



DIOCESE OF **Arundel and Brighton**

DENOMINATIONAL (S48) INSPECTION REPORT

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

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School Unique Reference Number: 125204

<b>Headteacher:</b>	Miss Carolyn Scrutton
<b>Chair of Governors:</b>	Ms Catherine Blackburn
<b>Lead Inspector:</b>	Mr Stephen Beck
<b>Associate Inspector:</b>	Mr Peter Ward
<b>Inspection date:</b>	04 June 2019

	Previous Inspection:
<b>Overall Effectiveness</b>	1
	This inspection:
<b>Catholic Life:</b>	1
<b>Collective Worship:</b>	1
<b>Religious Education:</b>	1

## SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

St Joseph's is an Outstanding Catholic school because:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Headteacher is an excellent role model and is well supported by the governing body and leadership team. As a result of their collegiate efforts and commitment, the school is a beacon of Catholic education.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The school provides its community with high quality experiences of liturgy to support their individual spiritual journeys by making worship as accessible, enjoyable and inclusive as possible.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• From Early Years pupils learn to understand the nature of prayer, the character of a prayer focus and have an ever growing knowledge of the life of Jesus. This continues as pupils move through the school and sees them fully engaged in their learning, with ability to listen and challenge one another thoughtfully, manifesting a significant level of intellectual argument and religious literacy.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• It is a school that constantly strives to be even better and since its last inspection all have continued to build on the school's strengths whilst recognising and working on areas identified for development. This reflects a 'could do even better' philosophy that marks out a strong capacity for ongoing improvement.</li></ul>

## **FULL REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

The school is a smaller than average size primary school with 182 pupils currently on roll, operating in a well utilised restrictive Victorian building in the centre of Dorking. It is situated in the Epsom deanery and is maintained by Surrey local authority. 73% of pupils are baptised Catholics and this proportion has risen over recent years. The principal parish which the school serves is St Joseph's, Dorking.

The proportion of pupils eligible for Pupil Premium funding at 8% is lower than the national average.

The proportion of pupils with Special Educational Needs at 10% is lower than the national average although 4 pupils have EHCP's.

The majority of pupils (61.5%) are of White British heritage. 37% come from other ethnic backgrounds. 34% of pupils speak English as an additional language and this proportion has grown over recent years.

The school maximises partnership working with a range of other schools through membership of the, Epsom Deanery Partnership, Inspire Teaching School Alliance, Paradigm Teaching School Alliance and Dorking Schools' Partnership. The next step would see the school sharing identified areas of excellence in Religious Education with the wider Diocesan school community.

### **WHAT DOES THE SCHOOL NEED TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

St Joseph's school has a clear understanding of its strengths and areas for development as evidenced in the self-evaluation form provided for this inspection. This in turn links well to the school's development plan, the religious education section of which clearly identifies actions, timelines and responsibilities.

With no significant areas for improvement the school should;

- Continue the development of the tracking of individual pupil progress and excellent assessment procedures already established in order to ensure these are embedded across the school.
- Further develop pupil voice, for example, through the roles of school council members and liturgy leaders.

## CATHOLIC LIFE

### THE QUALITY OF THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

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

- St Joseph's school is an outstanding school that constantly strives to be even better. It is to the credit of the school's leaders that having been graded as outstanding at its last inspection all have continued to build on the school's strengths, whilst recognising and working on areas identified for development. This reflects a 'could do even better' philosophy that marks out a strong capacity for ongoing improvement.
- Pupils play an important role in the evaluation of the school's Catholic Life and mission and they live out the school's mission statement '*We embrace our role in the wider community and seek to bear witness to our Catholic Faith in all that we do... We proclaim the Gospel values in the ways in which we love ourselves and others*' on a daily basis.
- In a recent survey 100% of pupils surveyed were able to articulate that the school's underlying mission is "*Learning and Growing Together in the Light of God's Love*" and were able to say what this means to them.
- The behaviour of pupils is exemplary. They show an understanding of the need to forgive, be forgiven and have a good understanding of right and wrong and they certainly show love and respect to all.
- Pupils are aware of the needs of others and seek justice for others within and beyond the school community. Under leadership of the school council, they are keen to raise funds to support those less fortunate than themselves and utilise many opportunities to support a broad range of charities. This has been further enhanced by the school's Year 6 teacher who has successfully established a link with a primary school in Kenya as a way of extending both the school's charity work and enhancing its curriculum.

- All groups of pupils are very proud to belong to this strongly Catholic school. They aspire to follow in their patron, St Joseph's footsteps and this is reflected in the happy, purposeful and caring climate evident throughout the school. As a pupil said, *"St Joseph taught us how to be brave and do things we should well, even when we do not want to but know it is right"*.
- There is a strong sense of a community firmly rooted in Gospel values and the teachings of the Catholic church.
- Pupils benefit from the opportunities they are given for responsibility within the school community and take their roles seriously, which helps them develop a sense of belonging e.g. House Captains, Playground Squad, Class Monitors and Librarians.

**The quality of provision of the Catholic Life of the school is Outstanding.**

- A warm welcome awaits any visitor who enters St Joseph's. The Catholic ethos is strongly evident in the 'learning family' of the school where expectations are high and all aspire not to have more, but to be more. Everyone's unique talents and skills are believed in and shared and collaboration is highly prized.
- The school commented that *"We appreciate that each person is uniquely created and loved by God and there is a shared commitment to respect their worth, to value their contributions to school life and to care for their individual needs"* and this was witnessed during the inspection.
- Gospel values are integrated into the whole life of the school and into all aspects of the curriculum. There is an evident drive for academic excellence in a context of developing and sharing in each other's God given talents.
- Pupils respond well to the opportunities the school provides for their personal support and development. As a result, they are happy, confident and secure in their own stage of physical, emotional and spiritual growth. Pupils appropriate to their age and capability, have a growing understanding of loving relationships within the context of a Christian understanding. The Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) programme has the full support of families and circle time is also well used throughout the school as a way of developing self-esteem, emotional literacy and discussing personal relationships.
- Pastoral care is a strength of the school. It is enhanced by the school's 'open door' policy that welcomes everyone and enables all to feel welcome. This enables school staff to get to know both their pupils and families very well. Families in turn feel they know their school and are able to seek support.
- As a parent wrote, *'My son comes home from school talking enthusiastically about what he is learning in religious education. His knowledge and understanding has increased so much, thanks to his teachers. I could never get him that interested myself'*.

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

- The leaders of the school have a clear understanding of the centrality of its mission statement within the school and a vision of how they intend the spiritual, moral, social and cultural life of their community to continue to develop. This ensures that a clear direction is provided to all members of the school community so that the already embedded Catholic ethos is further enhanced.
- Pupils value the visits made to the school by the parish priest and respond well to the opportunities he provides to help them grow spiritually. His commitment to and involvement in school life and the service he gives to the community is greatly valued and appreciated by all.
- The Headteacher is an excellent role model and is well supported by the governing body and leadership team. She has worked steadfastly to build on the school's previous outstanding inspection judgement and make the school a centre of excellence in Catholic education. As a result of her efforts and commitment, the school continues to be a beacon of Catholic education. The school should now look to being more outward looking by widely sharing identified areas of excellence across the diocesan family of schools.
- Leaders regularly review and reflect on practice to see where provision and experiences can be enhanced. Ofsted commented that *"Senior leaders are particularly effective. You have an accurate, reflective and honest view of the school's strengths and priorities"*. Inspectors were able to confirm that this comment applied equally in the context of religious education and was reflected in the strong self-evaluation document provided for this inspection.
- The school benefits from a dedicated and well organised Governing Body which works tirelessly to provide a first class setting for Catholic education. The Governors, particularly those in key roles, bring a wealth of expertise and skills to the school and work hard on its behalf providing a good mix of support and challenge. The Governors know the school well, contribute effectively, are influential in school improvement and strongly uphold the Catholic identity of the school.
- Many governors are active members of the parish community. The parish priest is highly effective as the link governor with specific responsibility for religious education and pastoral care. Governors attend liturgies, school events and some training days. The Chair of Governors participates in Improvement Partner visits to ensure the distinctive Catholic nature of the school is upheld.

## COLLECTIVE WORSHIP / PRAYER AND PRAYER LIFE

### THE QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP AND PRAYER LIFE

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

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### **How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship and Prayer Life is Outstanding.**

- Pupils' response to and participation in the school's collective worship is outstanding. They act with reverence and are keen to participate in collective worship.
- Singing is a strength of the school's worship and pupils sing joyfully, reflect in silence and join in community prayer appropriately and with confidence.
- They are involved in a variety of approaches to prayer, which include scripture, religious artefacts, liturgical music and other forms of prayer, both traditional and contemporary.
- Pupils are familiar with the traditional prayers of the Church and are also confident in contributing their own prayers as part of Collective Worship. They demonstrate an understanding of spontaneous prayer.
- They are beginning to become more actively involved in preparing and participating in the school's collective worship and this is an area the school has identified for further development.
- Pupils enjoy collective worship within the school and are keen to be involved in all forms of liturgies and enjoy reading, singing and serving. They particularly enjoy pupil led class worship. They feel that prayer is an important element in school life and enjoy setting up prayer focuses within the school.
- The school has recently created class liturgy leads to support and extend the work of the Year 6 Liturgy Leaders and the school plans to further develop the role of this group over the coming year. Through discussions with the pupils, it is clear that their experiences of Collective Worship impact positively on their spiritual and moral development.
- Each class has a Collective Worship folder in which a record of class Collective Worship is retained. These are a model of very good practice in providing monitoring and assessment of each class programme.

- St Joseph's operates very effectively on a restricted footprint and utilises space well including an outside calm area that is also used at times for class worship.

**The quality of provision for Collective Worship and Prayer Life is Outstanding.**

- The act of collective worship observed that focused on the gifts of the Holy Spirit held the pupils' interest and inspired them to reflect on the use of these gifts in their daily lives. The celebration was enhanced by concluding with some beautiful pupil led part singing.
- The prayer life of the school is deeply embedded and held in esteem by the whole school community. Pupils are able to articulate very clearly what it means to be part of a Catholic school and how their prayer life has helped them.
- Acts of worship provided by St Joseph's reflect the Catholic character of the school in their depth and variety. The different cultural backgrounds of the community inside and outside the school are taken into account and everyone feels included.
- The school's cultural mix provides an opportunity, which is effectively used, to explore diversity through relationships; to challenge one another, to examine prejudice and to grow together as a community.
- The school's religious education and education for personal relationships (EPR) schemes of work contribute significantly to the understanding of other faiths and beliefs and promotes values of respect and appreciation of other views.
- Prayers, assemblies and acts of collective worship are given the highest priority and have become a key part of every-day school life, providing inspiration for staff and pupils. They usually follow the Church's liturgical year or the 'Come and See' topics and follow the liturgical format of Gather, Listen, Respond, Go Forth.
- High quality displays and other stimuli used round the school, both inside and out, bear witness to the school's Catholic faith.
- Each class records their spiritual journey through the year in their special Spiritual Journal. These books are displayed prominently in the class and pupils enjoy looking through them.
- Class focal points are well used with, for example, candles lit at the start of the lesson. These are also relocated during the lesson to a different place in the classroom to mark the lesson as special and retain opportunities for reflection.
- It is recognised that pupils come from a range of faith backgrounds and frequency of practice; many having only limited opportunities to encounter worship at home or in Church. Prayer and worship is designed to be accessible, enjoyable and inclusive irrespective of the particular experience of faith and belief of the pupils.



- The school works hard to provide everyone in the school community with a high quality experience of liturgy to support their individual spiritual journeys. Feedback from parents and parishioners is very positive and appreciative and acknowledges the witness of the pupils.

**How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship and Prayer Life is Outstanding.**

- Leaders and governors are very good at promoting, monitoring and evaluating the provision for collective worship. Themes are shared to give worship a suitable direction. They have a very good understanding of the Church's liturgical year, seasons and feasts and make these accessible to the pupils in a contemporary context.
- Governors have a visible presence in the school, through their regular attendance at assemblies, prayer services and celebrations. As a result, they have a very good understanding of the school's provision of collective worship and how pupils respond to it.
- Leaders of collective worship within the school are very good models of practice for members of staff and pupils. They offer support to less experienced or less confident teachers. They are keen to continue developing regular professional development for staff, incorporating liturgical formation and the planning of collective worship.
- Very positive responses have been received from pupils following the recent introduction of Christian meditation into the school day and the school plans to develop its use further. A pupil wrote, *'I find meditation calming and it helps me to think about all God has made'*. Another wrote, *'I am finding meditation quite hard but I feel really fresh afterwards. I now meditate before I play a football match because I feel ready afterwards'*.

# RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

## THE QUALITY OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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- 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 Outstanding.**

- Although a significant proportion of pupils join St. Joseph's with relatively low starting points in terms of religious knowledge, the school's internal tracking data shows that, as they move through the school, they make good progress.
- Pupils show a deepening religious knowledge and vocabulary as they progress through the school and become more confident in linking scripture to their own lives.
- Most pupils acknowledge that religious education can be a challenging subject but indicated that they very much enjoy this aspect of the school curriculum.
- Pupils make good progress from their starting points as exemplified in their books and through lesson observations. Higher attaining pupils are challenged to stretch their thinking skills and understanding. Pupils indicated that they would welcome more frequent opportunities to experience a broader range of activities in religious education lessons such as drama, role play and hot seating. The strong, secure behaviour for learning environment would lend itself to these and other activities.
- Pupils in KS2 are encouraged to take ownership of their work by choosing the level of challenge in their tasks.
- Deanery moderation of work samples shows that the school is assessing its pupils accurately and that outcomes compare favourably with neighbouring Catholic primary schools.
- It was notable that from Early Years pupils understand the nature of prayer and the character of a prayer focus. This was evidenced in their ability to say the school prayer without prompts and sees them growing in their knowledge of the life of Jesus recalling incidents related to Jesus' friends.
- Pupils continue to progress in religious education during their school career at St Joseph's. They make good use of group/table talk to listen to and challenge one another thoughtfully, manifesting a significant level of intellectual argument. This leads to pupils making at least secure progress in their religious education and to them becoming religiously literate.

- School leaders articulate a commitment to ensure that religious education is taught with rigour and that attainment and standards in the subject at the end of KS2 are at least comparable with other subjects.

**The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education is Outstanding.**

- Teaching observed was mainly outstanding and was never less than good and all groups including those with special educational needs make very good progress. Monitoring over time reflects the same outcomes.
- Teachers have very high expectations, are enthusiastic about religious education and are committed to achieving the best possible outcomes for their pupils.
- Teachers are confident in the use of the 'Come and See' programme to plan and deliver outstanding lessons.
- Excellent use is made of assessment of work within lessons to check pupils' understanding to ensure progress is sustained.
- Excellent behaviour for learning, as a result of skilled classroom management by teachers, coupled with strong staff pupil engagement, ensures pupils remain on task throughout lessons.
- Teachers' questioning skills are a strength and this could usefully be further refined and extended through follow on questioning.
- Pupils make significant progress in being at least age appropriately religiously literate. This reflects the skills teachers have to develop vocabulary throughout lessons which they revisit to ensure pupil understanding.
- The presentation of work in pupils' books is consistently high and reflects the value they place on this area of the curriculum.
- Teachers use praise and celebration of achievements very well throughout lessons and in daily school life.

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

- Teachers optimise opportunities to make links to religious education in the teaching of other subjects emphasising that religious education is not viewed in isolation, recognising that the awe and wonder of God's creation is all around us.
- Teachers encourage parents to be involved in their children's learning in religious education. Parents indicated they felt well informed about their children's religious education and accordingly can help them. A leaflet outlining the term's topics is distributed along with the weekly focus sheets. This way, learning is extended into the family setting.

- With the publication of the new assessment framework, the Headteacher has been instrumental in setting up a working group of key Headteachers, a religious education SLE and some religious education subject leaders from across the deanery to work together. They have reviewed all the “Come & See” topics for each year group to adapt activities and tasks to ensure that they are in line with the new assessment requirements. Teachers at St. Joseph’s have been particularly reflective in trialling and adapting the new planning. This exemplary work could be usefully shared across the diocese.
- The SLT are fully committed to improving standards of teaching and learning in religious education through rigorous monitoring. This is achieved through the triangulation of evidence; lesson observations, monitoring of books and planning, pupil response and analysis of assessment data. These are all used to generate a clear picture of religious education throughout the school.
- St Joseph’s has an excellent subject leader who sets a clear expectation that all staff take collective responsibility for improvement. Record keeping and documentation is of a high order. During her current period of maternity leave there has been a smooth transitioning of the role to the Headteacher. She has temporarily provided excellent ongoing subject leadership, ably supported by her acting deputy, thereby maintaining momentum for religious education, most notably in the area of assessment.
- There is a palpable sense of teamwork amongst the staff of the school and a mutually supportive atmosphere.
- The pursuit of excellence and the nurturing and development of each persons’ unique God-given talents are central to all the school does.
- All staff and governors have a shared vision and a common sense of purpose. The school sees the successful empowering and developing of staff as part of its mission to Catholic education and this has seen a proportion of staff move on to senior positions in other Catholic schools.

## Summary of Inspection Judgements

How effective the school is in providing Catholic Education.

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**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.

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**Collective Worship and Prayer Life**

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How well pupils respond to and participate in the schools' Collective Worship and Prayer Life.

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The quality of provision for Collective Worship and Prayer Life.

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How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship and Prayer Life.

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**Religious Education**

**1**

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

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The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education

1

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

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