

St Joseph's RC Primary School

Front Street, Stanley, Co Durham, DH9 0NP

School Unique Reference Number: **114245**

Inspection dates: 20 – 21 September 2016

Lead inspector: Miss Maria Elliott

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Catholic Life:		Outstanding	1
Collective Worship:		Outstanding	1
Religious Education:		Good	2

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

St Joseph's RC Primary School is an outstanding Catholic school because:

- St Joseph's is a vibrant, colourful and welcoming school where the Catholic mission is extensively displayed throughout the school. There is a true sense of family at every level and the school motto, 'Together we make a special journey', is a living and breathing intrinsic part of the school.
- The Catholic Life of the school is outstanding because the Catholic mission and ethos are given the highest priority and shared by senior leaders, staff and governors alike.
- The quality of Collective Worship is outstanding because prayer is at the heart of the school and forms the rhythm of each day.
- The quality of Religious Education is good because pupils enjoy Religious Education, can explain its value and are keen to do well leading to good progress in most lessons. The areas for improvement from the last inspection have all been addressed.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

- This is an average sized primary school in Stanley County Durham, serving the parishes of St Joseph's Stanley and St Teresa's Annfield Plain.
- A very large majority of pupils are baptised Roman Catholic.
- The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- A very small minority of pupils are from minority ethnic groups.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is in line with national average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium government funding is lower than the national average.
- The school provides a very well attended breakfast club for pupils.
- The school presently holds the International School Award.

WHAT DOES THE SCHOOL NEED TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- Improve the quality of Collective Worship by:
 - Providing more opportunities for all pupils to be involved in preparing and leading Collective Worship independently, at age appropriate levels with the support of the newly formed Youth Mission Team group.

- Improve the quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education by:
 - Further strengthening subject knowledge for all staff.
 - Ensuring that assessment is used accurately and consistently across the school.
 - Ensuring all staff further develop their understanding of the expectations required in relation to progress and attainment.

CATHOLIC LIFE

THE QUALITY OF THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

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- 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 leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school.

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The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school is outstanding.

- The pupils have a deep sense of belonging to the school family of St Joseph's and this sense of family is nurtured in the children from their earliest days in school.
- The pupils, through their involvement in the school council, Mini Vinnies and the recently formed Youth Mission Team, are central to shaping the mission and ethos of St Joseph's. A member of the school Youth Mission Team saw her role as making the spiritual life of the school better; as she said, 'it is the heart and soul of our school.'
- The pupils speak with great enthusiasm about the many ways they promote St Joseph's ethos both within the school and the wider community and how this helps them to be a better person. They have a deep understanding of their roles and responsibilities within the school and parish family and relish the opportunity to meet these demands. The children, in partnership with parishioners, seize many opportunities to live out their faith such as growing vegetables to sell in order to raise money for the Save the Children Syria Crisis Appeal and CAFOD.
- The pupils' behaviour is exemplary; they are polite and courteous. They treat everyone with respect and know that each person is made in the image of God and loved by him, so they strive to follow this example.
- They have a deep sense of justice and are keenly aware of the needs of others both within their local community and beyond Stanley.
- The pupils are very well supported throughout school by a range of pastoral opportunities provided by very caring and deeply committed staff. All staff play their part and work as a very effective team, and everyone is valued for their contribution.
- The pupils are extremely proud of their own religious identity and beliefs and have a strong sense of personal worth. The Youth Mission Team group's desire is to inspire other pupils and schools to develop their spiritual life. They were extremely proud of the lapel crosses they wore as a sign of their role following their recent commissioning service.
- The pupils deeply value and respect the Catholic traditions of the school and its links with the parish and the diocese.

The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school is outstanding.

- The school mission statement is a clear and inspiring expression of the educational mission of the Church. It is understood and lived out by all and at the heart of all the school offers.
- Excellent relationships were evident at all levels and all staff have a deep sense of being an integral part of the school family; as a result they are all fully committed to the implementation of the school mission statement.
- The learning environment is vibrant and colourful, where extensive displays reflect the mission and identity as a Catholic school. There are a number of cosy prayer spaces which allow the pupils the opportunity for personal prayer time.
- St Joseph's is a school that is extremely committed to Catholic traditions and ethos.
- The highest level of support is offered to the pupils through effective policies and procedures, along with an explicit commitment to the most vulnerable. Through effective pastoral support pupils, staff and parents are able to access help and advice when needed, this is appreciated by families.
- Pastoral programmes, PSHE and RSE are planned and refer explicitly to Catholic teachings and principles.
- School expectations are clearly and consistently communicated by staff and governors resulting in the high standards of moral and ethical behaviour.
- St Joseph's behaviour policy is rooted in Gospel values, it embodies the need for justice and is supported by weekly Statements To Live By.

How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school is outstanding.

- Leaders and managers are passionately committed to the mission of the Church. They have a very strong sense of the mission of the Church and the school's role in expressing it. They are extremely conscientious in their delivery, providing a strong sense of spiritual purpose, with a focus on ensuring the fullest personal development of all pupils.
- The promotion of authentic Catholic ethos is seen as a fundamental role of the leadership team and is shared by the whole community who demonstrate great pride in their school.
- The Religious Education coordinator is a driving force within the school and is considered to be a highly effective role model by all stakeholders.
- The school's self-evaluation is a coherent reflection of planned monitoring, analysis and self-challenge which leads to a clearly focused plan for further improvement.
- The very effective work of the link governor for Religious Education and very knowledgeable chair of governors embrace Catholic Life and are very supportive of all the school is offering its pupils.
- The school engages extremely well with parents and carers to the great benefit of all its pupils and families. Parents have a very good understanding of the school's mission and are very supportive of it. They are very proud of their school.
- Governors make a significant contribution to the Catholic Life of the school, they are passionate about the school's mission and their role in ensuring it has the highest priority. They are actively involved in the evaluation of the Catholic Life of the school and provide

challenge and support where necessary.

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- Governors discharge their statutory and canonical duties extremely well. They work very effectively with the coordinator and headteacher and are committed to upholding the strong caring ethos that exists.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

THE QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

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

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How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship is outstanding.

- All pupils at St Joseph's respond very respectfully and thoughtfully when participating in Collective Worship in small and larger gatherings. Pupils act with reverence, reflect in silence and join in community prayers appropriately and with confidence.
- Pupils are encouraged to create an atmosphere for reflection and prayer, described by one pupil as, 'a time to think and speak to God'.
- Dependent upon their age, pupils take on responsibility to plan and prepare Collective Worship, under the guidance of the class teacher. They have a well-developed understanding of what constitutes worship and as one year six pupil stated, 'I like being responsible and choosing what to do in each part, especially choosing the music'.
- From an early age the pupils have a strong sense of what worship is about. On their first full day as a whole class the reception children were being nurtured in the early stages of their involvement in worship.
- Pupils have a very good understanding of religious seasons and feasts and the different demands this makes on our worship. They demonstrate respect for, and interest in, other faiths.
- Adults are effective role models for the pupils and contribute significantly to the spiritual and moral development of the pupils.
- Pupils participate actively in the parish sacramental preparation programme following diocesan guidelines.

The quality of provision for Collective Worship is outstanding.

- There is a clear policy for Collective Worship with a well-structured programme of liturgies, worship, masses and assemblies which are thoughtfully resourced. Staff support the pupils to enable them to plan, prepare and lead worship with regard for their developmental age.
- Prayer is central to the life of the school. Staff ensure that Collective Worship opportunities include a variety of prayer styles and that pupils are engaged in them. The pupils talked with enthusiasm about the variety of different opportunities offered to them for prayer.
- Parents speak very positively about the opportunities offered to them to support worship at home. The Wednesday Word, which is sent home weekly, is used to act as a bridge between school worship and the readings at Sunday Mass.

- Themes used for Collective Worship are linked to the school values, topical events, Statements to Live By and the liturgical year.
- Acts of Collective Worship are well-resourced and fully inclusive. Class liturgy boxes contain resources, artefacts and readings which are available for pupils and adults to use. All classes have a spiritual focal point with well thought out resources which provide pupils with stimuli for thought and reflection.
- The school's high quality provision ensures that the spiritual needs of the pupils are met extremely well.
- Collective Worship is reflective and fully inclusive, enabling all pupils to take part.

How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship is outstanding.

- The headteacher and senior leadership team display expert knowledge of how to plan and deliver high quality experiences of Collective Worship. They have a very clear understanding of the Church's liturgical year and use this to very good effect in leading the school in its knowledge and understanding of Catholic rites and symbols.
- Leaders have a very visible presence in school worship and a clear understanding of the strengths and areas for further development through a variety of monitoring activities. Leaders seek the views of pupils, parents and staff and these responses are highly valued and lead to further actions.
- Leaders support staff to continually develop their skills in leading Collective Worship and in helping pupils to become more independent in their leadership.
- The school's life of prayer and worship is given high priority by the headteacher, staff and governors and is seen as the very heart and soul of the school. They constantly seek to develop it through the school and parish community. Parents value this and speak very highly of the impact on pupils.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

THE QUALITY OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

2

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

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How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education is good.

- Pupils say they enjoy Religious Education, they have positive attitudes and older pupils speak enthusiastically about their learning, explaining how it helps them to understand how to live their lives. They are keen to do well and generally work at a good pace in lessons.
- Behaviour throughout the school is excellent enabling good learning to take place.
- Pupils develop and apply a range of skills well, and as they reach upper key stage two are able to interpret sources, reflect and evaluate, engage with religious ideas and integrate them into their lives. Whilst exploring the theme of unconditional love; using the scripture passage of the prodigal son, the Father, the elder son, and the younger were accused of 'failing to love unconditionally' and Year 6 pupils had to take these points of view, as well as lawyers and jury and plead their case.
- Outcomes for pupils are good. Most pupils are making good progress in Religious Education within lessons and over time. Pupils start from low starting points but by the end of key stage two standards are broadly in line with the diocesan average. Evidence from book scrutiny and lesson observations generally show a good variety and range of learning activities where progress is evident.
- As a result of the very effective support staff, pupils with special educational needs and disabilities are well supported and achieve well according to their age and ability.

The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education is good.

- The quality of teaching is good with some outstanding practice therefore most pupils and groups of pupils make good progress over time.
- Most teachers have a clear understanding of the values of Religious Education; they use the 'Come and See' materials with confidence to plan interesting and imaginative lessons and use a good range of high quality resources. Some teachers use very effective questioning to extend pupils' learning.
- Teachers manage their time well and deploy support staff effectively, as a result good learning is secured in lessons.
- Teachers mark work regularly and the quality of feedback given is positive and supportive; as a result of sharing 'I Can' statements pupils understand how well they are doing and what their next step of learning is.

- The school has an effective tracking system to monitor pupils' progress and achievement in Religious Education. Staff are becoming more confident and accurate in their assessments however there are inconsistencies in practice across the school.

How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education is outstanding.

- The headteacher is enthusiastic and highly effective in promoting the profile of Religious Education amongst staff.
- The subject leader of Religious Education is very committed, knowledgeable, and enthusiastic. She is very well informed about current developments and has high expectations which she communicates effectively with staff. She is well respected by her colleagues and seen as a source of support and guidance for all staff.
- Leaders ensure that the school's vision is shared through staff meetings, briefings, and staff attendance at diocesan training events. As a result Religious Education has a high profile in the school and is well planned to meet the needs of all the pupils.
- The strong leadership and commitment of the headteacher and Religious Education coordinator have had a significant impact on raising standards, consequently, teaching and learning is improving.
- Through a range of systematic and rigorous monitoring activities, including lesson observation, work and planning scrutiny, leaders have an accurate picture of achievement as well as a clear picture of the school's strengths and areas for development and have systematic plans in place to bring about further improvements.
- The Religious Education curriculum is rich and varied providing a range of interesting activities and often imaginative teaching. This fosters engagement and enables all pupils to make good progress in their learning. The curriculum meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference and contributes very effectively to the pupils' spiritual and moral development.
- Governors are highly visible around the school and are routinely involved in a range of monitoring and evaluation activities. They are extremely supportive and confident in their ability to challenge. They have great confidence in the headteacher and the subject leader of Religious Education and are extremely proud of the school.

SUMMARY OF INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

HOW EFFECTIVE THE SCHOOL IS IN PROVIDING CATHOLIC EDUCATION:

1

CATHOLIC LIFE:

1

The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school.

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The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school.

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How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school.

1

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP:

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 managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship.

1

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION:

2

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education.

2

The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education.

2

How well leaders and managers monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education.

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SCHOOL DETAILS

School name	St Joseph's RC Primary School
Unique reference number	114245
Local authority	Durham
This Inspection Report is produced for the Rt. Reverend Seamus Cunningham the Bishop of Hexham and Newcastle Diocese under canon 806 of Canon Law. For voluntary aided schools it also fulfils the responsibility the Governing Body has to inspect the school under s48 of the Education Act 2005.	
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