

**DIOCESE OF PLYMOUTH  
VICARIATE FOR EVANGELISATION CATECHESIS AND SCHOOLS**



St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Primary School  
Coombeshead Road  
Newton Abbot  
Devon  
TQ12 1PT

**URN 140765**

Head Teacher: Miss Kelly Dunne  
Chair of Governors: Rev. Deacon Tim van Kroonenburg

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Canonical Inspection under Canon Law 806 on behalf of the Diocese of Plymouth and  
inspection of Denominational Education under S48 of the Education Act 2005

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**Date of Inspection 19-20<sup>th</sup> April 2018**

Inspectors:  
Miss Sarah Adams  
Mrs. Helen Armstrong

## Context of School

St. Joseph's is a small Catholic Primary School within the Catholic School's Trust (CAST) which spans Dorset, Devon and Cornwall within the Diocese of Plymouth. It is part of the parish of St. Joseph's. The school has mixed year group classes within KS2 but single year classes in KS1. Currently there are 8 members of the teaching staff equating to 6 FTE Teachers. There is a private nursery attached to the school but is not linked to the school, although children who attend the nursery often transfer to St. Joseph's.

St Joseph's is widely recognised in the local community and throughout the diocese as having had a challenging time over recent years. Many factors, including frequent changes of leadership, led to a fractured community struggling with broken relationships. There was no clear vision, staff did not work as a supportive team, children's needs were not being met systematically, teaching and learning standards were wildly inconsistent. In June 2016, Ofsted found the school to be failing in behaviour and safeguarding. The current Head Teacher joined the school in September 2016.

Driven by a strong call to serve, the Headteacher worked tirelessly to equip and strengthen her team, embed the vision for St Joseph's, build relationships with parents and raise pupils' self-esteem and belief that they matter. By the time Ofsted returned in October 2016, the school was found to be effective in behaviour and safeguarding. Ofsted returned in October 2017 to do a full inspection. At that time Ofsted acknowledged, "The headteacher has a clear vision for the school. Her approach is inclusive and open. She has motivated staff and pupils. They work determinedly to make this a good school....Pupils' behaviour and attitudes are good. This helps them to focus and learn...Pupils' welfare and development are safe and secure."

## Context Data

NOR: 156 Girls: 77 Boys: 79 Disadvantaged: 19% EAL: 17% SEN: 16% FSM 8%

<b>Over-All Effectiveness:</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Grade 2</b>
The School as a Catholic Community:	Good	Grade 2
Leadership and Management:	Good	Grade 2
Word (Curriculum RE)	Good	Grade 2
Worship and Spiritual Life of the School	Good	Grade 2

## Summary of Key Findings

St. Joseph's is a school which is **Good**.

### The school has the following strengths:

1. St. Joseph's has evaluated itself as a Catholic school with honesty and integrity.
2. This is a school with a strong sense of purpose and a commitment to living by Gospel values.

3. Relationships within the school are positive and there is a growing confidence that with everyone working together St. Joseph's will go from strength to strength.
4. The Head Teacher and her Assistant Head set an excellent example of being at the service of all. Their humility reflects the call of Christ to be people who wash the feet of one another. To this end, the leadership encourages every member of the community to see themselves as integral to the success of the school.
5. The Chair of Governors is a longstanding governor and a key member of the community who works hard to support the school. Other members of the governing body are relatively new. Although they are beginning to see the need to challenge as well as support, there is a need for them to develop their roles so that they are seen to be active and proactive in leading the school with the Head.
6. Curriculum RE has a high status in the school and is valued and seen as important by teachers and the leadership.
7. Induction is taken seriously and new staff feel confident about the support that they receive, enabling them to engage with the Catholic Life of the school with confidence. The support they receive for the teaching of RE gives them the confidence to seek support and guidance if they need it.
8. Children enjoy their RE and apply themselves positively to the challenges they are given. Their resilience is strong and they perform well in lessons.
9. Support staff provide valuable assistance to the teachers, particularly with the most vulnerable children. They are sensitive to the children and respond well to their needs.
10. Parents are increasingly supportive of the school. Many responded to the survey which was overwhelmingly positive. They recognise the strengths of the new leadership and are pleased with the direction in which the school is travelling.
11. All aspects of school life contribute to the spiritual development of pupils. They are open to God's presence in all that they encounter.
12. Prior to the new leadership being in place, relationships with the local parish had appeared to have broken down and were certainly fragile. This has changed. Now the school and parish enjoy a positive relationship, enabling the school to benefit from the traditions and practices of the Catholic Church in a meaningful way. This provides a context for all aspects of school life, enriches the worship and stimulates spiritual development of all in the community.
13. The school provides the pupils with a wide variety of well-planned and spontaneous spiritual experiences, which enable all pupils to grow in their understanding and appreciation of God's presence in the world.
14. Scripture is highly valued and its relevance understood by all.
15. The school liturgies and worship enable pupils, staff, parents and carers to reflect on and be grateful for the gifts they have received from God.

### **What does the school need to do to improve further?**

1. As the school moves forward and staffing becomes more stable, the school would benefit from a review of its Mission Statement so that every member of the school community can embrace it and make it their own so that it becomes a shared vision for the school moving forward.

2. For Governors to develop a clear plan of agreed expectations for moving the Catholic life of the school forward, with a time-line for monitoring outcomes.
3. Provide a clear programme of development for staff in relation to their RE subject knowledge so that all can grow in confidence for delivering the curriculum.
4. For teachers to ensure that the amount of work in RE books reflects the amount of RE teaching that is being covered.
5. Ensure that there is a clear monitoring programme of all aspects of RE in place so that there is evidence for lesson observations, book scrutinies and support being offered where needed. (In addition or part of the whole curriculum monitoring programme).
6. Develop assessment in line with Diocesan and National guidelines so that teachers understand the framework for assessment and the expectations these hold for teaching and learning outcomes.
7. Develop further opportunities for a variety of prayer experiences which are both structured and spontaneous.
8. Develop the confidence of all adults within the community, so that all know how to structure and deliver an act of worship to the whole community. Ultimately this will lead to children developing their skills to do this.

## **Full Report**

### **THE SCHOOL AS A CATHOLIC COMMUNITY**

**Good**

- Although St. Joseph's has been, and continues to be on a challenging journey to rebuild its' confidence and sense of direction, there is no doubt that the Head Teacher is moving the school forward with a true sense of mission and vision. Her capacity to take the school all the way forward is undeniable. Ably supported by her Assistant Head, she understands the needs of the school and is committed to ensuring that St. Joseph's is a vibrant Catholic school community, rooted in the Church and service of the world. Her passionate commitment to service and leading from the front is to be commended. It is certainly bearing fruit in the confidence of the staff to bring about this vision.
- St. Joseph's is a warm and welcoming school, where children are its greatest asset. They are friendly, well-behaved and have a genuine care for one another. This is flowing over into a desire to meet the wider needs of the community. In particular the children had, during Lent aimed to raise £300 for WORK a charity that supports widows and orphans in Kenya, they not only succeeded in meeting their target but when on to raise a further £900.
- The school's current mission statement, '*Live, Love and Learn in a caring Catholic Community*', although in need of updating, continues to inspire and promote a belief in the joy of working together. Children consistently commented on how they care for one another and when working in groups never felt isolated or left out.
- The school has a relatively high proportion of vulnerable children. The Assistant Head has responsibility for working with all children who are vulnerable. She has a

great clarity of understanding regarding their needs and how to provide the necessary support packages so that they can settle and participate fully in the life of the school. Pastoral Care throughout the school is strong. Teachers and teaching assistants respond well to the different needs of individual children. The atmosphere around the school is, as a consequence calm and conducive to learning. The school embraces diversity and promotes equality. Children are helped to appreciate the needs of others and enthusiastically look for opportunities to support a growing range of charities.

- Children at St. Joseph's are highly positive about the school. They are happy, feel safe and respond well to clear expectations and boundaries. They are confident that the adults will keep them safe and care for them.
- Induction is well planned and received well by new staff, who are enabled to integrate quickly and embrace the ethos of the school. They are supported effectively by the leadership team and understand the expectations the school has of the adults in the community.
- The school embraces the love of Christ by promoting strong partnerships. These include developing positive relationships with parents, children supporting one another through the buddy system, engaging with the parish in a meaningful way and supporting parents to develop their skills. In addition the school is fully involved as a member of the academy and keen to learn from other schools while sharing their own strengths.
- A significant number of parents responded to the parent survey. They are highly positive about the school and believe that changes over the last two years have made a real difference. They believe that their children are well-cared for, enabled to learn and given opportunities to be creative and learn from first-hand experience. An example of this would be school trips which are focused and really offer children the chance to learn new things and have new experiences.

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**THE SCHOOL AS A CATHOLIC COMMUNITY (LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT)    Good**

- The Head Teacher and her Assistant Head are models of Christian leadership. Their commitment to developing a strong Catholic Ethos where every child matters is having an impact on the quality of education which children are offered and the development of their spiritual lives. Their own profound faith and sense of vocation pervades every aspect of school life.
- The Head Teacher is committed to sharing a vision of Catholic Education which embraces all and excludes no one. She does this by ensuring that all staff, children and parents have the opportunity to see its worth and engage with it.
- As a result of this commitment, the adults within the school feel increasingly valued and appreciated. It has not been easy because the school has experienced many changes over the past five years, but as people see the positive impact they are becoming increasingly willing to embrace change. Most staff are responsive and respond well to self-evaluation, monitoring and the need for searching analysis. As a

result needs are identified more quickly and support put in place to develop the skills and talents of the teachers and support staff.

- Relationships with the wider community have strengthened over the past year with home, school and parish having stronger links. The Parish priest and Deacon are regular visitors to the school and are welcomed and respected by staff and children.
- Currently there is only one additional leader in the school who is responsible for Maths. Once the school is more settled it will be important to find ways to develop more Middle leaders so that people can grow in confidence to lead and develop their skills as they take on more responsibility.
- The Assistant Head took over RE leadership in September, as a result of a long term absence. She has embraced this with enthusiasm and as a result all staff are growing in an awareness of its importance and how central it is to the life of the school.

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## **THE SCHOOL AS A TEACHING AND LEARNING COMMUNITY (WORD)**

**Good**

- Teachers and support staff engage well with children. Their interactions are encouraging and supportive, reflecting Gospel values of kindness, compassion, gentleness and forgiveness.
- Children enjoy their RE. They engage fully in lessons and are articulate in talking about their lessons. They are able to understand what they have been learning about and can apply it to their own lives and the lives of others. They have a genuine respect for the subject. They want to make progress, are keen to do well and apply themselves fully in lessons.
- It is clear that RE has a high status in the school and is seen as an important part of the school curriculum with all classes receiving their 10% entitlement. Working walls for RE are evident in all classrooms and demonstrate the development of a particular unit. Many show the teaching and learning which is taking place. They are used effectively to support the learning in the classroom.
- Teaching is for the most part strong. It engages children in meaningful and challenging activities. Children are attentive and interact with each other respectfully and inclusively. Within the pupil conference meetings, many of the children commented on how easy it is in the school to move from one group to another and always feel included.
- Expectations of teachers are high. As a result children have no time to be bored and consistently remain on task, keen to offer their ideas and keen to develop their skills.
- Teachers use the resources provided by the Diocese effectively and adapt their planning to meet the needs of the children. At the same time they are themselves creative and strive to ensure that lessons do set high standards.
- In those classes where there are teaching assistants, they work well with children in a supportive capacity. They understand the needs of those children who have particular difficulties and are attentive to providing them with what they need to be able to access lessons appropriately.

- Work in books shows a clear progression from years 1-6 and in some books there are a variety of good quality activities. In others, however, the standard of written work does not always reflect the high level of engagement in the lessons. There is also a disparity between the learning objective and the activities that children are asked to do in their books. If teachers could aim to improve this area of the teaching and learning, outcomes would be significantly higher.
- The school's marking policy is gradually becoming embedded and this will also have an impact if teachers ensure that they apply it consistently to their RE marking.
- To further support teachers to develop their understanding of RE, it will be helpful for the school to build in regular time for pre-unit conversations so that any concerns about the theology to be taught can be addressed.
- Learning environments are positive and engaging. The classrooms have interactive working walls and prayerful focal points, which honour the children's efforts and engagement with the subject. They are readily accessible and enhance learning and the prayer life of the school.

### **THE SCHOOL AS A CELEBRATING COMMUNITY (WORSHIP AND SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT)**

**Good**

- The Spiritual life of the school has developed significantly over the past two years. Children are now offered a variety of prayer and liturgical experiences which contribute to their spiritual growth.
- Children are open to the presence of God in their lives and the lives of others. The stability in the school and the development of the worship life of the school has contributed to this openness.
- Whole school acts of worship follow the liturgical year and ensure that the mission of the school is developed through engaging with the Gospel of the Sunday.
- The school receives positive support from the local Parish clergy. They visit every week and are welcomed by children and staff. The school now actively participates in the traditions and practices of the Catholic Church. In addition the Parish is now seeing the school as their school and are showing signs of wanting to engage more fully with the school. ( A recent survey in the Parish identified a number of parishioners who would like to offer their service to the school in a voluntary capacity).
- Each classroom has a prayer focus which is engaging and well-established, reflecting the liturgical season and the work of RE.
- Around the school a variety of displays, focal points and artefacts point to the Catholicity of the school. St. Joseph's is an overtly Catholic school and growing in its identity as such.
- Classroom circle prayer has been embraced by the teachers and children appreciate this more intimate time of prayer. Children respond well, are reflective and engage prayerfully in this quiet time.
- As the liturgical life of the school develops more, opportunities for children to learn the skills of leading worship will be a natural outcome.

- In all aspects of the life of the school the spiritual and moral development of the children is clear to see. Children are taught and nurtured to understand the difference between right and wrong. They understand the concepts of forgiveness and reconciliation and demonstrate a genuine desire to overcome conflict and be a community of peace.
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## **Conclusion**

St. Joseph's has had a difficult few years but the arrival of the current Head Teacher has made a significant difference to the life of the school. This is a school where living the Gospel is becoming firmly embedded and as a result the strength of this Catholic community, rooted in love and service to one another and the wider world is flourishing. This is a school where Christ is increasingly at the centre. Parents, Pupils, staff and the Bishop can feel hopeful and justly proud.

Sarah Adams  
Helen Armstrong