

# DIOCESE OF MIDDLESBROUGH

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



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

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**Headteacher:** Mrs J Wilson

**Chair:** Mr D Nolan

**Date:** 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> June 2013

**Inspectors:** Mr A Hay and Mr S Gallagher

## 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 Advisers and Inspectors.

### 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 Primary School is an above average sized school serving the parish of St Joseph in the Grove Hill area of Middlesbrough. The school has a high level of social and economic deprivation and a higher than average percentage of pupils whose first language is not English. Some 33% of pupils are granted extra funding through the Pupil Premium. An above average number of pupils are eligible for free school meals and there are an average number of pupils with Special Educational Needs. There are 279 pupils in 12 classes, plus a 52 place Nursery for part-time 3 and 4 year olds. The percentage of pupils in the main school who are baptised Catholics is 81% and 7% are of the Muslim, Hindu or Sikh faith. 80% of the teaching staff is Catholic, as are the majority of classroom support staff. The original school was built in the 1930's, with additions built in the 1950's/60's, and is spacious, well maintained and appropriately adapted to current needs.

**Pupil Catchment:**

Number of pupils on roll: 279 plus 52 part time nursery pupils

Planned Admission Number of Pupils: 42

Percentage of pupils baptised RC: 81% (not including nursery pupils)

Percentage of pupils from other Christian Denominations: 8%

Percentage of pupils from other World Faiths: 7%

Percentage of pupils with no religious affiliation: 4%

Percentage of pupils with special needs: 18%

**Teaching Staff:**

Full-time Teachers: 11

Part-time Teachers: 4

Percentage of Catholic Teachers: 80%

**Support Staff:**

Full-time Classroom Support Staff: 14

Part-time Classroom Support Staff: 3

Percentage of Catholic Classroom Support Staff: 71%

Percentage of teachers with CCRS: 20%

**Percentage of learning time given to R.E:**

10% in all year groups

**Parishes served by the School:**

St Joseph

# 1. OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

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## MAIN FINDINGS

St Joseph's Primary School is an outstanding Catholic school, due to committed and very effective leadership from the Headteacher and the quality of the dedicated team she has built up over the years. The school self evaluation systems are well established and link directly into planning for future improvement. Governors have good knowledge of the school through the efforts of the leadership team but are not yet rigorous enough in challenging and supporting the strategic direction of the school.

The School Mission statement is central to the ethos of the school and all it does. It is an inclusive, caring and highly effective organisation, inspired by the Gospel. All staff, Catholic and other, are able and committed to its aims. They feel they can make a real difference to the lives and faith journeys of the pupils and their families.

The Catholic Life of the school is very evident in the environment created, through the caring attitude and excellently managed behaviour of the pupils, and the quality and range of the outreach to the families and local community of the school. The parish and school are supportive of each other and all adults provide an excellent example. The positive relationships fostered between all parties are a real strength.

The quality and variety of Collective Worship is very effective in helping the faith of the school community develop and its strong sense of belonging to a Catholic community to be sustained. Pupils of all ages are developing skills and confidence in the planning and delivery of liturgies and are continually encouraged to develop and extend their skills in doing so.

Religious Education is clearly a core subject with similar funding, assessment and tracking procedures as the other core subjects. Planning is shared and thorough, and a good range of learning strategies are used at all stages. The teaching of Religious Education is of very high quality throughout the school and as a result and progress by the end of Key Stage 2 is outstanding. The pupils are confident in talking about their understanding of their faith.

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

1. To increase Governor involvement in and knowledge of the school as it moves through its current period of leadership change so it can provide appropriate support and challenge by making every effort to:
  - a) Ensure all Foundation Governor vacancies are filled, as soon as possible, with people who can bring appropriate skills to bear.
  - b) Establish a full programme of governor visits and reports from them to ensure the Governing Body has a full picture of the three main aspects of the Catholicity of the school.
  - c) Deliver a comprehensive induction/support programme for the new Headteacher who starts in September.

2. Review the roles within the newly established Religious Education Team to reflect the three main leadership aspects of Religious Education, Collective Worship and the Catholic Life of the school.
3. Use the recently established peer observation system and the varied skills of the Religious Education Team to share high quality teaching in order to raise the standard of all Religious Education lessons to outstanding.
4. Establish a broad based Chaplaincy Team to build on the very good work already done by the school in developing the pastoral support and spiritual life of the school community in the future.

## 2. PUPILS

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

The pupils at St Joseph's School take full advantage of the many opportunities provided for them to take on responsibilities both within school and beyond. This is particularly evident in the number and range of charities supported by them. They are able to be reflective and show healthy curiosity. They have good knowledge and respect for their faith and that of others. Liturgical celebrations and retreat days are very much valued and enjoyed. The pupils are very well mannered, have a clear sense of right and wrong and their behaviour is excellent, both in the playground and when moving round the school. They respond to the needs of others with care and openness, enjoying their own success and that of others. Pupils have both a high regard for their school and a keen sense of belonging to it as a Catholic community, readily giving thanks, forgiving and accepting forgiveness.

Pupil progress in each Key Stage is excellent, starting from a low base, and attainment is above average at the end of Key Stage One and high at the end of Key Stage Two. Assessment is based on accurate baseline analysis, realistic term teacher assessment and careful tracking of progress. The quality of class and written work for all groups of differing ability is consistently high, and is outstanding in Years 5 and 6, due to the staff's high expectations of their pupils. The pupils enjoy their varied lessons, showing interest and enthusiasm in learning about their faith.

The children show reverence and respect during both teacher and child led Collective Worship. They are keenly interested and make heartfelt responses to that which is presented to them. They plan and deliver liturgies in varied gatherings from the earliest years, building up their skills to a high level of independence by their final years. This was particularly evident in the Key Stage Liturgy on Reconciliation, led by Year 4. The pupils are at ease when praying with others of different faiths.

• 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	1

### 3. PROVISION

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

Religious Education lessons are carefully planned, taking into account both the pupils' prior knowledge and varied ability. All teachers, both Catholic and others, base their teaching on their high level of subject knowledge and their ability to use a good variety of teaching approaches. Teaching is consistently good with pupils showing motivation, application and understanding. It is often outstanding when well paced, lively and imaginative techniques are employed, as in the Year 2/3 lesson observed on 'Reconciliation – Rule Breaking' that began with the teacher cheating in a game the class were playing and the feelings that gave rise to. Information technology is very well employed. Pupils show increasing independence and ability to reflect on their experiences. They are able to assess their own progress to some extent but the use of the 'I Can.....' statements is not yet consistent through all classes. Teacher assessment however is of consistently high quality, being very well moderated, recorded and tracked throughout, in a clear, accessible system. This quality of teaching and the school's celebration of achievement and effort in Religious Education underpins the pupils' enjoyment of and enthusiasm for the subject.

Teacher's planning at all stages, the quality of the support given by classroom assistants and the careful building up of knowledge on prior learning ensure the full coverage of the Religious Education programme which meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference. Appropriately differentiated tasks are effectively used to ensure learning is maximised for different abilities and contributes to the pupils' spiritual and moral development.

Collective Worship is central to the life of the school, of high quality and well resourced. This was clear from the delightful provision seen in the Nursery and throughout the school. The pupils enjoy planning liturgies for their own classes and for larger groups, showing increasing skill and confidence as they move through the school. The pupils experience a variety of types of prayer and reflection. Parents and parishioners are included in more formal liturgies and respect is shown to those of other faiths. The themes of these celebrations arise from the seasons of the Church Year and themes from the Religious Education programme. The quality of singing in Collective Worship is a strength.

The frequently reviewed school Mission Statement successfully informs the ethos of the school. The learning environment is attractive and clearly of a Catholic character with numerous displays on Catholic themes in public areas and well focused prayer areas in each classroom. By carefully developed behaviour policies and extensive, positive behaviour management strategies, the standard of behaviour in the school is exemplary and the level of pupil awareness of the needs of others is very high. Relationships between all groups are excellent being based on respect and the acknowledgement of individual uniqueness.

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

## 4. LEADERS, MANAGERS AND GOVERNORS

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

The quality of the Catholic Life of the school is very well promoted by the school's current leadership, especially by its very able, committed and inspirational Headteacher, through clear systems of planning and delivery of the school's outreach to parents, charities and the parish and local community. This is evident in the support given to the Parish Sacramental programme, liturgies and other events and support given to families under stress. Collective Worship is very effectively planned to engage the pupils and their families in appropriate celebrations throughout the year. This is followed up by careful monitoring and evaluation which includes systems to record the response of the pupils to this provision. Leadership by staff at all levels in this area of the school's work is excellent, so the pupils show high levels of awareness of spiritual and moral issues. Those parents interviewed were very appreciative of this.

Clear and realistic self evaluation by the school leadership team of these areas of the school's work leads to effective self improvement plans, including well targeted staff training, especially in helping pupils build up their skills in liturgy planning and delivery. Both staff and pupils are aware of the centrality of the school's Mission Statement of engagement and improvement. The recent creation of a team to coordinate the Catholicity of the school has already shown itself as a useful management model but its role needs further definition. There is an appropriate base from which to form a chaplaincy team to ensure the very good provision in this area continues to provide for the needs of the pupils and their families in the future. The leadership of the school ensures that governors are made aware of the plans and provision for the Catholic Life of the school.

Rigorous systems for monitoring both the delivery and impact of the school's Religious Education programme, through lesson observation, work scrutiny and careful assessment, ensure high levels of achievement are maintained. Careful analysis provides a clear basis for the diagnosis of the strengths and areas of development within the subject. The leadership of the school ensure the governors are made aware of the data and the improvement plans arising from this information. Governors will need to be even more proactive in their strategic role in the future.

The school leadership team dealt effectively with the issue of the development of assessment and tracking highlighted in the last inspection and, due to the strength of systems currently in place and planned for the future, the school's capacity to continue to improve is outstanding.

<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>	1
<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>	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The extent to which the governing body provides effective challenge and support for the Catholic dimension of the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory and canonical responsibilities met</li></ul>	2