

Catholic Schools Inspectorate inspection report for St Joseph's Catholic Primary Academy

URN: 148483

Carried out on behalf of the Right Rev. Marcus Stock, Bishop of Leeds on:

Date: 4th & 5th May 2023

Overall effectiveness

The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school.....

3

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.....

2

Religious education (p.5)

The quality of curriculum religious education.....

3

Collective worship (p.7)

The quality and range of liturgy and prayer provided by the school.....

3

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 leaders of the school, especially the head teacher, are deeply committed to the Catholic life and mission of the whole school community, putting this at the centre of all their decisions and working hard to improve it.
- There is a genuinely warm and caring atmosphere, where all feel welcome, valued and loved.
- Pupils are very well behaved in lessons and during worship. They are equally well behaved in the corridors, on the playground, and at other times when they are not directly supervised.
- Pastoral care and support for pupils and families, offered by experienced and dedicated staff, is especially effective, and is greatly appreciated by those who most need it.

- The school enjoys a flourishing partnership with the local parish community, and works actively with other schools in the Trust, and with the wider diocesan community.

What the school needs to improve:

- Leaders should ensure that marking and feedback policies, and systems in Religious Education, are able to inform teachers' planning, and help pupils to fully understand what progress they are making and what they need to do to improve.
- Leaders should ensure that in religious education lessons there is more use of open-ended learning tasks and teacher questioning, with a focus on developing pupils' full potential and greater independence.
- Leaders should ensure that the existing pupil-led worship policy is applied consistently across the school and build on this by giving pupils a more significant role in evaluating the quality and impact of prayer and liturgy.

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:.....

2

Pupil outcomes

The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

2

Provision

The quality of provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school

2

Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school

2

Catholic life and mission is deeply engrained in the everyday life of St Joseph's. This is the result of the vocation and dedication of the school's leaders, especially the long-serving and well-regarded head teacher. Pupils understand the distinctive Catholic identity of the school. They are proud to be part of the school's community and to participate in the opportunities given to them to celebrate and share their faith. Pupils grow into confident, happy individuals who know God loves them. They demonstrate an understanding of Christian virtues and try to incorporate these into their daily lives. Behaviour is very good throughout the school. Pupils are polite and welcoming. They look after each other and older pupils have taken on special responsibilities to support others as 'House Captains', a position they are voted into by their peers. Pupils know they have a duty to care for those less fortunate than themselves. Pupils regularly support charitable fundraising activities, including a food bank, CAFOD, Christmas Shoe Boxes and The Good Shepherd charity. The school have a very active Mini-Vinnie group and pupils are committed to the diocesan Faith in Action award. Pupils undertake key ministries at the monthly Vigil Mass. They have enjoyed a pilgrimage in York. Parents are invited to attend the weekly parish Mass, attended by every class except the youngest on a rota basis.

The school recently reviewed its mission, 'Living, Learning and Loving with the Lord'. However, most pupils are not able to recall it or express how it impacts on their life. Some older pupils take lead roles within the school's Faith in Action team and Mini-Vinnies. The school has a detailed policy for the teaching of other faiths, and pupils show respect for people who are from other religious traditions. One older child showed great self-confidence by insisting on telling inspectors about her own Orthodox tradition. A range of well-planned and effective opportunities for spiritual and moral development are offered. A recent visit by Franciscan Sisters was much enjoyed by the pupils. The

Relationships and Sexual Health Education curriculum complies with statutory and diocesan requirements but is not on the school's website. The work of the pastoral worker, Catholic Care worker, and the special educational needs and disability leader is exemplary. They have received training in mental health and bereavement awareness. Inspectors were in awe at the story of one pupil's challenging journey through the school and his eventual appointment as head boy.

The school's leaders see Catholic life and mission as their core responsibility. There is a positive engagement with parents and the parish. This is a growing strength, thanks to the drive of all involved, including the parish priest, who can often be seen at the school gates with his dog. His favourite phrase, 'God is good, all the time. All the time God is good', was repeated by pupils in several lessons observed by the inspectors. The school signposts parents to courses on becoming a Catholic and recently three older pupils have asked to be baptised. Parents speak very supportively of the school and its mission. Regular bulletins on the school's website, the Wednesday Word and Facebook feeds keep parents in touch with the faith life and activities of the school. The school works in partnership with the diocese and other schools in the Blessed Peter Snow Catholic Academy Trust in areas such as staff training. All staff are supportive of the school's ethos, although not all regularly participate in those activities which reflect the Catholic life and mission of the school. The induction of new staff is good; they feel welcome and included. Leaders demonstrate a genuine respect for the dignity of all staff and make sure their contributions are valued.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade:.....

3

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.....

3

Leadership

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

2

Pupils enjoy their religious education lessons and the presentation of their work in books is good. Behaviour is always at least good and this helps to ensure that pupils can learn in a calm, focused environment. In all classes they concentrate and apply themselves well to the learning tasks. Most pupils develop secure knowledge, understanding and skills as expected by the *Religious Education Curriculum Directory 2012* and reach standards that are comparable with those achieved in other core subjects. This includes children with special educational needs and those whose circumstances have made them vulnerable. Pupils demonstrate an ability to use religious language and show some signs of developing individuality and creativity. However, most pupils do not achieve as well as they should. There is evidence in pupils' books that where role play, games, collaborative activities, and media sources like videos or classic art are used to enhance the teaching, pupils are more engaged and make better progress. Parents reported that their children talk about their religious education lessons at home and enjoy them.

Teachers are confident in their subject knowledge. They share their enthusiasm and personal faith experiences with pupils. A marking strategy is consistently followed across the school, using a tick system and codes, enabling pupils to be acknowledged for the work they have put in. However, this system does not help pupils to fully understand how well they are doing or what they need to do to improve. It is not clear how assessment or the marking strategy informs teachers' planning. In some lessons the input from the teacher was unnecessarily long. Teachers' questioning, and the learning tasks given are sometimes too closed and limit pupils' progress and independence. In the very youngest classes teachers do not always take advantage of the learning input, by extending the theme into the follow-up provision. More successful practice was observed in a Key Stage 2 lesson, where the teacher asked pupils to consider the implications of a best friend telling you they could fly. In pairs they discussed and recorded their reactions, feelings, emotions, questions, and the

proof they might need. They then considered how the disciples might have reacted to the resurrection and to Jesus revealing himself to them in the upper room. In a younger class children enjoyed planning and presenting a role play about Jesus eating breakfast by the shore of the sea of Galilee. Whilst support staff are extremely dedicated and experienced, the roles they are asked to undertake, to support the learning, are not always productive or varied enough to meet the needs of the pupils.

Leaders and the Local Academy Council ensure that religious education is given equal status with other core subjects in terms of resourcing, timetabling, and professional development. Members of the council's Faith Life Committee have conducted monitoring visits and receive reports from senior leaders on a termly basis. These reports do not always identify the most pressing areas for improvement. The subject leader is passionate about her role. She monitors and evaluates teaching, learning, and standards, and ensures that staff receive quality training. Training in creative approaches to religious education has been undertaken by teachers and many are near the completion of the Catholic Foundation Stones course. She attends Trust network meetings and has attended diocesan training. The curriculum is delivered sequentially, using the 'Way the Truth and the Life' programme. Enrichment activities such as a visit from the Bradford interfaith unit, a visit to the relics of St Bernadette, an Advent art group and residential retreats for the oldest, are built into the school's calendar.

Collective worship

The quality and range of liturgy and prayer provided by the school.

Collective worship key judgement grade:.....

3

Pupil outcomes

How well pupils participate in and respond to the school's collective worship

2

Provision

The quality of collective worship provided by the school

2

Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for collective worship

3

Pupils respond well to the prayer and liturgy opportunities they are given. They participate appropriately in silent reflection during prayer and worship. Singing in several classes and especially the Year 5 choir rehearsal, was lovely to witness. Pupils are aware of different forms of prayer and worship and talk positively about the experiences they are offered. Pupils undertake specific liturgical ministries in Mass on Holy Days, at the monthly parish Mass and at other key liturgical celebrations such as the feast of St Joseph the Worker. Pupils in key stage 2 have led prayers with younger pupils. All but the youngest classes take it in turns to attend the weekly class Mass at church. In class worship younger pupils often take on lead roles, in line with the school's policy. However, the school's policy is not consistently applied at the older end of the school. Pupils undertake roles such as reading from the Ten Ten collective worship resource, recording some daily examen sessions on the school's website, or leading the Stations of the Cross. Pupils know that their faith leads them to pray and that prayer should lead to action.

Prayer is embedded throughout the school's routines. Scripture is included in all prayer and is always seasonally appropriate. A number of staff are particularly committed to their faith and are excellent role models; this is especially the case with the head teacher and his deputy, as well as other members of the senior team and the support staff. The school building is blessed with large open spaces, both inside and outside. There is a prayer garden and an outside classroom, both of which are used for prayer and reflection. There are prayer tables in some corridors, the two halls and all classrooms. These are draped with the relevant liturgical colour for the season. Display around the school reflects and celebrates the distinctive Catholic character of the school. The parish priest is very supportive, working closely with the school to plan the liturgical experiences for the pupils in the coming year. Older pupils have access to the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Parents and parishioners are encouraged to join the school liturgies where possible.

Leaders ensure that resources for worship are of a high quality. Every class has a box of worship resources which include appropriate drapes, statues, candles and a cross or crucifix. Leaders have ensured that most teachers have undertaken training in the facilitation of pupil-led worship and the school has a clear, useful and comprehensive worship policy, but it is not being followed adequately. Pupils, with adult support, are not planning, leading and evaluating prayer and liturgy, to the extent they are capable of and as expected in the policy. Inspectors observed several class worships where the roles undertaken in older classes were the same as those undertaken with confidence in younger classes. A child in a very young class was able to start the prayers by leading her friends in making the sign of the cross, chose items to place on the prayer focus and picked the hymn they would be singing. The independence of older pupils is not being developed further than this systematically. Some planning of prayer and worship is done collaboratively, but this is not frequent enough or recorded efficiently, to enable the consistent sharing of ideas, leading to measurable skills progression and effective evaluation.

Information about the school

Full name of school	ST JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY ACADEMY
School unique reference number (URN)	148483
Full postal address of the school	Grosvenor Road, Huddersfield. HD5 9HU
School phone number	01977 555780
Name of head teacher or principal	Dominic Williams
Chair of governing board	Frances Marsden
School Website	www.stjosephscps.co.uk
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	BLESSED PETER SNOW CATHOLIC ACADEMY TRUST
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy
Age-range of pupils	4-11
Trustees	DIOCESE OF LEEDS
Gender of pupils	MIXED
Date of last denominational inspection	10 th & 11 th November 2016
Previous denominational inspection grade	Good

The inspection team

Mark Brennan

Lead inspector

Madeleine Bannister

Team inspector

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