



# Archdiocese of Birmingham

## INSPECTION REPORT

### ST JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY ACADEMY

#### Part of the Newman Catholic Collegiate

Mobberley Rd, Goldenhill, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffs, ST6 5RN

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Inspection dates 25<sup>th</sup> - 26<sup>th</sup> June 2015  
Reporting Inspector Denis Cody

Diocesan Inspection carried out with the framework used for s48 inspections

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Type of School	Academy
Age range of pupils	3-11 years
Number on roll	192
Appropriate authority	The Board of Directors
Chair of Academy Committee	Mrs Angela Jones
Telephone number	01782 235393
E-mail address	stjoseph@sgfl.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	April 2010
DFE School Number	861/3400
Unique Reference Number	140148

**Headteacher** Mrs Elizabeth Thomas

Previous inspection: 2

This inspection: 2

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DIOCESAN EDUCATION SERVICE



## Evidence

- The inspection was carried out by 1 Diocesan Inspector.
- The focus of the inspection was on the effectiveness and use of the school's self-evaluation of religious education (RE) and Catholic life.
- To validate the effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation of teaching and learning, the inspector observed three full RE lessons with the principal.
- The inspector completed a work scrutiny and held a discussion with pupils to evaluate the impact of teaching on their learning over time.
- Meetings were held with a member of the board of directors, the chair and other members of the academy committee, staff, and parish priest.
- The inspector observed a prayer service, attended a school Mass and undertook a learning walk to look at aspects of learning and teaching in RE, the presentation of the Catholic life of the school, and pupils' behaviour.
- Other documents such as RAISEonline, the development plan, teachers' planning, and learning journals were read alongside the self-evaluation document, and discussed with the principal and RE co-ordinator.

## Information about the school

- St Joseph's is a smaller than average size Catholic primary school, with an additional 28 full-time nursery children. It serves the parish of St Joseph in Goldenhill, Stoke-on-Trent.
- It is part of the Newman Catholic Collegiate formed by one secondary and eight primary academies.
- The school has a higher than average proportion of disadvantaged children.
- Currently 75% of pupils are baptised Catholics.
- 28% of pupils are of ethnic minority heritage.
- The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average while the number with special needs and/or disabilities is below average.
- Attainment on entry is below the national average overall.

## Main Findings

- St Joseph's school judges all aspects of its Catholic life and religious education to be good. This judgement is accurate because it is underpinned by a culture of formal and informal review and self-evaluation.
- In terms of RE, there are formal procedures and processes in place for evaluating teaching and learning. Therefore judgements are accurate and reliable and indicate areas for development, which are addressed in school planning.
- Review and self-evaluation of Catholic life and collective worship are built into the daily life of the school, but formal structures of self-evaluation are less well-developed than in RE. This has been identified by the school as an area for development in order to ensure a strong evidence base for improvement planning.
- The school has a strong and committed leadership at all levels, so has very good capacity for continued development in RE and Catholic life.

## School Self-Evaluation

### Catholic life and Collective Worship

- Rewritten with significant input from pupils, St Joseph's mission statement, '*Learning and Growing Together in Faith and Friendship*,' reflects the core mission of the school and is a constant standard against which to evaluate the quality of its Catholic life.
- Informal review and discussion are integral to Catholic life and collective worship in the school. This leads to new initiatives, like the introduction of RE leaders from Year 6 pupils, and helps to identify new areas for development, such as providing more opportunities for pupils to plan and lead collective worship.
- The principal, RE subject leader and parish priest, who is also link governor for RE, work closely together to develop and evaluate action plans and review related policies to promote Catholic life, and some feedback is collected from pupils and parents. However there is not yet a formal process of evaluation for the quality of Catholic life and collective worship, which would provide a more accurate and reliable basis for improvement planning.
- The school has recognised that its evaluation of Catholic life needs to focus on the outcomes for pupils as well as the nature of provision, and has identified this as an area for development.
- Aspects of the school's Catholic life are reviewed at senior leadership meetings. Areas for development identified are included in the RE development plan targets, and their progress subsequently monitored.
- Academy committee members visit school regularly, attending liturgies, Masses and assemblies, and so are able to informally monitor the quality of collective worship and how the school promotes the spiritual development of its pupils.
- The provision and effectiveness of collective worship is reviewed by the principal and parish priest. Parents and parishioners provide feedback on collective worship in school, and after Mass children are invited to reflect on the gospel message, answering questions in class or completing a simple reflection sheet.

### Governance

- The academy committee members are well-informed about the school and their role in its governance. They receive regular reports from the principal and through their working groups are actively involved in school improvement planning.
- Academy committee members play an active part in the production and review of the school self-evaluation document. Sections to be considered are discussed at meetings where members can express their views and the principal can be challenged and held to account.
- The link governor for RE regularly visits school and liaises with the principal and RE co-ordinator as part of the review process for Catholic life and RE.
- School leaders are committed to developing the quality of leadership at all levels. An induction programme supports new and inexperienced staff and The RE leader attends termly meetings with the Diocesan Education Service to keep up to date with key issues and diocesan initiatives. Both staff and

academy committee members, including the principal, are taking part in various leadership training courses.

- The principal, academy committee, parish priest and senior leaders are all committed to the Catholic nature and mission of the school and set a clear direction and manageable targets for its Catholic life.
- Through review and self-evaluation, they have a good understanding of the school, its place in the local community and its strengths and areas for development. The school therefore has good capacity for continued improvement.

### **Religious Education**

- All aspects of RE are subject to thorough monitoring and evaluation, so the school's judgements are accurate and reliable. Information gained is carefully analysed, shared and used to determine future planning, CPD and school improvement
- Under the leadership of the principal, deputy head and recently appointed RE co-ordinator, RE is placed at the heart of school improvement planning. Induction of the new RE co-ordinator has been prioritised. She has received support from the diocesan adviser and staff training on assessment in RE has been held as part of development planning.
- Judgements on pupil attainment and progress are based on careful analysis of data from regular pupil assessment activities, including baseline assessment and use of the national levels of attainment in RE.
- Pupil progress meetings analyse pupil attainment and progress, identifying ways to improve learning and quickly detecting and responding to any difficulties that may arise.
- Comprehensive systems are in place to check the quality and impact of teaching, including lesson observations, pupil interviews and book trawls. Each is followed up by individual feedback, sharing of good practice and, where appropriate, a whole school response. For example when a book trawl revealed that certain aspects of marking did not reflect the new feedback policy, a staff training session was organised and the issue successfully addressed.
- The RE curriculum is subject to regular review and update. Inspire workshops have been introduced for all classes during which parents work alongside their children on RE activities. Parental response has been very positive and it has enhanced the school's commitment to supporting pupils and their families.
- Pupils' RE work has been moderated alongside work from other schools in the MAC to improve the accuracy of assessment and develop staff subject knowledge.
- Assessment is given a high priority in the RE action plan, which shows year on year strengths and areas for development in RE.
- Academy representatives are kept informed of developments in RE through school observations and reports from the principal and RE co-ordinator.
- Pupil interviews provide evidence regarding their attitudes towards RE and the quality of their learning and understanding.
- Spiritual, moral and vocational education is afforded a high priority within the curriculum, but there has not yet been a specific audit of provision or its impact on pupils.

## Overall effectiveness of the school<sup>1</sup>

- Most pupils enter school with very low attainment in RE, but all groups make good or better progress over time.
- By the end of Key Stage 2 the great majority of pupils are working at or above expected levels, and performance in RE is comparable to that in English and Maths.
- Teaching in RE is good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and lessons are well planned and prepared to consolidate and extend pupils' learning. Children of all abilities are well-supported and provided with work at an appropriate level.
- Assessment techniques to support learning, such as questioning, verbal and written feedback and pupil self-assessment, are effectively incorporated into lesson planning and teaching.
- Pupil attainment and progress are carefully monitored and tracked.
- Children enjoy and respond well to their learning in RE and are able to discuss their faith confidently.
- The RE curriculum is built around the diocesan curriculum strategy, *'Learning and Growing as the People of God.'* This is supported and reinforced by weekly celebration of Mass or catechesis led by the parish priest, and the *'Wednesday Word'* liturgies which follow the liturgical year and are taken home by children to encourage family worship.
- Under the guidance of the parish priest, Years 3 and 4 use the *'Come Follow Me'* catechesis programme as their preparation for the sacraments of Penance and Holy Communion. This programme will be extended throughout Key Stage 2 as preparation for Confirmation. Staff are planning to cross reference the programme with the Key Stage 2 curriculum strategy to explore how best the two can be combined.
- Both staff and pupils of St Joseph's value and respect its strong religious character, which is reflected in positive relationships with families, the parish and within the school itself.
- Pupils are encouraged to play an active part in the life of their parish, and also in the wider Catholic community through links with other Catholic schools, participation in diocesan celebrations and support for local and international charities.
- Prayer and collective worship reflecting the liturgical seasons, Sunday Gospels and the RE curriculum are an important part of the daily life of the school. Pupils take part enthusiastically and with great reverence in school Masses, liturgies, and assemblies.
- In their worship pupils have opportunities for quiet prayer and reflection, and use both formal and informal prayers, singing and reading. The school has recently opened a prayer garden, providing a quiet place for private as well as whole class prayer and contemplation.
- The school's mission and value statements are used to promote gospel values and place the teachings of Jesus at the heart of school life. Pupils' sense of vocation and responsibility towards others is encouraged through assuming roles of responsibility and support within school, and raising money and awareness in support of others around the world.

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<sup>1</sup> As the quality of the school self-evaluation has been affirmed, the judgements in this section of the report conform to those of the school.

- The school council and Year 6 children are strongly committed to campaigning against all forms of bullying, and their work in this area is a strength of the school which has been recognised nationally by the achievement of the Diana Award.

### **Recommendations**

- Develop formal processes for evaluating Catholic life and collective worship, and their impact on pupils
- Carry out an audit of spiritual, moral and vocational development and evaluate its impact on pupils



July 2015

Diocesan Education Service,  
Don Bosco House,  
Coventry Road,  
Coleshill,  
B46 3EA

Dear Parents and Carers

**Section 48 (Diocesan) Inspection of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, 25-26 June 2015**

I am writing this letter to share with you the findings of the diocesan inspection of your children's school. Diocesan inspection now explores in detail the school's own view of itself as expressed in its self-evaluation. For this reason, much of the report is more technical than used to be the case. You are still entitled to have a copy of the full report should you want one and it will be available on the school website or by request from the school office.

St Joseph's is a Catholic school with a strong religious character which shows great support for the partnership between school, family and parish. The gospel values it promotes are reflected in the positive relationships and attitudes within the school. Children contribute fully to school assemblies and prayer services and take an active part in school and parish Masses, showing reverence and respect. They also support the wider Catholic life of the school in attending diocesan Masses and celebrations.

Teaching is good and teachers have good subject knowledge. Lessons are well planned and prepared in order to consolidate and extend pupils' learning. Children of all abilities are well-supported and provided with work at an appropriate level. Children enjoy Religious Education, achieve well and make good progress in their learning. They learn about the Catholic faith and how to put into practice the responsibilities and duties it brings to their daily lives.

The school principal, deputy principal and RE subject leader provide strong leadership for all areas of Catholic life and RE within the school. Together with the parish priest and academy committee they are committed to planning effectively for ongoing school improvement through rigorous self-evaluation. Academy committee members are well-informed about the school and their role in its governance. They receive regular reports from the principal and through their working groups are actively involved in school improvement planning.

In order to help with this process I have recommended that they should now develop formal processes for evaluating the quality and the impact on pupils of the school's Catholic life, and carry out an audit of spiritual, moral and vocational development and evaluate its impact on pupils.

I very much enjoyed spending two days at St Joseph's, working with the staff and children, and would like to thank everyone for their support and warm welcome. The children were friendly and eager to contribute. They spoke confidently about their school and their learning.  
Yours sincerely

Denis Cody  
Diocesan Inspector