



Catholic Schools Inspectorate inspection report for St Joseph's Catholic Voluntary Academy

URN: 146104

Carried out on behalf of the **Right Rev. Patrick McKinney, Bishop of Nottingham** on:

Date: 6-7 December 2023

Overall effectiveness The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school.....	1
Catholic life and mission (p.3) How faithfully the school responds to the call to live as a Catholic community at the service of the Church's educational mission.....	1
Religious education (p.5) The quality of curriculum religious education.....	1
Collective worship (p.7) The quality and range of liturgy and prayer provided by the school.....	1
The school is fully compliant with the curriculum requirements laid down by the Bishops' Conference	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
The school is fully compliant with all requirements of the diocesan bishop	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
The school has responded to the areas for improvement from the last inspection	Fully

Summary of key findings

What the school does well

- St Joseph's Catholic Voluntary Academy is a faithful witness to the teachings of Christ and the mission of the Church, both in its own community and beyond.
- The headteacher is an inspirational leader who, supported by the staff and governors, motivates the school community to live out its mission statement.
- The key principles of Catholic Social Teaching are evident in the ways in which the school welcomes everyone in a spirit of generous hospitality, especially those who are most vulnerable.
- Pupil enjoyment of religious education is marked by a high level of interest, enthusiasm, and engagement.
- The chaplaincy provision has a significant and profound impact on the spiritual life of the school.

What the school needs to improve:

- Improve teachers' planning of religious education so that more opportunities are provided for pupils to show independence in their learning responses.
- Develop high quality teacher questioning in religious education, which targets all pupils, in order to facilitate ongoing and accurate assessment of pupils' understanding.
- Ensure that marking and feedback is consistent across religious education, contributing to pupil progress and building on pupils' knowledge of how well they are achieving.

Catholic life and mission

How faithfully the school responds to the call to live as a Catholic community at the service of the Church's educational mission.

Catholic life and mission key judgement grade:.....

Pupil outcomes

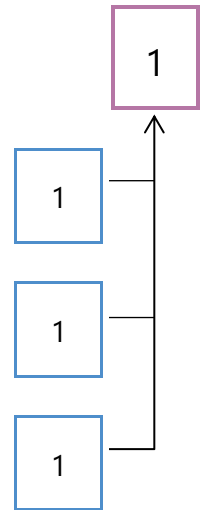
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

Provision

The quality of provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school

Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school



Pupils fully embrace the distinctive Catholic identity of their school. They understand that it encourages them to follow the teachings of Jesus, and that their mission statement 'helps us to work hand in hand with each other'. Pupils exude happiness and confidence, and have a well-established sense of belonging to their community. They seek to grow in personal development, helped by the focus that each particular year group has on a Catholic virtue. When questioned about these, pupils are able to name a virtue and explain its meaning. Pupils acknowledge their responsibility to care for others, particularly those in greatest need. 'This school teaches us how to help others' and 'We spread kindness' are typical comments. Catholic Social Teaching is at the heart of all activities, with pupils able to articulate the theological reasons for their support of charities, such as Mary's Meals and Cafod, and show an eagerness to be involved in groups responsible for putting their faith into action. The eco warriors' focus on reducing waste and recycling, including running an eco shop, and the mini vinnies' cards for a women's prison and hospital patients are two prime examples. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary at all times. The value that pupils put on chaplaincy provision is clearly evident in their responses to the opportunities for prayer and reflection in school, and particularly in the prominent role of the pupil chaplaincy group, whose spiritual impact is profound.

The mission statement, regularly revisited, is lived out by the whole of the school community. Staff members go above and beyond expectations in participating and contributing to the Catholic life and mission, helping to create a very strong sense of family, where all are welcome, particularly those who are most vulnerable. This can be seen not only in the modelling of positive relationships within school, but also at the school gate for parents, and in the desire to help families through providing for their daily needs, with frequent help with food donations and uniform requirements.

Pastoral care is outstanding, with a strong focus on adapting the school and its procedures to cater for a variety of concerns. The school environment is a vivid witness to its Catholic ethos, marked by outstanding displays of high quality, encouragement through inspirational quotations, and many examples of the importance of prayer. Each space is used creatively to contribute to the formation of all. The chaplaincy provision is an outstanding and flourishing part of the school's Catholic life, particularly in the role given to the pupil chaplains, supported by encouragement from the lay chaplain.

Leaders and governors clearly ensure that Christ is at the heart of the school. They actively promote the bishop's vision for the diocese, for example through the focus on the three themes of encounter, discipleship and missionary discipleship. Partnership between the school and the parishes of St Joseph's and Our Lady of Lourdes is flourishing, such as in the frequent involvement of the parish priest and religious sisters in school, the regular role played by the pupil parish ambassadors and the sharing of Masses and other memorable seasonal events. Leaders ensure that communication with and support for parents is prioritised. Leaders and governors also ensure that resources are appropriately targeted at those in greatest need. Governors show great ambition for the school, and commit themselves willingly to a well-organised process of self-evaluation that challenges and supports school leaders. The whole of the school curriculum is strongly influenced by Catholic Social Teaching, exploring links skillfully between academic subjects and Catholic culture, with scripture at its heart. Professional development for staff on Catholic life and mission is frequent and effective.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade:.....

Pupil outcomes

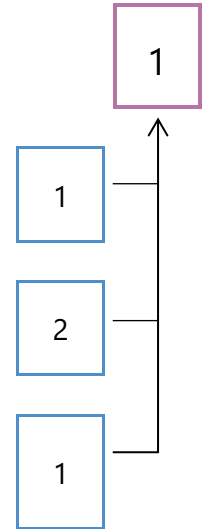
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education.....

Provision

The quality of teaching, learning, and assessment in religious education.....

Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor, and evaluate the provision for religious education.....



Pupils are developing secure knowledge, understanding and skills within their religious education. Their progress is consistently good in knowing more and remembering more, with all groups, including those with particular needs, achieving the best possible outcomes from their starting points. Pupils are confident in recalling biblical stories, and can speak fluently and confidently using subject specific vocabulary. They like the chance to participate actively in discussions. They are enthusiastic about religious education, showing an eager curiosity and a keen desire to expand their learning. Pupils show active engagement in lessons, with high commitment to completing their tasks or reflecting deeply. They relish the opportunities, when given, to show their creativity in their written responses, their prayers, their art work, and drama activities. They concentrate exceptionally well, collaborate with each other willingly, and can remain thoroughly engaged over a sustained period. Their enjoyment of religious education is very evident, and consequently their behaviour is exemplary. Pupils have some understanding of how well they are achieving, but this is limited at present. They achieve at least average attainment when compared with other core curriculum subjects

Teachers are confident in their subject knowledge. They are committed to the value of religious education and communicate this enthusiasm effectively to pupils. Planning is thorough, with classes within the same year group ensuring a consistency of approach. A variety of learning tasks are offered to pupils, focused on chosen themes from adaptation of the *Come and See* religious education scheme. Pupils are well supported in developing their knowledge. However, sometimes tasks are over-scaffolded, so that pupils do not get enough opportunities to take initiatives or present their work independently. Assessment of pupils' attainment is carried out at regular intervals. However, ongoing assessment of pupils' understanding on a daily basis is less effective.

This is often related to questioning techniques that rely on pupils volunteering answers, with some doing so more frequently, rather than ensuring that all pupils can respond. The invitation for pupils to discuss their learning with each other at length and frequently, or to elaborate on their oral contributions, is under-developed at present and teachers tend to talk more than pupils within lessons. Pupil effort is celebrated well, with frequent praise given. Marking and feedback is not yet consistent, and not focused enough on ensuring that pupils understand how well they are doing. Teachers use a variety of quality resources to augment their teaching and support pupils, preparing materials in advance to aid the flow of lessons. Teaching assistants play a vital role in supporting particular pupils, and do so very effectively.

Leaders and governors have ensured that the religious education curriculum fulfills the requirements of the *Religious Education Curriculum Directory (2012)*, and have gone to great lengths to adapt it so that it can be accessible and relevant to all pupils; it is carefully planned and appropriately sequential. A creative approach is used to deliver the curriculum, with a strong emphasis on scripture and the links to other subject areas. There is a clear commitment to high quality professional development opportunities for staff, both in-house and within the trust and diocese. The subject leader has a vision for the subject's development and is working to support colleagues in order to secure that vision. Enrichment of religious education is wide-ranging, through excellent links with a variety of providers, such as One Life Music, the parish sisters and the diocesan youth team based at The Briars. Self-evaluation is very effective: in addition to whole-school monitoring days, the link governor for religious education meets with the subject leader regularly. This approach enables strategic action for improvement to be implemented.

Collective worship

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

Collective worship key judgement grade:.....

1

Pupil outcomes

How well pupils participate in and respond to the school's collective worship

.....

1

Provision

The quality of collective worship provided by the school

.....

1

Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for collective worship

1



Pupil participation and engagement in prayer and liturgy is marked by infectious enthusiasm, a deep sense of respect and a clear understanding of its importance in the school's daily life. Communal singing is a significant strength of the school, contributing to the celebratory atmosphere of each gathering. Pupils also show the ability to reflect in silence, to respond with appropriate gesture and attend to the reading of scripture in an impressive manner. Pupil knowledge of scripture is well-developed, helping them to appreciate the message of celebrations more deeply. Pupils understand the organisation of the Church's liturgical year, and how it is expressed in prayer and liturgy. Pupils' collaborative planning, leadership and evaluation of worship, is another well-developed strength of the school. Pupils show responsibility, creativity and confidence to prepare and lead celebrations of the word, often working independently. Pupils are able to articulate how prayer and liturgy influences them and how it is relevant to how they act. They enjoy the voluntary opportunities to join in prayer, such as in eucharistic adoration and lunchtime visits to the chapel. They are developing the confidence for spontaneous prayer, either spoken or written, very strongly. They readily reflect on their experience: a typical comment about such opportunities is, 'It gives us time to reflect on what God has done for us'.

Prayer is central to the life of the school, and forms an integral part to gatherings of pupils, staff and governors. It has supported them as a community through difficult times, and all acknowledge how important it is through all circumstances. The daily pattern of prayer is naturally embedded, with a variety of styles: in key stages, as a whole school when celebrating achievement, in celebrations of the word in class, particularly at the end of a unit of work, in 'extended prayer' moments, and in the regular opportunity for Mass. Further examples of the wide range of engaging and creative experiences are the May celebration in honour of Mary, the 'Pentecost Party', weekly eucharistic adoration, rosary recitation, and stations of the cross. Scripture is always a fundamental

part of each gathering, and passages are always chosen with care for their appropriateness to the time of the year or the focused theme. Staff members model participation to pupils expertly, and have an excellent understanding of the norms of the Church and how to share prayer with pupils. The school has used space creatively for prayer gatherings: the chapel is beautifully presented with thoughtful decoration, artefacts and written materials, and in each class great care is taken with the prayer focus tables and their presentation. The parish church is also visited frequently. The school has worked hard to include parents within its prayer life, and this is gratefully acknowledged.

Guidance to support the delivery of prayer and liturgy has been carefully created as a support for staff. It includes a clear and comprehensive strategy for building pupil skills, and background information to build knowledge and understanding. Sacramental celebrations, holy days, and significant feasts are prioritised in the school's calendar. Opportunities for prayer and liturgy for all pupils are carefully planned across the year, with the support of the parish priest. Appropriate priority has been given to the formation of staff. Leaders and chaplains have a thorough understanding of the range of ways of praying within Catholic tradition, and are highly skilled in arranging these for the whole community. Prayer and liturgy are greatly enhanced by the choice of high-quality resources. Self-evaluation of prayer and liturgy, including staff, pupils, governors and parents, is well structured and instrumental in a constant strive for improvement.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Joseph's Catholic Voluntary Academy
School unique reference number (URN)	146104
Full postal address of the school	Mill Hill Lane, Derby, Derbyshire, DE23 6SB
School phone number	01332 361660
Name of head teacher or principal	Tracey Churchill
Chair of governing board	Fr Jonathan Whitby-Smith
School Website	https://www.stjosephsderby.srscmat.co.uk/
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	St Ralph Sherwin Catholic Multi-Academy Trust
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy
Age-range of pupils	4-11
Trustees	Nottingham Roman Catholic Diocesan Trustees
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	05 October 2015
Previous denominational inspection grade	2

The inspection team

Alan Dewhurst	Lead inspector
Lucy Gunton	Team inspector

Key to grade judgements

Grade	England	Wales
1	Outstanding	Excellent
2	Good	Good
3	Requires improvement	Adequate and requires improvement
4	Inadequate	Unsatisfactory and in need of urgent improvement