



# Archdiocese of Birmingham

## Section 48 Inspection Report

### ST JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Rough Hay Road, Darlaston, WS10 8HN

Inspection dates:

30-31 March 2022

Lead Inspector:

Mark Hinton

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#### OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS:

**Good**

Catholic Life:

Outstanding

Religious Education:

Good

Collective Worship:

Good

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*Overall effectiveness at previous inspection:*

*Inadequate*

#### SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

This is a Good Catholic school because:

- Leaders' relentless ambition for the Catholic Life of the school has led to exceptionally high standards.
- Teachers deliver good quality Religious Education lessons due to effective support from leaders.
- Leaders have ensured Collective Worship has been methodically and continuously improved, and as a result, pupils are engaged in and inspired by the provision.
- There is a solid and effective partnership with the parish priest, parish and wider cluster of local parishes. This results in creative opportunities for staff, pupils and families to come together for religious formation, sacramental preparation and staff training.

It is not yet Outstanding because:

- Not all lessons provide opportunities for pupils to be actively involved in their learning in various ways.
- Pupils' confidence and skills for preparing and leading their own acts of Collective Worship are not yet developed as much as they could be.
- Monitoring and evaluation of Religious Education and Collective Worship need to be reported more strategically to governors.

**FULL REPORT****What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Give pupils more opportunities to be actively involved in lessons by providing more collaborative, child-led and interactive learning experiences.
- Provide pupils with more opportunities to improve their skills and confidence for organising and leading their own acts of Collective Worship.
- Improve the reporting to governors of monitoring and evaluation findings so that leaders and governors can rapidly implement and monitor further strategic improvement, particularly in Religious Education and Collective Worship.

**THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL**

| <b>The quality of the Catholic Life of the school</b>                                                         | <b>Outstanding</b> |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|
| The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school                     | Outstanding        |
| The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school                                                  | Outstanding        |
| How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision of the Catholic Life of the school | Outstanding        |

**CL1 The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school****CL2 The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school**

- Pupils have an exceptionally strong, practical understanding of the school's mission statement, 'Guided by Jesus, learning together, striving for excellence', because the headteacher, supported by the deputy headteacher together with other leaders and the entire staff, has determinedly and purposefully placed the mission at the very heart of the school. As a result, even the youngest pupils can confidently explain how they live out the mission in their school life.
- The school has remarkably improved the quality of Catholic Life since its last Section 48 inspection. Inspired and driven by the dedicated headteacher, this rapid progress has been achieved through rigorous monitoring and evaluation and a culture of continuous improvement. The school rightly identifies that it now needs to widen further pupils' involvement in the evaluation of Catholic Life.
- Pupils' behaviour is a strength of St Joseph's that the entire community is justifiably proud of. Pupils are kind towards each other and adults. They show good manners and are polite and welcoming. Pupils can explain that their behaviour is influenced by the school's mission and the teachings of Christ. The headteacher has set the very highest expectations of behaviour. She is well supported by other leaders and staff who set a positive example for the pupils. Parents and carers who spoke with the inspection team said they valued the school's high standards and expectations of behaviour.
- Pupils' leadership skills have been well developed to confidently take the lead in many aspects of the school's Catholic Life. An excellent example of this is the very effective group of Mini Vinnies who are active, influential, well known and widely

respected by other pupils throughout the school. The Mini Vinnies are made up of pupils who have formally applied for the role from Years 3 to 6, have independently led various fundraising and charitable outreach projects, most recently organising whole school participation in CAFOD's 'Walk for Hunger' fundraising, a collection of emergency goods for refugees from Ukraine, a harvest collection of food for The Good Shepherd Mission in Wolverhampton and a cake sale for Macmillan to name a few. Pupils' confident leadership of aspects of Catholic Life has been achieved through the relentless determination of leaders to systematically improve the quality of Catholic Life by ensuring pupils are at the heart of it.

- Pupils demonstrate a very positive response to the school's Catholic Life. They are very proud of their commitment to helping others, and they can explain how this is not only through the support of charitable events but also by being kind, forgiving and helpful. This is because Catholic Life is at the heart of day to day life in the school, and leaders and governors strategically plan for it. Parents and carers are equally supportive of the Catholic Life and generously support the school's charitable fundraising, attend Masses and assemblies in school and in the parish at weekends. Parents of all faiths who spoke to the inspection team unanimously said they felt the Catholic Life of the school had a positive impact on their child's spiritual and moral development.
- The entire school community enjoys a very positive relationship with the school chaplain, who is also the parish priest. He is a much valued, regular visitor to the school who plays an active part in its Catholic Life. The parish priest is well known and well respected by staff, pupils and parents. Pupils say he 'brings them closer to God'. There is an innovative approach to parish life within the Newman Cluster of parishes. The school works closely with its partner schools and parishes to nurture Catholic Life and broader parish community life.
- Pastoral support is a crucial strength of St Joseph's and is much valued. The headteacher is determined that every child who attends St Joseph's should know that they are loved by their school and loved by Jesus. This deeply heartfelt vision drives the pastoral support provided by the school. Pastoral support is exceptional because it is personalised to each individual. The school looks after its pupils and their families, taking care of their immediate needs in some cases, supporting others through Catholic mental health and wellbeing programmes and providing bereavement support through counsellors who have been trained in delivering the 'Rainbows' Catholic programme for pupils who have experienced grief and loss.
- The culture of pastoral support is equally extended to staff who feel valued and well looked after. Staff who spoke to the inspection team said that leaders are actively mindful of their work-life balance, care for their emotional and mental well-being, and value their contributions. As a result, staff feel well supported to meet the high standards set by leaders and are motivated to go the extra mile.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral and ethical development is outstanding because it is ever-present in the school's daily life. The school environment contains numerous beautiful Catholic artefacts, displays and images that remind pupils of how to live in a Christ-like way. Outside, a beautiful and well-used prayer garden is dedicated to Our Lady.
- The school has methodically and deeply embedded the Catholic Schools Pupil Profile, and pupils demonstrate a deep and mature understanding of the values they focus on each half term. Pupils show a strong sense of right and wrong, influenced by what they learn in class, through regular assemblies and the consistent Catholic Life provision that the school has nurtured and developed. The school has identified the need to embed Catholic social teaching in even more curriculum areas by asking subject leaders to adapt their whole school curriculum plans.

- The school has implemented a thorough and carefully sequenced programme for relationships, sex, and health education (RSHE) through consultation with parents. As a result of the discerning way the programme was chosen and implemented, pupils enjoy their learning and feel secure and confident with its content.
- The culture of vocation is tangible at the school. Assemblies encourage everyone to be the person Jesus wants them to be, and the school has worked with the diocesan vocations office to arrange talks about vocations for pupils. The sense of vocation runs deep amongst the pupils due to the regular opportunities to learn, think and pray about vocations in the broadest sense.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher have inspired the entire school staff who embrace its Catholic Life. Regular staff retreats, high-quality training, the importance of staff prayer and the positive role models of the headteacher and deputy headteacher have motivated others and helped to create a happy, respectful, and dedicated staff community. Staff are very supportive and help with sacramental preparation in the parish, attend parish events and masses and invest time in their own formation. This high level of commitment of staff to Catholic Life leads to a positive impact on the provision for pupils.

### **CL3 How well leaders and governors promote, monitor, and evaluate the provision of the Catholic Life of the school**

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher, supported by other leaders, are exceptionally committed to the school's Catholic Life. This has been the driver of rapid improvement since the school's last inspection. This deep commitment has been thoughtfully and systematically embedded in the Catholic Life of the school in recent years to the point that it stands out for its effectiveness.
- Catholic Life is monitored accurately, and its evaluation leads to continuous improvement. Thoughtful and systematic monitoring and evaluation have incrementally improved the provision to the high standards now being achieved.
- Searching self-evaluation lies at the heart of the ongoing improvement of Catholic Life. Leaders and governors drive this. The Catholic Life link governor takes a very active strategic role and works closely and effectively with the school. There is a well-established culture of constantly reflecting and evaluating to improve continuously.
- Leaders and governors are explicit about the additional demands of working at the school and are discerning in their appointments. Staff induction is well planned and rigorous. Every year the whole staff spend training days reaffirming the Catholic Life of the school and discussing how it can be upheld and improved even more. As a result, all staff, including new starters, have a very well-informed understanding of how to contribute to the school's Catholic life positively.
- The school regularly asks parents and carers for their views about the school. Parents and carers are very positive about the Catholic Life of the school and the contribution it makes to their child's development. Parents who spoke to the inspection team were particularly positive about the school's strong connections with the parish and the quality of pastoral care at the school.
- The governing body makes a positive contribution to the Catholic Life of the school through its strategic monitoring and challenge. The link governor regularly visits the school to work alongside leaders and experience the provision first-hand. This is then reported to the governors at meetings. Governors are supportive. They recognise the immense amount of progress the school has made, and they are keen to continue this momentum through their strategic challenge and support.
- The school promotes the archbishop's vision relating to the school's Catholic Life.

**RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

| <b>The quality of Religious Education</b>                                                           | <b>Good</b> |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education                             | Good        |
| The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education                             | Good        |
| How well leaders and governors promote, monitor, and evaluate the provision for Religious Education | Good        |

**RE1 How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education****RE2 The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education**

- Pupils typically start in Nursery and Reception with a low baseline knowledge of key religious facts. They are well supported in their learning and make good progress so that by the end of Reception, most pupils' attainment is in line with age-related expectations. This good progress continues throughout Key Stages 1 and 2. By the end of Year 6, the vast majority of pupils meet age-related expectations, with a small minority going on to exceed them.
- The school has carefully focused on improving progress and attainment for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), for whom English is an additional language (EAL) and disadvantaged pupils. Current attainment data shows that this work has a positive impact, and gaps in attainment have closed considerably in recent years and this year. The school is not complacent and recognises there is still more to do to improve the achievement and progress of these significant groups of pupils.
- Pupils have good religious knowledge and understanding due to good teaching throughout the school. Older pupils can explain how Bible stories help inform their attitudes and behaviour, and some are starting to be evaluative about this. Younger pupils know and remember many Bible stories and are beginning to discover the religious messages they contain.
- Pupils in all classes enjoy Religious Education lessons and participate with enthusiasm. Sometimes there is too much 'teacher talk', and pupils do not have enough opportunities to make their own oral contributions to the lesson.
- Pupils' behaviour in Religious Education lessons is good. They are usually engaged by their lessons and want to do well. Pupils' verbal contributions are typically thoughtful and accurate, and the school is aware of the need to provide more opportunities for pupils to contribute to discussions.
- The quality of pupils' written work is of a high standard. Teachers' high expectations and the value pupils attach to their work lead to neat, careful work in Religious Education. Pupils' work is thoughtful and detailed and demonstrates their good understanding.
- Teachers' planning is usually rooted in pupils' assessment outcomes, and as a result, most lessons provide suitable challenges and support for most pupils. Sometimes teachers plan work that is not challenging enough for all pupils, and when this happens, not all pupils achieve their full potential in the lesson.

- Teachers' subject knowledge is strong. This is a result of high-quality support provided by the Religious Education subject leadership team. Teachers feel confident in their subject knowledge and appreciate the 'planning surgeries' provided. Systematic development of teachers' subject knowledge has helped the school improve the provision for Religious Education.
- The school recognises that teachers now need the same level of support in developing a more comprehensive range of teaching and learning strategies in Religious Education and has already provided expert training in this area, which will take time to embed. There are not enough opportunities for pupils to contribute to lessons, discuss their ideas and work collaboratively.
- Teachers extend pupils' learning using 'gap tasks' after each lesson which are effective because they are embedded throughout the school and well understood by pupils. Pupils evaluate their knowledge and understanding at the beginning and end of units of work.
- Lessons are usually well-paced, and there is very strong, detailed coverage of the Religious Education programme of study. Teachers now need to even out the balance between adult-led and child-led learning in lessons.
- Teachers' questioning is a strength of the Religious Education provision and has significantly improved due to high-quality training and development. Pupils' written work shows deep thought and positive response to challenges when teachers ask well thought, age-appropriate questions.
- The school has invested in high-quality resources for Religious Education, and teachers effectively use these. As a result, pupils are confident in using Bibles from an early age. Pupils in the Early Years enjoy using high-quality resources, such as wooden figures of Bible characters, to help them retell Bible stories. Almost all lessons use these high-quality resources to help pupils know and remember more. Teaching assistants make a positive contribution to classes and provide effective support to individuals and groups throughout the school. Their subject knowledge is strong, which helps them effectively contribute to pupils' learning.
- Teachers' expectations of pupils' work and behaviour in lessons are high, which is reflected in the large amounts of good quality work in pupils' books. Pupils' work is usually neat, careful and detailed. The school has made significant progress in this area. Pupils concentrate and listen attentively in lessons. They are enthusiastic about Religious Education, and they enjoy their lessons.
- Teachers provide feedback in line with the school's policy and provide verbal feedback on a one to one basis in class. Teachers pay close attention to pupils' work, and their feedback is helpful. In the Early Years, pupils' books show evidence of regular adult engagement with pupils to help capture and extend the religious learning of the very youngest pupils.
- Pupils are motivated by high expectations, and they are proud of their work. They are very careful with their work, and they engage positively with classwork and the gap tasks set for them. This is supported by the positive culture in Religious Education lessons where pupils are inspired to 'do their best work for God'.

### **RE3 How well leaders and governors promote, monitor, and evaluate the provision for Religious Education**

- Religious Education meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales and the additional requirements of the Archbishop of Birmingham.
- Leaders and governors ensure that at least 10% of curriculum time is dedicated to Religious Education across no fewer than two sessions per week.

- Governors ensure that Religious Education is at least comparable to other core subjects in terms of resourcing, staffing, and status.
- The monitoring and evaluation of Religious Education are good. Book scrutiny, lesson observations and one to one support sessions for teachers are embedded. The link governor comes to school to look at books and visit lessons alongside leaders in a strategic role.
- Self-evaluation and data analysis are strengths of the school, and these are drivers of continuous improvement in Religious Education. Self-evaluation is accurate and detailed and results from careful monitoring and collaborative discussions between members of the subject leadership team. This very effective work now needs to be reported to governors more strategically.
- The Religious Education subject leadership team effectively supports teachers' subject knowledge and planning. The team has helped teachers improve the provision for Religious Education to its current good level. There now needs to be a focus on creativity and interactivity in teaching and learning to continue the strong trend of improvement.
- Leaders and governors ensure Religious Education is planned to meet the needs of pupils, and this is reflected in the improved rates of progress and improved attainment for all pupils and significant groups of pupils. Leaders recognise that a broader range of teaching and learning approaches is needed to continue this rate of progress.

## COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

| <b>The quality of Collective Worship</b>                                                           | <b>Good</b> |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship                      | Good        |
| The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school                                           | Good        |
| How well leaders and governors promote, monitor, and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship | Good        |

### **CW1 How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship**

### **CW2 The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school**

- Worship and prayer are central features of every day at St Joseph's. In a whole school assembly led by the headteacher, the pupils were reverent, respectful and engaged by the content of the assembly, which was a reflection on the Parable of the Prodigal Son. The pupils prayed together in whole school prayer and privately in quiet prayer. A beautiful prayer display and engaging use of religious art, listening to music, and the opportunity to sing a hymn together, made for a joyous celebration that pupils told inspectors was typical of their Collective Worship experience at the school. This enthusiastic level of participation is because leaders have ensured and assured consistently high-quality acts of collective worship are embedded in the day to day life of the school.

- Opportunities for pupils to plan, organise and deliver their acts of Collective Worship are not yet fully embedded, and the school has rightly identified this as an area to develop further. Staff are enthusiastic and keen to support pupils in organising their own acts of prayer and are becoming more skilled in helping them do this. Pupils are starting to develop their confidence in this area, and some of the older pupils have improved their skills and confidence to a good level.
- A wide range of opportunities for prayer are provided in whole school Collective Worship, class-based Collective Worship, reflection time during the day, at Mass and during class prayers. The Marian prayer garden in the playground provides a peaceful and beautiful focal point for prayer and is used by staff, pupils and parents. A lunchtime Rosary club is well attended during May and October and much loved by pupils. These opportunities ensure pupils enjoy a rich prayer life, and pupils say they enjoy the chance to 'talk to Jesus' every day.
- Pupils have a good understanding of the liturgical year because of its prominence throughout the school. Upon entering the school building, the liturgical season is abundantly explicit through colours, displays, music and scripture. Timetables for prayer and collective worship are deeply rooted in the liturgical year.
- Prayer and liturgy positively impact pupils' spiritual and moral development. Gospel assemblies challenge pupils to think deeply about the example of Christ and how to apply it to their own lives. Prayer opportunities provide pupils with time to ask for God's help and blessings to follow that example. Pupils particularly enjoy the range of hymns they learn and sing together and make connections between the hymns and the teachings of Christ. One child said, 'when we sing, we pray another way.'
- Leaders and staff carefully and thoughtfully plan Collective Worship. It is strategically led and uses a wide range of resources to make it interesting, uplifting and engaging. Music and hymns are well planned for. As a result, pupils enjoy the provision and consider it to be 'time with Jesus'.
- Collective Worship is given high priority, and all staff set a very positive example to pupils. It is well planned and organised and is widely understood to be an essential part of every day, whether at a parish, whole school or individual class level. Artefacts and displays in the hall and the meticulously well-kept prayer altars in each classroom provide spaces conducive to reflection and meditation for acts of worship.
- Staff have a good understanding of the liturgical year, seasons & feasts as a result of the ongoing training and high-quality support they receive from leaders. The liturgical year provides the basis for the many and varied acts of Collective Worship throughout the year, both in school and the parish – such as the very popular May Procession.
- The school once again welcomes parents, carers, and parishioners to acts of worship in the school and parish now that the restrictions linked to the Covid-19 pandemic have been lifted. Parents, carers, parishioners and governors appreciate the opportunity to be fully involved in the worshipping community of the school.

### **CW3 How well leaders and governors promote, monitor, and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship**

- Leaders have a good knowledge and understanding of how to plan and deliver engaging acts of Collective Worship that enable pupils and adults in school to reflect, pray, listen to, and engage with the scriptures. Leaders' ongoing monitoring and evaluation of prayer and liturgy has helped the school progress significantly to the current good standard.

- Leaders' knowledge of the liturgical year is robust and well informed. Collective Worship is always thoughtfully and accurately matched to the liturgical season, and leaders have excellent religious knowledge. They share their substantial knowledge and expertise with other staff to ensure all Collective Worship is of a good standard. Leaders plan all aspects of collective worship around the liturgical year, and as a result, pupils develop their familiarity with and understanding of the rhythms of the Church's year.
- Great care is taken to ensure prayer and liturgy are accessible to all pupils. Particular arrangements are made for the whole school Collective Worship and more individual, age-specific classroom encounters. Music and hymns are thoughtfully selected for different age groups, making singing in worship enjoyable and popular amongst pupils.
- Leaders model high standards of practice to the entire community. They take the time to work with staff to train, coach, model and support the delivery of Collective Worship. As a result, worship has improved significantly at the school.
- Leaders are committed to supporting pupils to lead their acts of Collective Worship at a deeper level and recognise this is an important area to develop further. This is reflected in the school's current action plan for Collective Worship.
- All staff are provided with high quality, regular professional development and formation opportunities in relation to Collective Worship. Staff appreciate the school's investment in their ongoing development and recognise how it helps them continually improve the Collective Worship provision at the school.
- The school's monitoring and evaluation of Collective Worship is effective and has helped the school improve. The reporting of findings now needs to be more strategically implemented.
- Leaders at St Joseph's ensure that the school participates in diocesan collective worship initiatives. The school is fully compliant with the requirements of the diocesan bishop in this area.

**SCHOOL DETAILS**

|                                                                                                                       |                                                                                          |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Unique reference number                                                                                               | 104235                                                                                   |
| Local authority                                                                                                       | Walsall                                                                                  |
| <i>This inspection was carried out under Canon 806 of Canon Law and under Section 48 of the Education Act (2005).</i> |                                                                                          |
| Type of school                                                                                                        | Primary                                                                                  |
| School category                                                                                                       | Voluntary Aided                                                                          |
| Age range                                                                                                             | 3-11                                                                                     |
| Gender of pupils                                                                                                      | Mixed                                                                                    |
| Number of pupils on roll                                                                                              | 227                                                                                      |
| Appropriate authority                                                                                                 | The governing body                                                                       |
| Chair                                                                                                                 | Richard Dalton                                                                           |
| Headteacher                                                                                                           | Kathleen Hinton                                                                          |
| Telephone number                                                                                                      | 0121 568 6496                                                                            |
| Website address                                                                                                       | <a href="http://www.st-josephs.walsall.sch.uk">www.st-josephs.walsall.sch.uk</a>         |
| Email address                                                                                                         | <a href="mailto:postbox@st-josephs.walsall.sch.uk">postbox@st-josephs.walsall.sch.uk</a> |
| Date of previous inspection                                                                                           | November 2017                                                                            |

**INFORMATION ABOUT THIS SCHOOL**

- St Joseph's is a smaller than average primary school serving the parish of St Joseph's in Darlaston.
- The percentage of Catholic pupils is currently 28%.
- The percentage of disadvantaged pupils is above the national average.
- The percentage of SEND pupils is above the national average.
- The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic origins is above the national average.
- The percentage of pupils with EAL is above the national average.
- Attainment on entry is below average.
- Since the last inspection, a new headteacher, deputy headteacher and Religious Education subject leadership team have been appointed.

**INFORMATION ABOUT THIS INSPECTION**

- Two Diocesan Inspectors carried out the inspection: Mark Hinton and Christine Finnegan.
- The focus of the inspection was on the impact, quality, and leadership of the school's provision of Catholic Life, Religious Education and Collective Worship.
- The inspectors observed teaching across 7 Religious Education lessons to evaluate the quality of teaching, learning, and assessment quality. All of these lesson observations were conducted jointly with senior leaders.
- The inspectors completed work scrutiny and held discussions with pupils to evaluate their understanding of Catholic Life, the impact of Religious Education teaching on their learning over time, and their collective worship experience.
- Meetings were held with the chair of governors, the Catholic Life link governor, the headteacher, the Religious Education subject leadership team and the parish priest. Inspectors also spoke with parents and carers about their views.

- The inspectors attended a whole school assembly, class Collective Worship and undertook a learning walk to look at aspects of learning and teaching in Religious Education, the presentation of the Catholic Life of the school and pupils' behaviour.
- The inspectors reviewed a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation, data about pupils' attainment and progress, Analyse School Performance (ASP) data, the school development plan, the Religious Education, Catholic Life and Collective Worship action plan, whole-school planning and individual class 'floor books'.