



DIOCESE OF
SHREWSBURY

DENOMINATIONAL INSPECTION REPORT:

**THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL
AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

School: St Joseph's Catholic Primary School
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Sale
Cheshire
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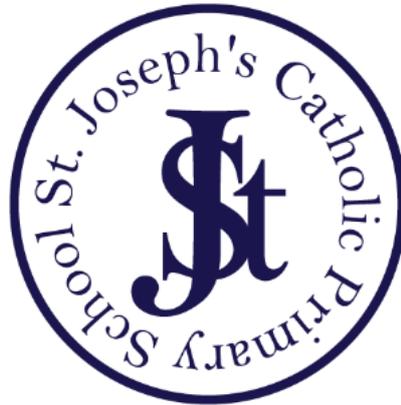
URN: 106348

Headteacher: Mrs E Taylor

Chair of Governors: Mrs D Loftus

Date of Inspection: 14 November 2019

Inspectors: Mr K Toms
Mrs J Ward
Mrs N Kirkman (shadowing)



*“Praying together,
Learning for life,
Caring for all”*

SCHOOL: St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Sale

DATE OF LAST INSPECTION: 10th December 2014

JUDGEMENT FROM PREVIOUS INSPECTION: Outstanding

AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT FROM PREVIOUS INSPECTION

There were no areas for improvement identified during the last inspection.

PROGRESS MADE WITH AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT FROM THE PREVIOUS INSPECTION

Although there were no areas identified for improvement at the last inspection, the school leadership team have continued to identify in the School Development Plan areas they wish to address each year including:

- Continuing to improve assessment strategies in line with the Diocesan Working Party and other local schools
- Coverage for Religious Education in the nursery setting
- Enrichment activities through feasts and festivals in the liturgical year
- Pupil leadership skills in Collective Acts of Worship and responding to The Word
- Incorporating the message of Laudato Si into teaching and the wider life of the school and their whole approach to Faith in Action
- The whole approach to creativity in the Religious Education curriculum
- Completing the Prayer Garden

As a result of their dedicated and focussed support on developing the Catholic Life of the School, St Joseph's continues to be an outstanding school.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS: how effective is the school in providing Catholic Education.

1

This is an outstanding Catholic school.

The above judgement on overall effectiveness is based on all the available evidence following the evaluation of:

CATHOLIC LIFE

1

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

1

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

1

Summary of key findings:

- St Joseph's continues to be an outstanding school because it places its mission statement at the heart of all they do and say, 'Praying together, Learning for Life and Caring for All'.
- The school is ably led by a well-loved Headteacher whose vision, inspiration and love for this community of faith is palpable. All staff, pupils, governors and parents are deeply appreciative and supportive. All clearly work in partnership in striving to strengthen this mission, further enhancing the Catholic Life of the School.
- Pupils make good and outstanding progress and their achievements are well above average. They value their Catholic tradition and are particularly skilled in planning and leading Collective Acts of Worship. They support younger pupils and take their prayer services out to the wider community both in the parish and beyond.
- Religious Education is placed at the heart of all, permeating the whole curriculum and all they do. St Joseph's is truly a joyful and vibrant community with faith at its heart.

What the school needs to do to improve further

St Joseph's has clearly identified what it needs to do to improve further through its very rigorous School Development Plan:

- Continue to enrich the Religious Education of the school by extending creative opportunities.
- Use internal and external moderation to support their well-developed monitoring and tracking procedures.

Information about the Inspection

The Inspection of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School was carried out under the requirements of the Education Act 2005, and in accordance with the Shrewsbury Diocesan Framework and Schedule for Denominational Inspections approved by the Bishop of Shrewsbury. The inspection reviews and evaluates how effective the school is in providing Catholic education. This process begins with the school's own self-evaluation and the inspection schedule follows the criteria set by the National Board of Religious Inspectors and Advisers (NBRIA 2017).

The inspector reviewed in detail the following aspects:

- The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school
- The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school
- How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education
- How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship
- The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school
- How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education, Collective Worship and the Catholic Life of the school

The inspection was carried out by two inspectors and a shadowing inspector over one day:

- Six lessons were observed
- One Key Stage Collective Act of Worship and five prayer gatherings
- Discussions with the Headteacher and the Senior Leadership Team
- Discussions with the Governors and Parish Priest
- Meeting with pupils, including members of the Mini Vinnies and Faith in Action team
- Scrutiny of documents, pupils' books and Class work presentations
- The school website was also used to inform judgements and a comprehensive walk around the school meeting other key members of this faith community

Information about this school

- St Joseph's is a two-form entry Catholic Primary and Nursery School in the centre of Sale
- The site is quite restricted with little space for expansion and no field areas
- Excellent use is made of this restricted site
- The pupil admission number is 60 and there are currently 456 pupils on roll, the majority of whom are baptised Catholic
- The majority of pupils transfer to the local Catholic High Schools
- There is a low percentage of pupils with English as an additional language
- 81% of the teachers are Catholic, with 5 having the CCRS or equivalent
- The Chair of Governors has been in post since September 2017.
- The Headteacher was the former Religious Education Coordinator and appointed to the Headteacher in April 2015.
- The Religious Education Coordinator has been in post since April 2015.

Full report – inspection judgments

CATHOLIC LIFE

The Catholic Life of the school is outstanding

1

The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school	1
The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school	1
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision of the Catholic Life of the school	1

- All the pupils at St Joseph’s show a remarkable understanding and love for their school, fully engaging and participating in the Catholic Life of the School. They see the school’s mission statement of *‘Praying Together, Learning for Life and Caring for All’* as central to all they do, say and pray. They are able to reflect this admirably in the way they ably lead Collective Acts of Worship, respect each other and in the way they interpret it through their commitment and understanding to the principles of *Faith in Action*.
- The pupils’ behaviour, respect for all and reverence in the numerous liturgies the inspectors experienced was never less than outstanding. They expressed a maturity beyond their years.
- They are committed to the Gospel values and the teachings of Jesus as their role model. This informs all their actions and behaviour towards each other. In discussions they fully understand what *Faith in Action* means to them and how this underpins their approach to praying and celebrating together. One pupil commented that “We are trusted and allowed to be independent”.
- All staff are committed and totally focussed on the mission of the school and providing every opportunity for pupils to grow and flourish in their faith journey. The pupils particularly commented on how they enjoyed being a part of this faith community: *“I like that the teachers are professional in lessons but if you are ever upset or worried they help you and they turn into a comforting friend”*.
- The quality of Religious displays around the school are outstanding and truly reflect the centrality of the school’s faith life.
- Although the school is challenged in their available space inside and outside, it is never seen as a handicap but an opportunity. A phased programme for a new prayer garden has become another opportunity for the school community to gather reverently and prayerfully.
- The inspirational personal leadership of the Headteacher is undoubtedly central to this school continuing in its outstanding journey. Her vision and love for the community is palpable and she is held in high regard by all staff, pupils, parents and governors.
- The enthusiastic and extremely dedicated Religious Education Coordinator is highly effective and offers unstinting support to all her colleagues and is to be commended for her hard work in enhancing the Catholic life of the School.
- Pastoral care is seen as fundamental to the mission statement and this care was expressly commented on by the pupils, staff, parents and governors, not only in discussions but in feedback from the questionnaires.
- Staff morale is very high and staff approach the teaching of Religious Education with great enthusiasm. The sound knowledge they displayed is based upon both support in

school and through a very effective programme of Continuing Professional Development.

- Recent tragedies have left the whole community bereft, but it has also reflected the real strength this faith community are able to offer each other.
- The Governors play a very full part in the Catholic Life of the school and the wider parish community, their roles frequently intertwined. They are fully conversant with the School Religious Education Development Plan. They know their school extremely well and plan very effectively to evaluate their effectiveness and continue to take the school forward. They are regularly in school supporting and encouraging all developments.
- Parents are seen as co-partners and integral to the success of St Joseph's as a community of faith.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Religious Education is outstanding.

1

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education	1
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education	1
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education	1

- Almost all pupils make good and outstanding progress and this is reflected not only in the year on year attainments in Religious Education, but in the high standards they display in discussions and in their work books. Pupils with particular needs are well supported by the teaching assistants and they are given appropriate support and challenge to help them develop and achieve in their lessons.
- Pupils are enthusiastic about how their lessons help them to understand their faith and inform the way they think and make decisions about their actions. In discussions they are fully conversant with the principles of how a *Faith in Action* approach is an integral part of Religious Education. They know that their involvement in such things as Mini Vinnies and the support they offer the wider community make a real difference.
- In all the lessons observed, children show very good prior learning, they are very knowledgeable about their work, confidently expressing their opinions and discussing how this could inform their thinking. They rise to the challenges offered to them from an understanding of The Trinity observed in some lessons and the seeking of Justice for All in others. The pupils see that the actions they take in everyday life are an extension of their faith. They enjoy the opportunities to work in the community like Brindley Lodge, Cornerstones and raising awareness of the needs of others and supporting many charities. High on their list is the support for Trafford Little Bundles, Bereft Families and Refugee Families.
- They use the message of Laudato Si to further inform their thinking and Faith in Action principles.
- Teaching is highly effective and in all the lessons observed, teaching was never less than good and often outstanding.
- Teachers make very good use of Assessment for Learning techniques to inform, challenge and extend pupil learning. Monitoring and tracking is of a very high standard and the adoption of the PITCH marking scheme (already in use in other subjects) in Religious Education is helping to provide more challenge and support.
- Teachers speak highly of the support they receive from the Senior Leadership Team and internal training opportunities, as well as the support they receive from Diocesan Courses.
- The high standards achieved by the pupils were also reflected in the scrutiny of pupils' work, where all tasks and challenges were observed. The pride they take in their work was outstanding. The "Floor Books" kept by all classes were an impressive way of recording different aspects of class discussions in Religious Education.
- All Senior Leaders and Governors are skilled in their roles and, together with the visionary leadership of the Headteacher, continue to strive for improvements in the provision for Religious Education at St Joseph's.

- Discussions with Governors and Senior Leaders reflected the depth of commitment and understanding they all have and how the development of *Faith in Action*, The document *Laudato Si* and the school's creative curriculum is strengthening the Religious Education provided by the school.
- The school has a well developed approach to the teaching of RSE and is currently reviewing their provision using the resource *A Journey in Love*.
- Pupil behaviour throughout the inspection was outstanding and a credit to all within this vibrant community.
- The pupils showed an impressive commitment to seeing their faith as a living and prayerful reality. They embraced the opportunities offered to them through their work in the Mini Vinnies, Faith in Action, Caritas and the support they offer The Valley of the Moon Children's Centre in Bolivia.
- The Parish Priest offers very effective pastoral and liturgical support for the school – Mass is celebrated in school each week. The parish community and school community are seen as one. Many of the children from St Joseph's school return as teenagers in a supportive capacity and their leadership skills are commended by the staff of their Secondary School.
- Leaders and Governors fully comply with the Bishops' Conference Requirements and Religious Education is very well resourced to support the high priority given to it. At least 10% is clearly identified in the timetable dedicated to specific Religious Education teaching in all key stages.
- As one parent commented: "*St Joseph's is a family community in which Faith is central to all aspects of school life...the knowledge and love of faith instilled in all the pupils and the extremely close links between home, school and church are exemplary*".

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

Collective Worship is outstanding.

1

How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship	1
The quality of provision for Collective Worship	1
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship	1

- Collective Worship is clearly an outstanding feature of St Joseph's school. It is at the heart of everything they do and commented on by all who are able to share in the liturgical celebrations and prayer life of this vibrant Catholic community.
- The pupils are highly skilled and competent in all aspects of preparing, leading and supporting all opportunities for celebrating the school in prayer and song. The singing experienced during the inspection was outstanding.
- From an early age, pupils are assisted to prepare and lead collective Acts of Worship so that by the time they reach the end of Key Stage 2 they have clearly developed essentials skills in leading their own liturgies. Inspectors were able to observe these skills in both a Key Stage 2 Act of Worship, prayer services in classrooms and the praying of The Angelus together.
- Reverence and respect are at the heart of all these celebrations and pupils are skilled at preparing the main focus with appropriate resources and in a meaningful prayerful way. Singing is of a very high standard and pupils sing joyfully and with deep meaning.
- Acts of Worship demonstrate the same emphasis on a commitment to principles of Faith in Action and how the scriptures (The Good Samaritan in the Key Stage Two celebration) still helps us to live out our faith in a very practical way.
- Parents fully appreciate the opportunities to participate in a variety of liturgical and prayerful settings and the inspectors were also able to experience a short prayer service led by the Headteacher for their own prayer life. Parents are invited to all Masses and celebrations and opportunities such as The Travelling Crib are used to good effect in helping parents participate further in the prayer life of the pupils.
- The Liturgical Year is at the heart of all celebrations and other themed services and class Assemblies and is skilfully woven into the prayer life of the school.
- The inspectors received many comments on the moving prayer services the pupils lead, particularly with the elderly at the local Residential Care Home.
- Traditional prayers and the pupils' own prayers are used effectively through the whole school and the inspectors experienced pupils spontaneously contributing their own prayers.
- St Joseph's puts the opportunities for prayer at the heart of this community. Pupils' Religious literacy is of a very high standard and they are extremely confident and competent in leading and supporting all aspects of celebrations in the Catholic Life of the School.