



St Joseph's Catholic Primary School Stanley

URN: 148412

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of Bishop Stephen Wright, Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle
16–17 October 2024

Summary of key findings

Overall effectiveness

The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school

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

Religious education (p.5)

The quality of curriculum religious education

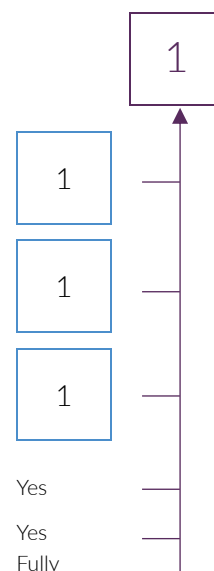
Collective worship (p.7)

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

The school is fully compliant with the general norms for religious education laid down by the Bishops' Conference

The school is fully compliant with any additional requirements of the diocesan bishop

The school has responded to the areas for improvement from the last inspection



Compliance statement

- St Joseph's Catholic Primary School is fully compliant with the general norms of religious education as laid down by the Bishops' Conference.
- St Joseph's Catholic Primary School is fully compliant with all requirements of the Diocesan Bishop.
- St Joseph's Catholic Primary School has responded and met the areas for further development which were identified within the last inspection in 2016.

What the school does well

- A tangible sense of family exists across St Joseph's Catholic Primary School. Pupils thrive; they feel they belong, and they feel safe.
- Pupil attitudes, behaviour for learning and general behaviour in and around school are exceptional and relationships are built upon mutual respect. They are secure in the fact that they are known and cared for by the staff and as a result they flourish.
- A consistent focus on vocabulary acquisition ensures that pupils develop religious literacy from the earliest opportunity.
- The principles of Catholic social teaching are well embedded and pupils are able to make links between their learning and how they are living them out.
- Prayer is central to school life; it enriches pupils and staff to spiritually grow together.

What the school needs to improve

- In Religious Education:
Ensure that teacher feedback challenges all children to deepen their learning.
Support pupils to enable them to understand how they can make further progress in religious education.

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

Pupil outcomes

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

Provision

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

Leadership

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



Pupils at St Joseph's Catholic Primary School flourish in a welcoming and inclusive faith community dedicated to following the teachings and example of Jesus. Pupils know their mission statement well and fully embrace its call to 'work hard, love tenderly, walk humbly, trusting in God'. They are able to say how they live this out in their daily lives and how it shapes their actions. Pupils confidently speak about Catholic social teaching (CST) principles with increasing fluency and older pupils take responsibility for finding ways to respond. They do this through ways such as helping to collect produce for PACT house, raising money for Children in Need, and through Cafod initiatives such as the Big Lent Walk. From their earliest days in school, pupils are able to speak about being precious, they know that they are valued and that they are made in the image and likeness of God. They demonstrate deep respect for adults in school and for each other, following the 'St Joseph's Way' and speaking of St Joseph's as, 'A forgiving school, where it is OK to make mistakes, we just learn from them.' The restorative approaches to behaviour management encourage pupils to take responsibility for their actions and the ethos ambassadors in each class are proactive in encouraging others to follow their excellent lead. Pupils embrace the many leadership roles available to them within school such as Mini Vinnies, CST leaders and ethos ambassadors.

Staff are exemplary role models, show deep commitment to the school and are extremely proud to be a part of St Joseph's community. One member of staff commented that, 'the Catholic life at school is uplifting for all' and another said that, 'I enjoy being part of this happy and holy school.' Parents appreciate the support and nurture that staff give to pupils, saying they feel part of a bigger family since their child came to this school. There is an embedded culture of welcome from everyone, from the minute you walk through the door. The school environment proclaims

the school's Catholic identity; vibrant displays celebrate our Catholic faith showcasing pupils' work and projects the school is working towards. The Catholic relationships, sex and health education programme meets all Diocesan requirements, is carefully planned in consultation with parents and is firmly rooted in Church teaching.

Leaders and governors at St Joseph's see the Catholic life and mission of the school as one of their core responsibilities. They are fully committed witnesses to the gospel and enjoy their work together putting Christ at the centre of school life. The headteacher inspires both pupils and staff with truly enriching formational experiences and has shared a clear vision with all. Leaders fully embrace and actively promote the principle that Catholic schools are at the service of the local church and strong parish links are a real strength of this school. Leaders and governors speak enthusiastically about the parish community which the school is very much a part of and work hard to ensure this partnership flourishes. St Joseph's is highly successful in engaging parents and has a strong and effective social media presence which parents and parishioners appreciate to keep them well informed about school life. Parents are regularly welcomed into school. These highly effective relationships with parents and the local parish community are built up in the early years and continue as pupils progress through school. Leaders ensure the principles of Catholic social teaching are fully embedded such that pupils can clearly make links between what they are learning and how they might independently and pro-actively respond to the call to action.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

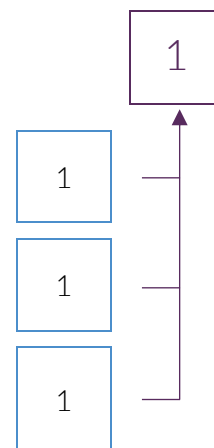
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

Provision

The quality of teaching, learning, and assessment in religious education

Leadership

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



Outcomes in religious education are consistently strong and pupils are developing excellent knowledge, understanding and skills as they progress through school. They speak about their enjoyment of lessons and the variety of creative ways religious education is taught. The 'refresh' element of lessons ensures pupils are helped to know more and remember more of their prior learning. Pupils are religiously articulate relative to their age and capacity thanks to the focus given to learning religious vocabulary. Pupils progressively build their knowledge of the Bible and are able to use scripture to support their learning and to make links to topics they are covering. Some pupils were able to speak confidently and knowledgeably about their learning on other world faiths. Behaviour of pupils both in and beyond the classroom is exceptional and as a consequence their work is of a consistently high standard. They are actively engaged in lessons and contribute thoughtfully to class discussions, sharing their knowledge and how they are living out their religious education in their everyday lives and applying it to their thought processes. For example, one Year 6 pupil commented that although many in their class may have expensive devices and gifts given, these are not the true 'treasures' of their lives.

Teachers at St Joseph's demonstrate deep commitment to religious education and have high expectations which they communicate effectively to pupils. Lessons, therefore, have a purposeful and productive atmosphere, where pupils feel confident to ask questions of their teachers and each other. Teachers at this school give pupils space and time for purposeful reflection in lessons and have a high level of subject knowledge. They use skilful questioning which they adapt for different learners and provide effective scaffolds for learners with special educational needs in order that they are able to work towards the same learning objectives as their peers. The school's focus on vocabulary acquisition means teachers effectively model and continually reinforce religious vocabulary during lessons and this has resulted in pupils being

confident to use this religious vocabulary in their answers and when speaking about their work. Teachers throughout school plan using key resources from the Diocese and other high-quality sources to effectively optimise learning for their pupils. Staff have benefitted from continued professional development on curriculum implementation within Bishop Wilkinson Catholic Education Trust; strategies which they have been able to apply effectively to their religious education lessons. More able learners are not always challenged to deepen their learning and inconsistent feedback means pupils are unsure of how they can further improve.

The headteacher has energised the staff through sharing her vision for religious education at St Joseph's. All leaders and governors show a strong commitment to ensuring that religious education is at the centre of the whole curriculum. They ensure that religious education has full parity with other core curriculum subjects, including its priority for continued professional development for staff, the way in which it is resourced and the number of timetabled hours it is awarded. Leaders have planned to incorporate key retrieval strategies and other curriculum research into the teaching of religious education which ensures it is high quality and constantly developing. They ensure it is imaginatively planned with creative and engaging lessons. The subject leader has a clear vision for the teaching and learning of religious education and is a well appreciated source of knowledge and support for all teachers within school. Her monitoring of the subject leads to clear feedback for staff and therefore clear improvements in teaching. New staff are well supported into this school and are offered a variety of development opportunities.

Collective worship

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

Collective worship key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

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

1

Provision

The quality of collective worship provided by the school

1

Leadership

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

1

1

Collective worship is central to school life at St Joseph's, enriching pupils and staff to spiritually grow. The experiences of prayer and liturgy provided by the school engage pupils deeply and they understand and take part in their ministries with increasing confidence. They demonstrate an excellent understanding of the shape and meaning of the Church's liturgical year and how it is expressed in the prayer life of the school. These times of prayer capture pupils' interest, and they are inspired to respond with reverence and respect. Pupils speak confidently and articulately about the power of prayer and how they pray for people who are sick or less fortunate than themselves, both in their school community and in the wider world. Pupils are confident in preparing and leading prayers, liturgies, and reflections in creative prayer, and show progressive skill in leading and planning. They work well with staff and each other and are excellent role models for younger pupils. Year 4 pupils eloquently explained how they planned their celebration of the word and how it linked to their Catholic social teaching theme. Pupils are beginning to develop their skills when evaluating acts of worship, identifying how they can make further improvements.

Prayer and liturgy are central to life at St Joseph's and pupils are offered many different ways and opportunities to pray, from the daily pattern of prayer to the weekly structure of prayerful gatherings. St Joseph's offers rich and high-quality prayerful experiences incorporating a combination of traditional prayer and more creative times of prayer. Year 5 led a beautiful and moving spontaneous prayer with their peers. Well-chosen scripture passages form the heart of prayer and liturgy, ensuring that all are fully engaged. All staff are invited to pray as part of staff gatherings. They are inspiring role models and expertly lead the younger prayer leaders through the planning and preparation for their class prayer time, reinforcing the key elements and providing the children with options and choices linked to the key theme. Families feel very much included in the prayer life of the school and are regularly invited to celebrations and to take part in prayer and liturgy. Parents say these opportunities are highly valued with several saying how the experiences the school provides have inspired pupils to pray at home and teach members

of their extended family the prayers they have learned. Furthermore, staff support pupils and their families well to participate fully in the liturgy both in school and at the parish Mass.

School leaders including governors place great importance on securing high quality liturgical prayer and worship throughout St Joseph's. Leaders ensure that staff receive well planned and effective induction to deliver prayer and liturgy, which results in good levels of confidence and competence amongst staff. They have a clear vision for developing pupil planning and leadership skills as they progress through the school. This allows pupils to sequentially develop the confidence and understanding needed to flourish and grow from the opportunities provided. The Headteacher is a true faith leader, inspiring the whole school community. Leaders ensure that the provision for prayer is well resourced through careful budget setting and allocated resources. Therefore, high quality prayer experiences which reflect the Catholic traditions and mission of the Church, are engaging and enriching for the whole community. Leaders, including governors, evaluate the impact of prayer and liturgy as part of the strategic self-evaluation cycle. Working in partnership, they monitor the impact of their actions to ensure that prayer is the foundation that underpins the school community.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Joseph's Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	148412
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	8403381
Full postal address of the school	St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Front Street, Stanley, DH9 0NP
School phone number	01207 232624
Headteacher	Mary Urwin
Chair of governors	Beverley Ewart
School Website	stjosephsstanley.bwcet.com
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	Bishop Wilkinson Catholic Education Trust
Phase	Primary
Type of school	Academy
Admissions policy	Non-selective
Age-range of pupils	3-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	September 2016
Previous denominational inspection grade	1

The inspection team

Jane Weatherall
Nicola Noble

Lead Inspector
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