



DIOCESAN CANONICAL INSPECTION REPORT

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL, COLLECTIVE WORSHIP AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

St Joseph's Catholic Voluntary Academy

Langwith Road, Langwith Junction, Mansfield, NG20 9RP

School URN:	141478
Inspection Date:	19 October 2017
Inspectors:	Mr Anthony Harrison and Mrs Siobhan Minford

Overall Effectiveness	Previous Inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This Inspection:	Outstanding	1
Catholic Life:		Outstanding	1
Collective Worship:		Outstanding	1
Religious Education:		Outstanding	1

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

St Joseph's Catholic Voluntary Academy is an outstanding Catholic school.

- All pupils are at the heart of the school's Catholic mission and ethos. All stakeholders deeply value the Catholic tradition of the school and work in partnership to provide the best possible Catholic education for pupils. As one parent told the inspectors: 'The Catholic Life of the school is intermingled into every aspect of pupils' learning – faith is the basis of all the school does'.
- Teaching and learning in Religious Education is outstanding. Pupils benefit from a measured and consistent approach to the teaching of Religious Education, where lessons are well structured, creative and tailored to meet the learning needs of each individual pupil. Time is never wasted and pupils are engrossed in their learning. This leads to outstanding progress and attainment.
- The Catholic Life of the school permeates every aspect of school and community life. Pupils take ownership and initiative in leading the community of St Joseph's in deep and meaningful worship. They understand their role as disciples in living the Gospel values. They do this through the large numbers of charities they support in action and deed.
- Pupils are rightly proud to be members of St Joseph's. The school is led by a highly effective leadership team, who in partnership with the headteacher, are passionate and wholly committed to maintaining the high standards; together they have a clear vision for the school. Pupils are eager to learn and demonstrate exemplary behaviour in all that they do and in every aspect of school life.

FULL REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

- St Joseph's is a smaller than average sized primary school.
- The school is situated on the Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire border and serves the parishes of St Joseph's, Shirebrook; St Teresa's Warsop; and St Bernadette's Bolsover.
- The school is part of the Aquinas Catholic Academy Trust.
- 57% of pupils on roll are Catholics, 16% are from other Christian faith backgrounds, 2% are from other faith backgrounds and 25% have no religious affiliation.
- 12% of pupils are in receipt of pupil premium and 6% are on the SEND (special educational needs and/or a disability) register.
- The parish priest, who now resides in Mansfield, is new to the parish and the school.

WHAT DOES THE SCHOOL NEED TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- Catholic Life:
 - To continue the excellent work already undertaken by the school to review the school's mission statement in liaison with all stakeholders, making it more easily accessible to pupils and stakeholders.
 - As a beacon of outstanding practice, disseminate this, including good governance, in a time and resource manageable way, so that other schools in the Diocese of Nottingham may clarify their understanding of what constitutes outstanding Catholic Life.
- Collective Worship:
 - To build upon the pupils' high level of knowledge and understanding of the different approaches to worship so that they are able, at an age appropriate level, to explain and comment on the prayer rich variety of prayer traditions they experience at school; such as meditation, traditional and contemporary approaches to worship and talk about their preferences and the impact these different approaches have on them.
- Religious Education
 - To further deepen pupils' understanding by increasing the level of challenge through questioning in lessons and through feedback in books.

CATHOLIC LIFE

THE QUALITY OF THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL	1
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- The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school.
- The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school.
- How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school.

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

- The behaviour of pupils is exemplary; they enthusiastically take on leadership roles within the school, learn from each other and are very keen to seek justice for all. Their awareness of the wider community and the concept of discipleship is outstanding; this is clear, not only from everyday activities but also from their involvement in a range of fundraising for local, national and global charities of their choice.
- All pupils have a deep sense of belonging and purpose which helps to develop their personal worth. They are proud of their religious identity and very inclusive of others and of other faiths. Constant promotion of the school's ethos during all curriculum and extra-curriculum provision embeds the strong Catholic ethos and enriches the positive relationships evident throughout the school.
- The school is passionate about its links with the parish church; pupils are regularly involved in parish and diocesan celebrations. Pupils act as parish ambassadors where they are able to speak in church to explain to parishioners' recent initiatives and fundraising events upon which they can work together. On the day of the inspection, two pupils served at a wedding where Mass was held in the church. Participation and service during parish Masses on Sundays is very well received and have a positive impact on pupils' sense of belonging and mission.
- Pupils play an active role in developing the Catholic Life of the school. They are eager to fulfil the school's overarching aim within the current mission statement: '...to ensure all that we do is rooted in the teachings of Christ, promoting the love of God'. The school recognises the need to review the wording of school's mission statement to make it more easily accessible to pupils and all stakeholders.
- The Relationship and Sex Education programme (RSE) runs throughout the school from Foundation Stage to Year 6 and refers explicitly to Catholic teaching and principles. Pupils and their families respond in a positive manner to this important aspect of Catholic education. The Catholic Life of the school prepares pupils well for their next stage of learning; whether moving class, key stage, or on to secondary education. The entire curriculum is centred on the development of the whole human person in the image and likeness of God.

The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school – outstanding

- The school has a strong sense of community and parents value the nurturing that the school provides. Pupils are at the centre of shaping the school mission and ethos.
- The learning environment of the school effectively promotes the school's Catholic character with fresh, modern, displays demonstrating pupils' work. This reflects the wide range of creative and vibrant activities which take place at the school and the significant role that pupils play in ensuring that the Church's social teaching is lived out in the daily life of the school.
- School policies are rooted in Gospel values, for example, the school's behaviour policy and exclusion statement clearly reflect the ethos of reconciliation. Specific reference to the Gospel in the introduction and guiding rationale is evident in all policies.
- The school has an exceptional sense of community and enjoys highly effective partnerships with the whole community, including vulnerable and hard to reach sections in the local area. As a result, St Joseph's is highly regarded in Shirebrook by people who have lived in the area for many years and for those new to the area. One parent said to the inspectors: 'I really can't sing the school's praises enough. It has helped my family to settle in and has made us feel welcome'.
- The headteacher, senior leadership team, parish priest and governors are outstanding role models. The priority they afford to developing and sustaining the Catholic Life of the school has secured a strong Catholic ethos which permeates every aspect of school life.

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

- Under the direction of the headteacher, the whole school staff are inspirational in creating an atmosphere of respect, love and promotion of the Church's mission in education.
- The provision for the Catholic Life of the school is given top priority in the school's development plan. Rigorous monitoring procedures for Catholic Life are well established and include self-challenge through regular analyses and requests for feedback from the extended school community.
- St Joseph's pupils thrive and are secure in an atmosphere that reflects high standards of ethical and moral behaviour based on Gospel values. Highly effective mentoring systems are in place and staff give their time generously for the benefit of the pupils.
- The school has developed a range of highly successful strategies to overcome possible barriers to learning and ensure that all parents and carers are engaged with the school. For example, their involvement in the 'Thriving Communities Project', assists them in building stronger relationships with the pupils and their families.
- Governors make a highly significant contribution to the Catholic Life of the school. They are passionate about the school's mission; both supporting and challenging as necessary. They are kept fully informed of developments of the Catholic Life of the school through visits, headteacher's reports and participation in school events and as a result have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

THE QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP	1
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- How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship.
- The quality of provision for the Collective Worship.
- How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship.

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

- Pupils across the school take the initiative in leading the school's prayer life when planning and leading acts of prayer, and when providing creative opportunities for worship and reflection. During the inspection, pupils from the liturgy group had worked with the headteacher to plan a whole school Act of Worship with the theme of 'Courage'. Pupils told inspectors which ideas and plans were theirs and that it is common place for pupils to plan a range of liturgies; for as one pupil said: 'We work as a team because we are a learning community'.
- Collective Worship has a clear purpose, message and direction; ending with a mission for all pupils and members of staff. During Collective Worship, all pupils were fully engaged and responsive to questions, reflections, prayers, hymns and visual resources. Pupils fully understand that they bear witness to the Gospels and enthusiastically take on the role of being disciples.
- Pupils are responsible for leading liturgies in their classes. In a Year 3 Class Liturgy, pupils skilfully used scripture which reflected the theme of the topic: 'We are God's People'. Throughout the liturgy, pupils were able to relate scripture to their own lives and personal circumstances through measured responses to questions and reflections, expertly led by a small team of pupils. Pupils were encouraged by the team to use words from the chosen Gospel passage when writing ways in which they can show that they are children of God.
- All pupils have regular opportunities to respond spiritually and deepen their understanding and relationship with God, through prayer journaling. Pupils take the time to contribute to their own private prayer journals which can only be seen by another person through invitation. These provide pupils with a personal and private record of their relationship with God that travels with them as they journey through school.
- During the inspection, the choice of scripture readings, the range of resources were appropriately chosen by pupils. Pupils enjoy taking on roles such as altar serving, reading, drama, singing, taking the offertory and even writing new Gospel Acclamations for whole school and class Masses. They are proud to proclaim their faith and beliefs.
- All pupils have an excellent understanding of the Church's liturgical year, its seasons and its feasts. They display confidence in their use of a variety of approaches to traditional and contemporary prayer, although they are not fully aware of the differences to these approaches.

The quality of provision for Collective Worship – outstanding

- Collective Worship is centred on the pupils; it is planned on clear themes and messages which are communicated well in advance to parents and carers which attracts and facilitates their support and attendance.
- Throughout the school, displays on chosen liturgical and biblical themes are engaging and promote the Catholic character of the school. Each class has a prayer corner to encourage the pupils' interest, reflection and spiritual growth. Prayer focuses are well resourced with pupils able to use artefacts appropriately to enhance their liturgical experiences.
- Collective Worship is open to the wider school community and the school is proactive in promoting parent and carer involvement.
- Provision for Collective Worship is outstanding because it is carefully planned to meet the needs and ages of all pupils enabling them to access high quality liturgies which reflect current local and global issues; as well as being in line with the seasons of the Church's year.
- The strong prayer life of the school is valued by all members of the school community. The school day is punctuated with prayer and all meetings begin with a prayer as a matter of routine.
- High quality weekly liturgies result in pupils being able to reflect on the Gospels and make links between God's message and their own lives.

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

- The school's leadership is deeply committed to the Church's mission in education. The headteacher is energised by the task and is a source of inspiration to the whole community. As a result, all staff are united in their clear vision of the school as a worshipping, supportive Catholic community where pupils treat each other with great respect and are happy to talk about their faith.
- Collective Worship is given a high priority and its evaluation by the headteacher and the Religious Education subject leader is accurate. Leaders provide strong support for other members of the staff team in planning for Collective Worship.
- Leaders have a thorough knowledge and understanding of the Church's liturgical year, planning high quality liturgical opportunities which reflect the teachings and traditions of the Catholic Church. The headteacher and Religious Education subject leader formally monitor Collective Worship. Pupils and governors are also actively involved in this process.
- School leaders work skilfully to ensure that members of the wider school community are able to participate in Collective Worship. Prayers and hymns are used specifically to encourage and enhance parent and carer participation. They enjoy joining with the pupils in prayers and in using actions to sign songs.
- The provision for sacramental preparation is outstanding. Working collaboratively, the school and parish, supported by the Parish Priest, have successfully established parents as 'primary educators' and developed sacramental preparation courses which fully involve parents and carers.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

THE QUALITY OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION	1
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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 – outstanding

- Standards of attainment and progress in Religious Education are outstanding with end of Key Stage 1 and 2 results well above diocesan averages. Pupils show a high level of religious literacy and demonstrate a deep spirituality.
- Pupils demonstrate a high level of commitment in their learning with all pupils engaged and enthusiastic. During discussions pupils exuded great passion for their learning saying: 'Religious Education is a big thing to us'. They spoke proudly and at length of what and how they learn and are eager to share this with others.
- Relationships between teachers and pupils are strong. Pupils value the opportunities to reflect, wonder and talk about God.
- The school environment is alive with pupils' work and inspirational messages. Displays are interactive, bright and engaging. Resources are plentiful and focus prayer areas form an integral part of the learning environment.
- Pupils take charge of their learning. They know what they need to do to improve their learning and are keen to challenge themselves to produce a high standard of work.

The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education – outstanding

- Lessons are thoroughly planned and differentiated to meet the learning needs of all groups of pupils. The integration of ICT, art, drama and the excellent use of resources, contribute to pacey lessons where the pupils are engrossed and challenged. As a result, behaviour is outstanding and disruption to learning is non-existent across the school.
- The wide range of innovative approaches to teaching demonstrates the high level of confidence of teachers; this is down to their deep subject knowledge of Religious Education. All groups of pupils make at least good progress in lessons and progress over time is outstanding.
- In almost all lessons observed, teachers' questioning was thoughtful and challenging. However, in some lessons observed opportunities to tease out further knowledge by expanding on answers were missed.
- Pupils receive accurate verbal and written feedback and are given time to respond to this. In keeping

with the school's marking policy, teachers challenge pupils in their written feedback in order to deepen their understanding. The depth and consistency of these challenges, however, is variable.

- Pupils are consistently involved in evaluating how well they have achieved. 'Steps to success', as well as colour coded marking trays give pupils ownership of their learning and the confidence that they can make further improvements to their work. The celebration of pupil achievement is central to each teacher's assessment strategy.
- Presentation of pupils' written work is of a very high standard throughout the school. Pupils take pride in their work. The quality and quantity of work matches that of other core subject areas.

The extent to which leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education – outstanding

- The Religious Education subject leader and the headteacher have a clear vision for the school in respect of standards and expectations, and share these effectively with the whole staff. Monitoring and evaluation for Religious Education is robust. The school regularly participates in diocesan training and in both diocesan and MAT moderation of pupils' work in Religious Education.
- Governors effectively support the development of Religious Education in the school and have a thorough knowledge of the standards in Religious Education. They provide the correct balance of challenge and support to the school's leadership.
- The analysis and collection of data has become embedded in the school improvement cycle. All pupils are tracked and their work is discussed in detail. Pupils who are off target are closely monitored and catered for.
- The Religious Education curriculum is skilfully designed, imaginative and stimulating. The pupils are provided with a wealth of opportunities to link with other groups of pupils, the community, and, the parish. Therefore, they are encouraged to widen and deepen their knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith.
- Religious Education is extremely well resourced in terms of staffing, physical resources, capitation and curriculum time when compared with other core curriculum subjects. The timetable fully meets the episcopal requirement of the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales to devote 10% of curriculum time to Religious Education.

School Name	St Joseph's Catholic Voluntary Academy
Unique Reference Number	141478
Local Authority	Derbyshire

The inspection of this school was carried out on behalf of the Bishop of Nottingham under Canon 806 of Canon Law in accordance with the *evaluation schedule* for diocesan canonical inspections in the Diocese of Nottingham. The inspection reviews and evaluates how effective the school is in providing Catholic education. The process begins with the school's own self-evaluation and the inspection schedule is in line with the criteria set by the National Board of Religious Inspectors and Advisers (NBRIA).

During the inspection, the inspectors observed 10 Religious Education lessons and 2 Acts of Collective Worship.

Meetings were held with the headteacher, the subject leader for Religious Education, the chair of governors and the parish priest. Discussions were also held with pupils and parents.

The inspectors scrutinised a range of documents including reports of the governing body, action plans, the school development plan, monitoring forms, assessment information and parental response forms. Inspectors also examined the work in pupils' Religious Education books.

Chair of Governors:	Mrs Ann Neale
Headteacher:	Mrs Deborah Tibble
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WHAT INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS MEAN

Within the report, the following grades are used:

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Requires Improvement
Grade 4	Inadequate

In the context of the whole school, the overall effectiveness grades have the following meaning:

Grade 1	Outstanding	The school is a highly effective Catholic school. Pupils' needs are exceptionally well met.
Grade 2	Good	The school is an effective Catholic school. Pupils' needs are met well.
Grade 3	Requires Improvement	The school is not yet a good Catholic school, it is not inadequate however, and there are aspects that require improvement. There will be a monitoring visit within the next 12 months and the school will be re-inspected within 3 years.
Grade 4	Inadequate	There are features in need of urgent and immediate attention. The school is not meeting the basic minimum requirement for adequacy as a Catholic school. The school will receive an annual monitoring visit and will be re-inspected within 3 years.

In addition to the information above, if any one aspect of the evaluation schedule is found to 'require improvement', the school will receive a monitoring visit within one year of the publication of the report.