



St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

URN: 105719

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Bishop of Salford

29th February–01 March 2024

Summary of key findings

Overall effectiveness

The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school

2

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

2

Collective worship (p.7)

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

2

The school is fully compliant with the curriculum requirements laid down by the Bishops' Conference

Yes

The school is fully compliant with all requirements of the diocesan bishop

Yes

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

Fully

What the school does well

- Knowledgeable, committed and dedicated leaders are extremely supportive of the mission and faith of the school.
- There is a strong sense of Christ being at the heart of this school.
- Relationships between staff and children are excellent and as a result pupils have a secure understanding that they are cared for and are valued.
- Pupils demonstrate love, justice, compassion, forgiveness and wisdom and their behaviour is excellent.
- St Joseph's workers demonstrate independent planning and leadership of collective worship.
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What the school needs to improve

- To reflect upon and embed the mission statement to ensure that it is a clear and inspiring expression of the individual mission of St Joseph's.
- Deepen the provision of highly engaging learning activities by giving pupils more creative opportunities to present their work showing individuality.
- To ensure staff develop confidence and a deeper understanding of a variety of ways to pray and worship.

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

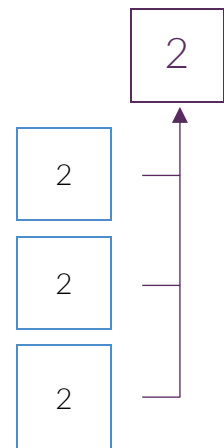
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

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



The pupils of St Joseph's recognise their distinctive Catholic identity and are very proud of their Catholicity. They demonstrate high levels of respect and compassion for all they meet. Many show a willingness to contributing to the faith life of others in their roles as 'St Joseph's Workers' and 'The Green Team'. They strive the live out the teaching of Jesus Christ. Behaviour throughout the school, both within and outside of lessons is exemplary as the children respond to the high expectations of all the staff. The care that pupils and staff have for their most vulnerable pupils and families is the cornerstone of the school. This has created a culture where pupils are sensitive to the needs and feelings of others. Pupils show respect for themselves each other and the environment. The Green Team were proud of the school's efforts to reduce carbon emissions and spoke articulately about their newly installed solar panels, LED lighting and lowered ceilings to reduce energy bills. They have great ideas about caring for our common home, which they share with their school friends and families.

Staff understanding has improved and visiting other schools is an important part of the induction for new teachers. Shared moderation with other schools has developed the practice at St Joseph's and there is now a more collaborative approach with other Catholic Federation of Oldham Schools (CFOS). Pupils actively take part in the mission of the school. Pupils have a secure understanding of Catholic social teaching and are involved in fund raising, awareness raising of important issues, including homeless appeals, hospice appeals, St Joseph's penny, Caritas and Ukraine appeals. The school has developed a Green Team to fulfil Pope Francis' message in Laudato Si to care for our common home. The St Joseph's Workers are key to the mission of the school and support the most vulnerable in their community as well as helping to promote and deliver Caritas in Action. In a recent poverty proofing school audit, when asked

what would happen if a child was on their own, the children said 'that would never happen at St Joseph's'. The mission statement has at its heart 'we are stars' based on Isaiah 40: 26, this is displayed in the hall and every classroom. The idea of being a star, shining with God's goodness is in all areas of school and provides the basis for St Joseph's Mission, developing this further to ensure all children know and live the mission statement will result in a greater impact on school life.

Parents are overwhelming positive about the Catholic life and mission of the school. One parent described it as 'one big family where everyone belongs'. Pupils feel safe, protected, respected and known and are thriving here due to the nurturing relationships with staff who 'always listen' to them. There is a tangible culture of welcome for all with high quality pastoral care with effective links with the local authority, local networks, parish and other services. There are strong, mutually supportive relationships, between home, parish and school. The leadership team regularly engage with them and identify areas for improvement working on them together. The school has a pastoral leader, who works closely with vulnerable pupils and families. This role is integral to the support the school offers families. She is a friendly, welcoming person who they can speak to and who will support and signpost families. Leaders of the school have the gospel values at the heart of all the decisions taken for the good of the children at St Joseph's. The staff team, driven by the dedicated head teacher and the religious education lead are united in their ambition to place the school in a strong position for future improvements. Staff and governors, play an essential part of the parish being ministers of the liturgy and ministers of the Eucharist. The head teacher is well known and well loved by the entire community and offers support for all in their faith formation.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

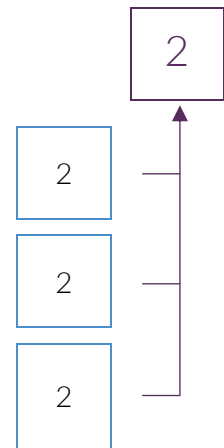
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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



Religious education has a high status at St Joseph's. Right from their start in Nursery, pupils achieve and progress well in religious education, developing secure knowledge for the next stage of learning. There are systems in place that check children's knowledge at the start of a unit and at the end. Pupils respond well to challenges set for them and are eager learners. They unanimously enjoy their religious education learning experiences at St Joseph's, with pupils saying 'It is my favourite subject' and 'I like that we use scripture and can think deeply'. Overall the outcomes, provision and leadership in religious education are good. Pupils acquire religious literacy skills quickly and by the time they reach Key Stage 2 they are thoughtful and reflective about the issues they have been studying. There are examples of good work in the pupil's books. Pupils' understanding and use of religious vocabulary is a strength of St Joseph's; they are able to articulate challenging meaning and build upon their knowledge of key vocabulary. When discussing St Paul's letters in Year 6 one pupil linked their learning back to prior learning on slavery. Children in Reception discussed how to help people who are hungry, giving a thoughtful range of answers and the children in Nursery could talk about how God's love helps them to grow.

Teachers are secure in their subject knowledge of the religion curriculum. A classroom culture has been created which allows pupils to flourish in their learning giving them the confidence to feel comfortable in all their responses. The introduction of the 'St Joseph's Questions' has had a positive impact which is evident in the way pupils are confident to answer big questions to extend their thinking and learning. Where the best practice was seen, pupils were allowed the time and space to reflect and consider their responses to skilled questioning which resulted in deeper learning. Opportunities to make links in order to enhance pupil's social and moral development through the religious education curriculum are used well. In some lessons

observed and through book scrutiny, it is apparent that pupils can sometimes be restricted due to an over reliance on printed sheets which curtails their independence; liberating these pupils through more open tasks will maximise their learning.

The curriculum at St Joseph's reflects the requirements of the *Religious Education Curriculum Directory*. The lesson structure is consistent throughout the school and the routine of a focus on prior learning, current learning and future learning allows for regular recapping and links to be made. The leadership of religious education is good with staff consistently voicing how supportive and knowledgeable the subject lead is. She routinely engages with the diocese and is aspirational for the outcomes of all pupils. She is effectively supported by the head teacher to drive the progress of the subject forward, which includes the involvement of the well-informed governors. There is parity with other core subjects and the standard of work in books is good overall. The school's self-evaluation is very thorough and well informed from regular monitoring, analysis and self-challenge. This results in strategic action being taken when needed.

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

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

2

2

St Joseph's enjoys an atmosphere of calm and respect, conducive to prayer and reflection. Dedicated staff provide opportunities for pupils to enter into the presence of God. Through daily prayer and worship. Pupils respond well to experiences of prayer and liturgy at St Joseph's. In the whole school gathering, they confidently reflected in silence, respectfully joined in with prayer and sang with enthusiasm. Prayer and liturgy is appropriate to pupil age and capacity and they understand a rich variety of ways of praying that are part of the Catholic tradition. The St Joseph worker's role is thriving and they are proud of the contribution they make to the prayer life of the school. They are able to plan liturgy carefully drawing on experience and knowledge of scripture allowing opportunities for all children to think deeply and make liturgical links. Pupils are able to recognise and talk about the ways in which prayer and liturgy influence the wider life of the school. For example, pupils spoke with enthusiasm about going to the prayer room and the Emmaus Centre and how that allows them to be 'closer to God'. Through these experiences, pupils understand how to reflect upon their immersion in prayer and liturgy and turn this into action.

Prayer is routinely planned and is a central part of everyday, forming routine gatherings of pupils, staff and the community. Seasonally appropriate scripture is mapped across the Liturgical year and opportunities to enhance home prayer life are facilitated, for example, pupils take prayer bags home during Lent. Each week, whole school, collective worship ends with a mission for the week, which is a tangible way that children can make a difference in their own lives and in the lives of others. There is clear potential for pupils and staff to further enhance the quality of class prayer and liturgy. The best prayer experiences seen allowed the pupils to encounter God's presence through responding to

scripture, simple stillness and reflection in a prayerful atmosphere. In early years the sense of reverence is palpable, the children are comfortable to gather and talk about their faith and share prayer and worship with their friends. The school makes good use of the indoor and outdoor spaces for prayer, including the newly developed prayer room and all classes have a dedicated prayer space. The school provides regular opportunities for pupils to visit St Joseph's Church for celebrations. Staff, parents and governors commented on the strong links with the parish and it was described it as 'another arm of the school'.

School policy on prayer and liturgy is fit for purpose, accessible and useful to staff resulting in some meaningful opportunities across school. Further experiences which create a sense of awe and wonder, where mood and atmosphere are considered would further enhance the spiritual experience for the pupils. Staff and pupils value the time to pray together and prayer is seen as a central part of all school celebrations, for example prayer forms the start of every staff briefing. Parents feel very much part of the prayer life of the school through invitations to gatherings, such as, Stations of the Cross as well as the sacramental programme. Likewise, governors are committed to ensuring St Joseph's is a worshipping community and they provide a further link to the parish. Leaders recognise the need for an increased profile of pupil leadership, including chaplaincy, and they have already worked hard on making the faith journey more explicit. Regular opportunities for professional development are offered to all staff for liturgical formation from the Diocese and the Catholic Federation of Oldham Schools.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Joseph's RC Junior, Infant and Nursery School
School unique reference number (URN)	105719
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	3533359
Full postal address of the school	St Joseph's RC Junior, Infant and Nursery School, Oldham Road, Shaw, Oldham, OL2 8SZ
School phone number	01706847218
Headteacher	Garry Needle
Chair of Governors	Michael Pemberton
School Website	www.st-josephs.oldham.sch.uk/
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	N/A
Phase	Primary
Type of school	Voluntary Aided School
Admissions policy	N/A
Age-range of pupils	3-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	4 th December 2018
Previous denominational inspection grade	Requires Improvement

The inspection team

Jane Myerscough
Clare Campbell

Lead
Team

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