



INSPECTION REPORT

St. Joseph and St. Teresa's Catholic Primary School

Lovers' Walk, Wells, BA5 2QJ

Telephone: 01749 678791

E-mail address: office@st-joseph-st-teresa.somerset.sch.uk

URN: 123842

Headteacher: Angela Bennett

Chair of Governors: Charlotte Lythaby

**Canonical Inspection under Canon 806 on behalf of the Diocese of Clifton
and inspection of Denominational Education under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005**

Date of inspection: 2-3rd February 2017

Date of previous inspection: January 2012

Reporting Inspector: Mr Joseph Skivington

Assisting Inspector: Mrs Michele Marshall

Description of the school

St. Joseph and St. Teresa's is a smaller than average-sized primary school, with a current roll of 157. Of these children 68% are Catholic. It serves the parishes of St. Joseph and St. Teresa, Wells; St. Michael, Shepton Mallet and St. Mary, Glastonbury and draws pupils from mainly White British, favourable socio-economic backgrounds in and around the city. The proportions of disadvantaged pupils, and those with special educational needs, is below the national average. The school has seen in recent years an increasing number of pupils with English as an additional language, from mainly Spanish, Polish and Filipino families. The school has two trained ELSAs (Emotional Literacy Support Assistant) and a Parent, Family Support Advisor, who support a number of children in school. Pupils join the school with a baseline level of prior knowledge and experience of religious practice in line with expectations.

Overall effectiveness of this Catholic school (summary statement)

Grade 1

This is an outstanding school because:

- Under the inspirational head teacher, the governing body and all leaders are totally committed to the promotion and nurturing of the school's Catholic life and mission, and have very successfully sustained its overall outstanding provision and outcomes.
- It is a fully inclusive school where pupils, their parents and carers, from all faiths and none are made welcome, and all show respect and genuine interest and care towards each other;
- The behaviour of pupils and their care for others is outstanding. They are role models for each other and this contributes enormously to the outstanding spirituality and ethos of the school. Their behaviour for learning is very positive, they enjoy their RE lessons, and they make good and outstanding progress over time. This is the result of consistently good teaching, with much that is outstanding.

The capacity of the school community to improve and develop is outstanding

- The senior leadership team constantly drives improvement in all areas and works closely with the diocese and other local cluster schools to seek and to share good practice. The governors are a very effective, challenging body, with a hands on approach and great experience in providing proactive support and challenge. Through consultation with parents, staff, and pupils the school has a realistic view of what has to be done to improve even further, and follows this through;
- The rigorous, securely embedded procedures for self evaluation enable strengths and weaknesses to be highlighted quickly, and action taken to improve practice and outcomes through a comprehensive and detailed development plan with clear, measurable objectives which are constantly monitored and re shaped as appropriate;
- The areas for development noted in the last inspection have been comprehensively addressed. The assessment for learning and tracking of individual pupil's progress feeds very effectively into learning objectives which match pupils' learning needs, and increasingly provide high challenge especially for the more able;

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- The capacity to sustain and build on already outstanding provision and outcomes for Catholic Life and religious education is beyond question. The success in embedding distributive

leadership ensures consistency, commitment, and stability for the future, with clear responsibilities and expectations from the whole staff and governing body.

What the school should do to improve further

- Encourage all pupils to take more ownership of their RE learning, extending and widening those learning strategies that help them best to learn actively, imaginatively, and creatively, as well as giving scope to deepen teacher knowledge and develop a rich, creative curriculum.

How good are outcomes for pupils, taking account of variations between different groups?

Grade 1

a) The extent to which pupils understand, contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school

- Pupils have a good understanding of what it means to be in a Catholic school and how it differs from other schools. They can articulate, for instance, the impact that the prayer life of the school has on their actions and their relationship with others. Their remarkably mature written replies to Bishop Declan's People of Hope questionnaire for young people amply demonstrates this;
- Pupils contribute not only by their outstanding behaviour both in lessons and around the school, but also through pupil conferencing, providing essential feedback, which is built into the school improvement plans. Pupils increasingly take on a range of responsibilities which show they are alert to the needs of others, and especially in becoming outstanding carers and role models for the younger children;
- The chaplaincy team is becoming a real driving force in sustaining and enriching the Catholic life of the school. Pupils apply to be chosen and pledge a commitment to become role models. Younger children see them leading reflections and respond well. This also encourages good pupil relationships across the school;
- Pupils have a genuine respect for those from different backgrounds and a heightened moral sense of their obligation to help others. They are exploring Pope Francis 'Laudato si' encyclical and developing their personal response to it. A reflection session on being stewards of the planet and conserving water, for example, swiftly moved to action - 'what can we do for those who lack water?' and a suggestion to support the work of Water Aid. They support many other charities, both local and global, such as CAFOD;
- There are strong links with the parish, with pupils participating in and leading both school and parish liturgies;
- There is further scope, perhaps through a more formal review of the school mission statement, for pupils to be able to articulate what the statement means for them and to encapsulate their reflections in their own words.

b) How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education

- Pupils enter the school at varied levels of attainment and understanding of religious knowledge and practice, but in line with expectations. Taking account for their starting points the proportion meeting expectations and exceeding expected progress by the end of Key Stage 1 is high. The quality and quantity of work, and the pace of progress over time, is good and much is outstanding;
- Progress at Key Stage 2 matches the excellent quality, quantity, and consistency of the written work seen in the earlier years, so that by the end of Key Stage 2 the outcomes in both attainment and achievement are outstanding. There is a deepening of understanding of the theology behind each topic, and very impressively they are becoming adept at reflecting on the meaning of the Gospel accounts and making links between scripture and other areas of their lives. For example, in a lesson on Apostolic Succession pupils were able to see, without teacher's prompting, links with the post resurrection Breakfast on the Shore. Another example, in a different lesson the children were able to link the Flight into Egypt with the plight of refugees today. There is however, on occasion some inconsistency in the level of teachers' challenge, which affects the quality of the pupils' response;
- Disadvantaged pupils, and those with special educational needs, make similar outstanding progress as the other pupils because of very effective planned interventions, differentiated tasks and the pro active support of learning assistants;
- Pupils are at the stage where they could be encouraged to take more ownership of their own learning, through pupil led discussion or more independent research, and letting teachers know what prevents them from learning better. The school listens to what children have to say and where appropriate could encourage a wider, more imaginative approach to learning;
- Pupils are proud of their achievements and demonstrate a positive interest in learning new things and ideas. They question readily –for instance 'Where did the Roman centurion get his faith from?' and they feel confident in expressing their own opinions. When asked pupils were very positive about their learning and enjoyment of RE. They know what level they are on and what concrete steps they need to take to get to the next level. Their conduct in lessons and around the school is outstanding, a reflection of the school's successful promotion of its core values and ethos.

c) How well pupils lead, respond to and participate in the Prayer Life of the School

- All pupils irrespective of faith background participate fully, and feel included, in the prayer life of the school. They show reverence, attentiveness, and willingness to play their part as witnessed in the beautiful candle lit reflective assembly for Candlemas Day, where their attention and behaviour was impeccable. All pupils are becoming more involved in the planning and preparation of their liturgies and assemblies. The liturgical calendar is at the core of the planning process and this is evident in the pupils' growing understanding and use of religious liturgical terms;
- The chaplaincy team takes the lead in promoting prayer life, and they are excellent role models as well as animators. They regularly plan and present reflection sessions

in all year groups, picking a theme, such as promoting the bonds of friendship. The school has its own prayer garden, which is a labyrinth or walking meditative maze. A member of staff with the support of a parish catechist organise a school prayer club, which is very popular and a focus for developing their spirituality.

- The pupils value the many prayer opportunities, which punctuate the school day. They compose their own heartfelt prayers and reflections, which are displayed on the pupil-monitored prayer tables.

How effective are leaders and governors in developing the Catholic Life of the school?

Grade 1

a) How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school and plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils

- Leaders and governors very effectively promote, nurture, and sustain the Catholic ethos of the school as their primary concern and care, which is the main focus of their strategic planning. The inspiring head teacher has communicated a vision for the future and assured stability and continuity through team building and distributive management despite inevitable staff changes;
- The governing body is a very knowledgeable and hands on influence in the life of the school. They meet all statutory, canonical, and diocesan requirements fully, and strive to bring to reality the call to be a People of Hope. They are well informed and proactive in all aspects of school life and their combined expertise is shown in the questioning and challenges through the governors' minutes and in their notes of visits to the school. The governors have benefitted from diocesan training and reflection on the People of Hope document as well as the Bishop's Pastoral Plan;
- There is a commitment from every member of the staff to work together to achieve the best for the pupils, as well as promoting Catholic values across all the subjects. Staff morale and their investment in the school is outstanding and they are excellent role models for their charges;
- The school frequently asks parents, staff and pupils their opinions as to what could be better. As a result of this feedback, the school leadership knows itself very well, can more accurately assess the impact of its actions, and can quickly re shape its improvement planning where necessary. Parents are kept informed of school events and the topics their children are studying through regular newsletters and email. They attend Masses and assemblies whenever they can;
- The spiritual life of the staff is nurtured and celebrated through regular inset or inspiring talks, such as the day with Sr. Judith Russi, a shared INSET with other schools. This helps bind staff, Catholic and non-Catholic, together in commitment and unity of purpose, sharing the same goals and values of the school's mission. There is at least one Inset day annually which is devoted specifically to Catholic life and spirituality which is focussed on instilling confidence in leading and directing the prayer life of the pupils through their

own spiritual growth. Induction procedures for new staff are well planned and very supportive.

b) How well leaders and governors monitor and evaluate the curriculum for Religious Education and relationship education, and plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils

- Leaders and governors use data and monitoring information intelligently and effectively, exercising careful oversight of the RE curriculum and learning outcomes. The governors receive termly reports from the head teacher, who is also the RE coordinator, but are also kept closely informed through feedback from the very experienced link governor, who is a frequent visitor to the school. Governors challenge, question, and hold senior leaders and staff to account, as is evident in the feedback from lesson observations and book scrutinies;
- The subject records are comprehensive with great attention to detail but also to the wider picture. The parents are invited to be part of their child's education through newsletters outlining the topics currently being studied, and giving hints about how they can help their children at home. Their views, and the views of the pupils, are frequently elicited through conferencing, and any issues or problems arising properly addressed. Subject development plans are drawn up and used as working documents, which are added to or re shaped during the course of each term;
- The provision for staff induction, in service training, and diocesan training is particularly supportive for the teaching of RE. The school is well aware of pockets of weaker subject knowledge and is addressing this area with extra support. This has resulted in teachers becoming more confident in assessment and in setting learning objectives. There is similar work being done in building levelling skills, which is supported by cross moderation with schools.

How effective is the provision for Catholic Education?

Grade 1

a) The quality of teaching and how purposeful learning is in Religious Education

- Teaching is very effective in promoting purposeful learning, the engagement of the pupils, their enjoyment, and their overall good and better results. The pupils' outstanding attitudes to learning have a strong impact on their progress and achievement. Learning assistants are involved in providing supporting resources for lessons and when needed expansion of knowledge with the teacher;
- Teaching is consistently good with some outstanding practice. A good range of teaching styles are employed, including strong questioning skills, which ensure pupils' concentration and engagement. In a Year 1-2 lesson the children learnt much from role playing, especially having to answer questions into a handheld microphone, describing and justifying their opinions. Where there are occasional weaknesses in planning for learning, or subject knowledge, teachers receive swift and effective support;
- Teachers have high expectations of pupils' presentation of work and intellectual effort. As a result the pupils rise to the challenge and are able to contribute their own

arguments and opinions, writing reflectively and at some considerable length. This is illustrated in each Year's Floor Book, which has many examples of discussions and reflective writing. This could be encouraged further by including more diverse forms of learning led by the pupils themselves;

- Teachers' skills and expertise in assessing pupils' progress are being successfully refined so that they can arrive at reliable judgements on individual achievement and progress over time. Written work is annotated so that the pupils' progress over time can be clearly seen.

b) The extent to which the Curriculum promotes pupils' learning

- The RE curriculum meets all Bishops Conference's requirements. It is broad and balanced so that students can explore and develop their own values and beliefs. They discuss themes such as peace, fairness, compassion and injustice, which they then link to the objects of their charity fundraising, and outreach to others in society who are more needy. Consistency and continuity in progression are carefully planned. Staff meet termly to plan the topics in advance;
- The study of other world faiths through Faith Weeks and visits to other places of worship is a real strength of this inclusive school, because it ensures ample time to explore and understand other major world religions, and to promote tolerance, understanding, and respect for others' beliefs. It also inculcates an appreciation of the diversity and richness of other cultures;
- Provision for sex and relationship education, using the Journey in Love programme, is in place and approved by the governors adhering to diocesan guidelines. The wider curriculum successfully promotes spiritual, moral and vocational development, and is taught through the lens of the Faith. The First Holy Communion preparation is run by the parish and supported in school;
- There are many opportunities for the pupils to exercise their generosity and reach out to others in need, through local and global charities.

c) The quality of the Prayer life provided by the School

- The outstanding prayer life of the school is inclusive and joyful. Prayer punctuates the school day and is part of every celebration. A well planned timetable of Masses and assemblies follows the liturgical year, including traditional Catholic practices such as the Rosary, Advent and Lent celebrations, and the Stations of the Cross. There is a clear intent to encourage more pupils to organise and lead collective worship, using the excellent role modelling of the chaplaincy team;
- Already they have a thriving Prayer Club based in The Hive, and the new prayer garden is yet another opportunity for reflection and prayer;
- The parish priest makes an important and valued contribution to the spiritual life of the school, supporting its role in the wider mission of the parish and the universal Church. The parish church, close by the school, is an excellent resource and draws the school into the life of the parish. Teachers and pupils have created colourful and thought-provoking displays around the school, which remind the whole community of the liturgical cycle, and the topics the pupils are currently studying;

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- Parents and carers are invited to attend Mass and assemblies and many do. The school is keen to encourage more parents to become involved in the prayer life of the school and their children. The excellent newsletter keeps parents fully involved about what is going on in school, and very successfully outlines what each Year's termly topic in RE is, with prompts and questions that the parents can use to reinforce the learning in school. Every opportunity is taken for joint worship with other schools.

Summary of Parental Questionnaires

There were 78 parental questionnaires returned. All were extremely positive about the school and the quality of their children's education. Some typical responses included:

'We particularly wanted our daughter to be brought up in a caring and welcoming school. We wanted her to know her faith more clearly and enjoy sharing her religion with children her own age'

'The school makes it easy for children to reflect and understand their faith at a deep level appropriate for their age. The school takes time to celebrate differences and similarities between individuals, culture, and religions in a positive way'.

'This school has a warm, caring attitude; it values pupils as individual children, as part of the family of God. It has an ethos of caring for each other, the world, and others less fortunate and I feel this is so important in the world we live in'.

'Although we live near other schools we wanted to send our children to this school because it is Catholic and we are a practising Catholic family. The parents are really involved and the PTFA is thriving'.