



St Joseph's Catholic Voluntary Academy

URN: 138080

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Bishop of Nottingham

01–02 May 2024

Summary of key findings

Overall effectiveness

The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school

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

Religious education (p.5)

The quality of curriculum religious education

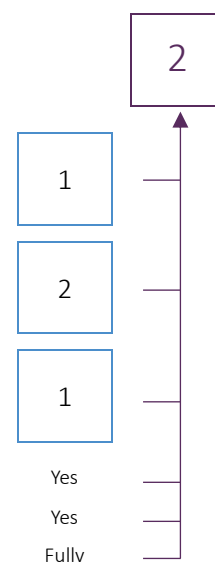
Collective worship (p.7)

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

The school is fully compliant with the curriculum requirements laid down by the Bishops' Conference

The school is fully compliant with all requirements of the diocesan bishop

The school has responded to the areas for improvement from the last inspection



What the school does well

- All members of the community fully embrace the Catholic identity of the school, and enthusiastically participate in implementing its mission statement on a daily basis.
- Leaders and governors are highly ambitious in ensuring the very best Catholic education for all pupils; they are ably supported by a united staff team.
- Teachers demonstrate a deep understanding of the importance of religious education, and the impact it has on the moral and spiritual development of pupils.
- The school's provision for Collective Worship is a beacon of excellent practice.
- Prayer and Liturgy is at the heart of the school, carefully structured to ensure that all encounter Christ in a variety of opportunities.

What the school needs to improve

- Ensure religious education tasks given to pupils match the identified learning objectives and the end of year expectations.
- Develop pupils' understanding and skills in religious education through providing a wider range of high quality, creative, learning activities.
- Take opportunities to share the school's outstanding practice in Collective Worship.

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

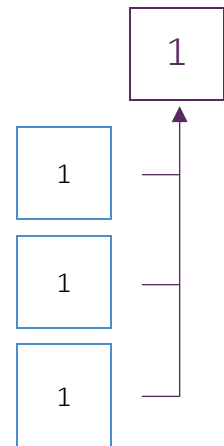
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

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



At St Joseph's, pupils love their school, recognise what it stands for, and consistently and actively live out its mission. They embrace its values, knowing that they should aim to 'believe, achieve, succeed' under the guardianship and protection of St Joseph. They understand that the person of Jesus is at the heart of the school, and that they are all unique, valued and cared for by God. In striving to follow Jesus, they earnestly embrace opportunities to grow in virtue. They are helped by the school's introduction of a regular focus on a particular virtue for a period of time: these virtues are well-known and understood by pupils. Gentleness, self-control and patience, for instance, are practised on a daily basis, with their prominence evident in classroom lessons, in prayer gatherings and in interactions with each other. Pupils love to participate by taking a lead in responding to the demands of Catholic Social Teaching. They are active within a range of groups, such as the chaplaincy team, school council, eco-warriors, virtue ambassadors and wellbeing ambassadors. A particular emphasis on care for our common home, following Pope Francis' message within 'Laudato Si', is very noticeable, with the school achieving a green flag eco award recently. There is keen involvement in charitable works, with money raised each term for a designated charity. Pupils show great respect for each other; behaviour around the school is exemplary. They highly value the chaplaincy provision, speaking highly about the lay chaplain's role and are very willing to immerse themselves in the opportunities provided for them.

The mission statement is fully embraced by all of the community, with everyone able to recite it as part of daily prayer, and recognise its influence on their daily lives. The school benefits from a very close staff group, totally united in supporting each other, particularly through recent challenges and difficulties that have emerged unexpectedly. There is a strong culture of welcome, within the realisation of the importance of being part of a community, exceptionally supportive, going above and beyond for each other and for pupils and families. Staff are exemplary role models: 'Catholic life is at the heart of all we do', one member stated, and this is recognised by parents too. Pastoral care is

excellent, with keen attention to the needs of all, particularly the most vulnerable. The physical environment is exceptional in celebrating its Catholic identity, with care and attention given to all areas of the school. Chaplaincy provision is central to the school, and is rightly celebrated as being a core feature of its daily life. Relationships and sex education fulfils statutory and diocesan requirements; it has been developed in close consultation with parents, with adaptations to its delivery sympathetically agreed.

Leaders and governors are energised, joyful and determined in promoting the Catholic life and mission. They are fully engaged with the work of the St Thomas Aquinas Catholic Multi-Academy Trust and the diocese. Parish links are very strong, with the parish priest, regularly present in the life of the school, seen as more a member of the school family than a visitor. Partnership with parents is also well developed. Parents are very grateful for how the school is nurturing their children: 'I feel that faith is at the heart of everything the school does', is a typical comment. Catholic Social Teaching is very evident in the functioning of the school. Those working at the school acknowledge how their wellbeing and dignity is respected by leaders and governors. Professional development in the Catholic life and mission is regular and effective, and there is constant self-evaluation of all that takes place.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

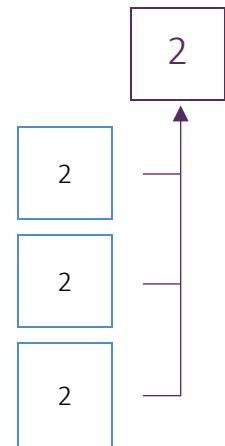
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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 enjoy their religious education lessons. They take pride in their work, attending to written tasks with diligence. They want to do well, and are developing secure knowledge, understanding and skills. Pupils make good progress across the school. They are engaged young people, able to reflect spiritually, and to think ethically. Their knowledge of scripture is excellent; they are able to recall bible stories in detail, a feature that has been augmented by the school's provision of prayer and liturgy. They work with concentration, and willingly collaborate with each other in given tasks. They have some understanding of how well they are doing, with a 'RAG' rating of self-assessment used to build awareness which is in the early stages of development. Pupils show a good level of attainment in religious education against their age-related expectations. However, their progress and attainment are not outstanding because their strong literacy skills sometimes mask their development of religious literacy, and some tasks that they undertake do not help them to focus precisely on what concepts and skills should be learnt or developed.

Teachers are confident in their subject knowledge. They are very committed to the value of religious education, and communicate this highly effectively to their pupils. In lessons, questioning is used well to develop understanding, but could probe more deeply in some lessons to challenge pupils to develop their responses more precisely. Teaching assistants carefully support pupils with particular needs to access the curriculum. Teachers understand the age-related expectations for their pupils, and design learning objectives associated with these. However, the design of tasks to fit these objectives, and the clear focus on associated success criteria, is not always approached with sufficient rigour. Teachers readily recognise the contribution of religious education to the spiritual and moral development of pupils, and emphasise this well in their lessons. Teachers have ensured that pupils are able to write in sustained manner frequently. This approach is used to good effect, but is over-emphasised, in comparison to a wider range of learning activities that would enable pupils to demonstrate their understanding in a variety of contexts, and present their learning more

independently. Religious education teaching in St Joseph's is thus securely good, but is not outstanding because of these factors.

The school's religious education curriculum is a faithful expression of the Religious Education Curriculum Directory (2012). Leaders and governors have ensured its priority as the 'core of the core curriculum'. Professional development for staff has been regular and well-targeted, with opportunities for all to benefit. The subject leader for religious education is passionate about promoting religious education, and generously supports colleagues in their personal understanding of what should be taught and how this can be achieved. All value her expertise and commitment absolutely. Attractive displays of religious education topics in each classroom are evidence of her influence. Clear systems have been put in place to support staff and direct religious education teaching: these have brought consistency to how the subject is delivered, establishing a securely good standard. Encouragement of a more creative approach within these parameters is at an early stage of development, helped by recent professional development, such as the 'Building the Kingdom' training, for example. While monitoring and feedback to teachers is established, and happens frequently, the rigour of checking its impact is still developing. Leaders' introduction of virtues education has started to impact positively in religious education lessons.

Collective worship

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

Collective worship key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

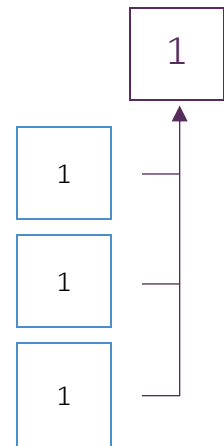
How well pupils participate in and respond to the school's collective worship

Provision

The quality of collective worship provided by the school

Leadership

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



Pupils fully engage and participate with enthusiasm in the school's provision of prayer and liturgy. They relish being exposed to a rich variety of prayer and celebration, throughout the liturgical year, that includes more formal celebrations in the Catholic tradition, and prayer within a classroom setting. They demonstrate their conscious participation through their attentiveness, their willingness to volunteer contributions, their respectful silence and their engagement in communal prayer and singing. Pupils are adept at collaborative planning and leadership of prayer, at age-appropriate levels. This is because their skills have been carefully nurtured as they move through the school, being able to grow in independence, knowledge of scripture and the variety of types of prayer. Pupils are confident in offering spontaneous prayer in gatherings as well as being knowledgeable about traditional prayers. They are becoming increasingly skilful in evaluating the quality of prayer and liturgy that they and their peers have planned, and how to make improvements to it. They acknowledge the impact of prayer on their lives and those of others, and how it inspires them. They make connections easily between what they are learning in lessons, particularly in religious education, the virtues that they are focusing on at the time, and actions in their daily lives.

The centrality of prayer and liturgy at the heart of the school is unquestionably evident. Prayer permeates the day at regular times: this daily pattern and rhythm is inspirational. Pupils are given many opportunities to encounter Christ throughout each day, week and throughout the school calendar. The richness of Catholic tradition is seen in the regular opportunities to attend Mass, to experience the Sacrament of Reconciliation and Adoration; and in seasonal celebrations such as the Stations of the Cross, Advent retreat services, and the Ash Wednesday service. Classroom celebrations of the word are planned each week, with pupil chaplains and their peers able to plan and lead these, under the guidance of the lay chaplain, using a variety of resources. Scripture is central to prayer, so that all pupils have a deep knowledge of bible stories. Lectio Divina and Visio Divina gatherings, coupled with the imaginative use of prayer journals, are an impressive feature of the provision. Staff

commitment and skill in leading prayer is very impressive. Creativity abounds, giving all a constant sense of awe and wonder, relevance and deep engagement. Space is used with imagination, with the 'Upper Room' a treasured location, and regular use of the parish church and hall while the school hall is unavailable. Care has been taken to ensure that the prayer focus area in each classroom is given particular prominence and care. Families and parishioners are included and welcomed: 'There are always plenty of opportunities to be involved in prayer and to reflect on our own walk with God', as one parent commented.

The school policy for prayer and liturgy is very accessible and has great impact in practice, supported by documents produced by the St Thomas Aquinas Catholic Multi-Academy Trust lay chaplains. School leaders have developed an impressive liturgical calendar to ensure excellent provision. Professional development and formation are very effective in supporting all staff, meaning that the knowledge and skills of leaders has been effectively disseminated to everyone. Resourcing of prayer and liturgy is excellent. The school is blessed with an experienced and highly-regarded lay chaplain whose impact is treasured by all. The headteacher's inspirational example is recognised widely in ensuring that the school's focus on its prayer life is prioritised above all. Self-evaluation of prayer and liturgy is well developed and thorough.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Joseph's Catholic Voluntary Academy
School unique reference number (URN)	138080
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	8553347
Full postal address of the school	St Joseph's Catholic Voluntary Academy, Coventry Road, Market Harborough, LE16 9BZ
School phone number	01858465359
Headteacher	Bernadette Dabbs
Chair of Local Governing Body	Alissa De Luca Ruane
School Website	http://www.stjosephs.leics.sch.uk
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	St Thomas Aquinas Catholic Multi Academy Trust
Phase	Primary
Type of school	Academy
Admissions policy	N/A
Age-range of pupils	4-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	2 March 2016
Previous denominational inspection grade	Outstanding

The inspection team

Alan Dewhurst
Joanne Green

Lead
Team

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