of the school, but this is not yet fully in place.

Leadership of the RE curriculum is intelligent and robust. The RE team works extremely well, as is evident in the outcomes. Monitoring, evaluation and response to the evaluation, takes place systematically and is of a high quality. This results in a high proportion of outstanding teaching and the teaching of RE being never less than good. Tracking of data is rigorous, and assessments are mainly thorough and accurate. This, combined with on-going professional development, results in the excellent attitudes to learning and outstanding progress for all pupils. Creative approaches to ensuring consistently outstanding teaching, such as team and collaborative working, is in place in some parts of the school and is very successful. Leadership in EYFS is outstanding. This is seen in the thoughtful and imaginative use of events, the Church's year, nature, wild-life etc. to engage very young pupils in a meaningful, holistic Catholic education.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How well leaders, managers and governors monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education and plan for improvement to outcomes for pupils 	1