



# Archdiocese of Birmingham

## Section 48 Inspection Report

### ST JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC ACADEMY

Part of The Newman Catholic Collegiate  
Mobberley Road, Goldenhill, Stoke-on-Trent, ST6 5RN

Inspection dates: 23-24 September 2021  
Lead Inspector: Ben McArdle

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**OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS:** **Good**

Catholic Life: Good

Religious Education: Good

Collective Worship: Good

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*Overall effectiveness at previous inspection:* *Good*

### SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

This is a Good Catholic school because:

- The headteacher has a clear vision for the Catholic Life of the school, which is shared effectively with all stakeholders. Consequently, everyone is enabled to contribute to the school's radiant ethos.
- Attainment in Religious Education is at least good for all pupils and shows continuing signs of improvement.
- High expectations and routines surrounding prayer and liturgy have embedded a deep level of reverence and respect amongst pupils.
- Governors and directors have an excellent knowledge of the school, its strengths, and areas for development. They work effectively with the headteacher to plan improvements.

It is not yet Outstanding because:

- Pupils' leadership of Catholic Life and Collective Worship is very limited.
- Monitoring activities relating to Catholic Life, Religious Education and Collective Worship are not always evaluated in a way that informs improvement planning.
- The new RE leadership team needs time to establish itself and to impact the school's developmental work.

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

- Increase the capacity for pupil leadership for Catholic Life and Collective Worship and afford them more opportunities to lead in these areas.
- Ensure that all monitoring activities are evaluated in a way that informs current and future improvement plans.
- Train, support and monitor the effectiveness of the new RE leadership team, so that it is enabled to make a significant contribution to school improvement.

**CATHOLIC LIFE**

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

**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 know the mission statement and can recall it with ease. As a result, pupils are clear in their knowledge that St Joseph's Academy is unmistakably a Catholic community. Most older pupils articulate a secure understanding of the mission statement's meaning with great enthusiasm, though younger pupils are not yet confident in doing this.
- Pupils' evaluation of the Catholic Life of the school is developing. Catholic Life pupil leaders speak with zeal about the opportunities they are afforded to monitor and evaluate the prayer areas located around the site. Furthermore, the school seeks pupils' views on some of its initiatives, such as the work done about vocations as part of the 'Me and My Future' week. Pupils would appreciate more opportunities to provide feedback about the school's provision, as they don't feel that their views are always heard.
- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Because of deeply embedded routines and high expectations, there is an overwhelming sense of community, which results in confident and happy children. Children at St Joseph's love their school.
- Currently, pupils' leadership of Catholic Life is limited. A very small number of Catholic Life pupil leaders are appointed from Year 6, who write prayers for the school community. Beyond this, their role is underdeveloped. Leaders should develop the role, to include more pupils and expand its impact across the school community. The current Catholic Life leaders are eager to be involved in growing the capacity of the team and to be involved in succession planning for it.
- Pupils are involved in a range of activities relating to the Catholic Life of the school. Pupils are aware of the reasons why charitable outreach is important at St Joseph's and can link this back to the school's mission statement. Consequently, they are

knowledgeable regarding the distinctive Catholic nature of the school's outreach work.

- There is a range of chaplaincy activities offered by the school, which are well received by pupils. Adults almost exclusively lead these activities, and as such pupils do not feel that they play any significant part in their leadership. Chaplaincy could be enhanced by harnessing the children's enthusiasm and empowering them as leaders.
- The level of pastoral care provided by the school for its pupils is outstanding. As a result of various strategies, including the Rainbows programme, and a sense of co-responsibility between all members of staff, pupils excel in their physical, emotional, and spiritual growth.
- Pupils' understanding of vocation is primarily developed through an explicit focus as part of the 'Me and My Future' week. This is an exciting initiative, involving parental and parishioner engagement, to which the children respond enthusiastically. Consequently, most pupils think about vocation in terms of a future job and about what jobs God might be calling them to do. There is evidence of older pupils beginning to reflect on the type of person that God is calling them to be, which must now be embedded with all pupils at an age-appropriate level. As part of this development, leaders need to determine how secure staff's understanding of vocation is.
- There are good links with the parish in terms of pupils' sacramental preparation. The parish values the pastoral support it provides to the Church's mission. The school works hard to foster the relationship between school, home and parish and recognises the need to sustain this.
- The parish priest is steadfast in his belief that the teachings of Jesus Christ impact the lives of pupils at this school, which is demonstrated in the way they can talk about the personal challenge the Gospel sets them and why it is important for them to respond.
- Staff are committed to the school's Catholic Life and all desire to contribute towards its enhancement. Leaders, including governors and directors of the multi-academy company (MAC) recognise the need, and have planned for, regular opportunities to develop the formation of staff. They view this as a vital component in empowering staff to support pupils in their faith journeys.
- There are high quality relationships between all colleagues and pupils. These are underpinned by a shared understanding of community and of the importance of prayer to the life of the school.
- St Joseph's expresses itself physically as a Catholic school. Displays and prayer corners identify liturgically relevant themes and foci. These are consistent throughout the school.
- The standard of behaviour demonstrated by the staff is exemplary. They are excellent role models who consistently exhibit the highest standards to pupils who, in turn, aspire towards their high standards. At all times, staff are living witnesses of the school's mission.
- The school, together with the MAC, is at the beginning of its journey to explicitly express the Church's teaching on its commitment to the poor and to our common home throughout its entire curriculum. Whilst pupils are already aware of why Catholic social teaching is important, this is usually developed through prayer and liturgy, and is yet to be embedded within the taught curriculum, beyond Religious Education.
- Pupils' spiritual and moral development occurs primarily through Religious Education and prayer and liturgy. Such opportunities are carefully planned and executed beautifully, resulting in highly engaged young people.

- School leaders are aware of the need to create opportunities for retreats and pilgrimages to further enhance their current provision of spiritual and moral development.
- Staff speak in nothing but the highest terms of the headteacher. They value the high level of support received from her and her genuine commitment to their pastoral care. All staff feel valued and are consequently well-motivated to aspire towards realising the headteacher's vision for the school.
- Relationships, sex & health Education is taught firmly within the teachings of the Catholic Church.

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

- Leaders and governors have a deep understanding of the school and its needs. Thanks to the work of a deeply committed team of people who provide regular and insightful support and challenge. They have a clear strategic vision for how they want the school to excel in providing high quality, distinctively Catholic education.
- Excellent lines of communication between all levels of leadership ensure that priority is given to enhancing the school's Catholic Life and that it remains a primary focus of their work; this is valued by the senior leadership team.
- The school plans its monitoring and evaluation of Catholic Life on an annual basis. Monitoring activities are usually designed to focus on both school and MAC priorities.
- There is a lack of consistency in the impact of monitoring and self-evaluation. With a new RE leadership team in post, it is vital that all monitoring activities result in a crisp evaluation of the community's needs. Evaluations should subsequently inform strategic improvement plans which are, in turn, monitored for impact and effectiveness.
- Directors have rightfully identified the need to closely support and monitor the new RE leadership team. Provision of mentoring is planned to support and develop these roles and will contribute towards nurturing these new leaders to realise the aspirations of the school and MAC.
- Leaders plan for the induction of new staff well. An informative induction pack, coupled with mentoring, ensures that new staff are clear on the headteacher's vision for the school. Because of this, new staff feel welcomed into the community very quickly.
- Regular professional development of staff is provided by the school and the MAC. Leaders are passionate in their desire for Catholic Life to remain a priority for school development and, as such, ensure training establishes a shared vision of its priority across all staff.
- Most parents speak well of leaders' efforts to inform them of developments in Catholic Life. The school has recently redesigned its newsletter to help highlight key information. The newsletter also advertises Mass times and other significant events occurring within the parish. The development of 'inspire workshops' for parents has been both well-received and successful in helping to engagement parents in this aspect of the school's work.
- St Joseph's benefits enormously from the work of an extremely knowledgeable, passionate, and dedicated chair of governors, who also acts as link governor for Catholic Life, Religious Education and Collective Worship. Her unwavering commitment to the school ensures that the whole community is kept abreast of developments, enabling leaders and governors to monitor them and accurately identify further areas for improvement.

- Governors and directors discharge their canonical and statutory duties effectively.

## 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**

- Children love Religious Education at St Joseph's. They are enthusiastic and passionate when talking about what they learn, and most can establish clear links between what they learn in lessons and its relevance to their lives.
- Pupils are guided by their teachers to reflect on what they have learnt in lessons in a way that encourages them to think theologically and ethically. This is frequently achieved by way of class discussion and as the final level of the challenge posed to pupils in lessons. Because of this approach, some pupils do not always get the opportunity to reflect on what they have learnt in lessons, and some struggle to articulate their thoughts adequately.
- Pupils make at least good progress in Religious Education during their time at St Joseph's. Some pupils, particularly the more able, would benefit from making progress more quickly in lessons, so that they are enabled to achieve the more challenging learning outcomes.
- Most groups of pupils make at least good progress. Pupils who speak English as an additional language make progress in Religious Education that is in line with other subjects. Pupils with special educational needs and disabilities make significantly more progress in Religious Education than in other core subjects.
- Pupils' engagement in lessons is very good. They are keen to learn but are not always afforded the opportunity to engage actively in their learning in a timely manner. At times, pupils are exposed to lengthy periods of teacher-talk which restricts their opportunity to make rapid progress.
- Attainment is at least good in all phases of the school. Recent data shows that improvement has been made which has seen a decrease in the percentage of children working below diocesan expectations.
- Because of the high standards and expectations set by classroom teachers and other adults, the quality of work in pupils' books is consistently good. As a result, pupils are proud of their work and treat Religious Education as *the* core subject of the school.
- Pupils' work demonstrates a good coverage of the diocesan curriculum and of the national age-related standards for Religious Education. Consequently, they develop knowledge and skills in line with the bishops' expectations.
- There is a high use of worksheets that are stuck into pupils' books. At times, this prevents pupils from sufficiently developing their written responses and limits opportunities for them to be truly independent learners.

- Teachers place a strong focus on religious literacy. Staff prioritise the accurate use of technical vocabulary as part and parcel of their everyday teaching. As a result, pupils are confident in their use of religious language and can use it accurately to talk about difficult concepts, in an age-appropriate way, such as the concepts of reward and eternal life.
- Planning is detailed and facilitates teaching that is at least good. When teaching is outstanding, it is because teachers plan activities that are well-matched to pupils' need and capture their enthusiasm, whilst enabling them to make rapid and sustained progress.
- Teachers consistently use teacher and self-assessment to assess pupils' progress against the curriculum by using criteria that has been adapted into pupil-friendly language from the diocesan strategy. However, it is not always clear how teachers make their assessments: tasks issued to children do not always match the assessment criteria. Teachers should ensure that pupils are always enabled to demonstrate their ability against the learning outcomes of the diocesan strategy.
- A wider range of creative learning activities in Religious Education, including more collaborative work, would vary the pupils' experience in the classroom and provide more ways for them to demonstrate their achievements.
- All teachers are confident in their subject knowledge and use it expertly in their teaching.
- The teaching of Religious Education is good. Teachers manage time and deploy other adults well to ensure that pupils remain on task throughout lessons and curious about their learning.
- Questioning is always planned although there is an over-reliance of the 'hands up' technique, which limits the number of children participating in class discussions. At times teachers do not fully utilise pupils' answers to develop their understanding or to correct misconceptions.
- Teachers have high expectations for their pupils, who aspire towards meeting them. Consequently, pupils enjoy Religious Education.
- Feedback is generally provided in line with school policy and focusses on a mixture of posing reflective questions and questions to extending pupils' knowledge. However, this is not consistent across all teachers. Priority needs to be given in developing a consistent implementation of the feedback policy throughout the school.
- Teachers routinely use praise and reward in Religious Education lessons to motivate pupils.

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

- As a result of the close working relationship between leaders, governors and directors, Religious Education at St Joseph's is fully compliant with requirements of the Bishops' Conference of England & Wales.
- Frequent monitoring of class teachers' timetables demonstrate that pupils spend no less than 10% of their curriculum time on Religious Education.
- Religious Education is given parity with other core subjects, due to the commitment of leaders and governors.
- Where attainment in Religious Education is lower than expected, leaders identify the reasons for it and report these to governors. The new RE leadership team needs to ensure that the areas for development identified by the previous subject leader are fully addressed in a robust and secure manner.

- Leaders need to ensure that monitoring activities are followed-up by evaluation and action which facilitate continuous development, in line with school and MAC improvement plans.
- Directors of the MAC have good plans in place to support the new RE leadership team, seeking support from elsewhere in the company, with the education service as well as with the headteacher.
- Leaders and governors ensure Religious Education is planned to meet the needs of pupils. The headteacher has a clear understanding of the strengths and areas for development of Religious Education teaching.

## 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**

- Pupils act with exceptional reverence and respect during prayer and liturgy. This is because of established routine, high expectations and strong leadership leading from the front, which is supported by all staff.
- Prayer and liturgy enable good opportunities for pupils' spiritual and moral development. Assemblies and other instances of prayer challenge pupils to make a difference to their own lives, and pupils relish the chance to think about this.
- All pupils experience an established diet of prayer. They are clear on its centrality to school life and are confident in expressing its relevance to themselves and their families.
- Long-term planning using diocesan resources ensures that worship is also liturgically accurate and well-matched to the liturgical calendar and local needs.
- Whilst there is some variety to styles of prayer, and variety in resources, there is a need for these to be further developed so that pupils have more opportunity to engage in voluntary acts of worship and spontaneous prayer. The parish priest has worked with Year 6 on meditation techniques in the recent past, which has laid a good foundation for this development to continue to build upon.
- Pupils have a good understanding of the liturgical year and appreciate that all acts of worship are carefully planned to be relevant to the Church's cycle of seasons and feasts. Pupils can explain why certain artefacts and prayers are used at particular times, though are heavily guided by their teachers in doing so. Pupils need to become more independent in articulating their age-appropriate understanding of why they pray in particular ways and with certain artefacts at specific times of the year.

- Pupils' leadership of prayer and liturgy is variable across the school though, overall, opportunities are limited. When pupils are enabled to lead worship, they enjoy doing so, though it is still very often the case that it remains tightly controlled by teachers. The school has begun to take action to address this, though the need is ongoing.
- Leaders have been successful in engaging parents in the prayer life of the school, which has been very well received, particularly over the course of the pandemic. The school is rightfully seeking ways to sustain and further increase the high levels of engagement.

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

- Leaders plan quality prayer which challenges pupils to think about their own lives and the choices they make.
- The headteacher models good practice to her staff. For example, prayer in assemblies is always linked to the liturgical year, involves interaction with pupils and is supported by reference to the school's mission statement. Consequently, pupils have a clear understanding of the purpose of prayer.
- Pupils would benefit from school leaders' determination to find further ways to make the Church's seasons and feasts accessible in a contemporary context. For example, the recent use of contemporary music styles used during remote prayer services could be brought into school prayer services and assemblies.
- The promotion of pupil leadership is acknowledged by leaders at all levels as a priority area for development. Further appropriate professional development for staff has been identified by the headteacher as the essential for facilitating this. Governors are acutely aware of the importance of formation opportunities for staff when securing high quality provision of prayer in school.
- The link governor ensures that prayer and liturgy are included in governors' quality assurance procedures and that it is discussed in reports back to the full governing body. This enables them to monitor progress against school and MAC developments, offering effective support and challenge wherever needed.

**SCHOOL DETAILS**

Unique reference number	140148
Local authority	Stoke-on-Trent
<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	Academy
Age range	2-11 (including pre-school)
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on roll	213
Appropriate authority	The board of directors
Chair	Gillian Meller
Headteacher	Laura Hamilton
Telephone number	01782 235393
Website address	<a href="http://stjosephscatholicacademy.co.uk">http://stjosephscatholicacademy.co.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:stjoseph@sjnewman.co.uk">stjoseph@sjnewman.co.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	25-26 June 2015

**INFORMATION ABOUT THIS SCHOOL**

- St Joseph's Catholic Academy is an averaged-sized primary school situated in the parish of St Joseph's, Goldenhill.
- The percentage of Catholic pupils is currently 49.8%
- 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 below the national average.
- The percentage of pupils with EAL is in line with the national average.
- Attainment on entry is below average.
- Since the last inspection a new headteacher has been appointed and the previous Religious Education subject leader has been promoted to headship in another local Catholic school. Subsequently, the governors changed the leadership model so that it is shared between three people: one for each of Catholic Life, Religious Education and Collective Worship.

**INFORMATION ABOUT THIS INSPECTION**

- The inspection was carried out by two Diocesan Inspectors: Ben McArdle & Melanie Elliott.
- 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 nine Religious Education lessons to evaluate the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Some of these lesson observations were conducted jointly with the headteacher.
- The inspectors completed a 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 experience of Collective Worship.

- Meetings were held with the chair of governors, the chair of the board of directors, the accounting officer, the headteacher, the RE subject leaders, pupil Catholic Life leaders and parents. A telephone conversation took place between the lead inspector and the parish priest.
- The inspectors attended both whole school and phase assemblies, two classroom-based acts of worship and undertook learning walks 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 RE action plan, teachers' planning, and Catholic Life journals.