



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

St Joseph's Catholic and Church of England (VA) Primary School

Calver Crescent
Chesterfield
S43 3LY

Previous Section 48 inspection grade: Good

Current inspection grade: Outstanding

Diocese:

Local authority: Derbyshire

Dates of inspection: 15th October 2015

Date of last inspection: 1st February 2011

School's unique reference number: 134773

Headteacher: Rowena Herbert

Inspector's name and number: John Clapham 775

School context

St Joseph's is a smaller than average primary school with a rising roll of 138 pupils in five classes, plus a newly opened nursery. Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds and speak English as their first language. The proportions of pupils eligible for free school meals or who are in local authority care are above the national average. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above average. The school has had an executive Headteacher since January 2013, as part of a soft federation with another school.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Joseph's as a Catholic and Church of England school are outstanding

- Well-articulated distinctively Christian values are clearly expressed in every aspect of the life of the school, with exceptionally strong partnerships with and across the three churches linked to the school
- The school has become an inclusive, loving and caring environment where every child is nurtured as a child of God, and their needs met exceptionally well.
- The high profile of the school's Christian character has a discernable impact on the children's outstanding behaviour and attitudes and their academic, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The school is well led, with all members of the school community contributing tirelessly to the rapid progress that the school continues to make.

Areas to improve

- Increase the creative opportunities for personal reflection across the curriculum to develop children's spirituality, using all areas of the school site.
- Develop global links with other schools and churches to raise awareness of the multi-cultural nature of Christianity.
- Develop a wide range of higher level skills to equip children to make links between beliefs and practices across the RE curriculum.

The school, through its distinctive Christian character, is outstanding at meeting the needs of all learners

The work of St Joseph's is informed by explicit Christian values that are an integral part of the whole life and witness of the school. One governor made the comment that 'the overt prominence of the Christian purpose and vision of the school is never far from the surface', an observation that was borne out throughout the inspection. Values such as peace, love, friendship, hope and trust are lived out consistently by all members of the school community. The school's Christian character results in a secure and caring environment where children make strong progress both academically and in terms of their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Children's spiritual development is exemplified through responses in books, and a spirituality learning walk carried out by the school, which showed children thinking deeply and were confident to express their thoughts and views. Adults in the school are good role models for children who report strong, supportive relationships and say that they feel safe, valued and included. The enthusiastic, well behaved, children enjoy attending school because St Joseph's meets their needs well and shows exceptional care to families as a whole. As a result, children value school as a safe happy place and attendance is high. They work and play together well both in school and on the playground, showing a high standard behaviour and care. Children have confidence that any issues are dealt with quickly and fairly. They take their responsibilities seriously, particularly through the well-defined roles within the school parliament and in caring for each other as a whole school community. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school, and greatly appreciate the school's open door policy. One parent commented 'Our school is like a big family where children and adults are listened to, and emotional as well as academic needs are met. I am so proud that my kids come here'. Children have an exceptional understanding of the school's Christian heritage as jointly Catholic and Church of England, although this does not yet extend to the children understanding Christianity as a multicultural world faith.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Collective worship across school is inspirational and an integral part of the whole school community. Relevant and engaging opportunities for worship, both in classrooms and as a whole school, give children many opportunities to participate, reflect and apply meaning to their own lives. The high level of involvement that children have in planning, leading and evaluating collective worship has given worship a high profile in school life, influencing the thinking and day to day actions of the whole school community. Through high quality partnerships with clergy from both religious traditions of the school, children clearly understand and can identify the distinctive features of these traditions and practices. The extensive work that the clergy put into preparing the children for joint masses in school raise the prominence and value of mass in the school and is an example of outstanding ecumenical practice. This makes a significant impact on the children's own spiritual journeys. During the inspection, one child reflected that 'collective worship is important because we are like a big family and the Holy Spirit guides us and helps us'. Prayer is highly valued as an integral part of the life of the school. Children are developing a good understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit in worship and were keen to discuss this during the inspection. Governors and senior leaders have used well focussed monitoring and evaluation of collective worship to respond quickly to feedback, ensuring that collective worship makes a significant impact on the school community. Collective worship is well planned to cover a broad range of Christian themes and important Christian festivals and meets statutory requirements.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

The RE curriculum successfully promotes the school's Christian values and staff are making great steps in developing high level skills in children's enquiry, analysis, interpretation, evaluation and reflection. The school's creative enquiry led approach to RE gives children many opportunities to apply their impressive knowledge and skills, which now needs to impact more strongly on the quality of children's reflections across school. Teachers use questioning effectively to gauge children's understanding and encourage them to think more deeply. An example of this observed during inspection was the children's insightful responses to the question 'Does God love you if you are not baptised?' Children do not yet use their thinking skills as deeply to make links between beliefs and practices across the RE curriculum. Children clearly understand their 'steps to success'. They are making strong progress because marking and feedback in RE is carried out with the same rigor as core curriculum areas across the school. Children's responses to marking comments and questions show clear progression, and a deepening understanding on the meaning and application to their own lives. The whole staff team have worked collaboratively to exemplify RE standards against progression criteria. This has given a whole school consistency with clear progression of skills and high expectations of what the children can achieve. Strong attainment and progress in RE is evident across the school. Tasks are well matched to children's needs and provide appropriate challenge. This was an area for development in the previous inspection and is now a strength. The RE curriculum meets statutory requirements, with the teaching of Christianity given prominence. The new subject leader is proactive in developing her role in supporting and challenging staff to constantly improve their practice. Her recent work with a foundation governor on the monitoring of RE has strongly supported the process of self-evaluation and improvement planning.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the school as a church school is outstanding

The school leaders have a clear Christian vision for St Joseph's and communicate it warmly and effectively. The strong partnership shared by St Joseph's and Bolsover Juniors under the executive head has had significant impact on moving the school forward. The school has significant capacity to continue their strong progress in school improvement. Strengths are pulled in from each school, with high levels of collaboration and dissemination of good practice. School leaders, including governors, are particularly effective in linking their vision to day-to-day actions and in helping staff to build effective partnerships with the parishes, dioceses and their local communities. The governors tackle their roles as critical friends with considerable expertise. Self-evaluation is astute and accurate, with well-planned actions in place to move the school forward. This was an area of improvement from the last inspection, and has been addressed fully. The school leaders and governors ensure statutory requirements for RE and collective worship are fully met, and make a significant impact on improving well-being of the children and their families. High quality professional development gives staff at all levels meaningful opportunities to reflect on their priorities for development and use their strengths collaboratively for the benefit of the whole school community. The Christian ethos of the school and the centrality of RE and collective worship are communicated effectively through the school prospectus and key policy documents.

SIAMS report October 2015 St Joseph's Catholic and C of E Primary School, S43 3LY