



## St Joseph's Specialist School and College

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School Unique Reference Number: **125465**

**Principal:** Mrs M. Fawcett

**Chair of Governors:** Dr M. Hollins

**Lead Inspector:** Mrs A. Oddy

**Associate Inspector:** Mrs A. Ireland

**Inspection date:** 18.11.2014

**Overall Effectiveness** Previous Inspection: 2

This inspection: 1

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**Catholic Life:** 1

**Collective Worship:** 1

**Religious Education:** 1

## SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND LEARNERS

St Joseph's is an outstanding Catholic school because:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ St Joseph's provides an outstanding educational and caring experience for all its learners within the setting of a Christian community. The warm and welcoming atmosphere demonstrates its love for its learners who are all valued as children of God. A commitment to relentless self improvement is driven by exceptional leadership and a highly committed staff team. The school ethos embraces and supports all members of the school community. Learners enjoy school and make excellent progress. St Joseph's is an outward looking school sharing its many gifts and talents with the wider community. Areas for development identified by the last inspection have been fully addressed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The quality of collective worship is outstanding. Learners develop their relationship with God through an exciting programme of prayer, celebration and liturgy and respond very positively. Opportunities for quiet prayer and reflection are also available to all members of the school community and its visitors.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Catholic life of the school is outstanding. The mission statement "Christ in our lives – no limits, just possibilities" permeates all aspects of school life. There is a strong sense of community; relationships within the school are excellent and extend to the wider community of parents and families. Learners and their families come from many faiths and cultures; all are included in the Catholic life of the school.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The quality of religious education is outstanding. Excellent teaching and learning ensures that learners enjoy religious education and make good progress. Careful structuring of lessons and a curriculum skilfully adapted to the needs of individual learners result in purposeful and successful learning. Detailed monitoring and assessment contribute to accurate school self evaluation and inform school development planning.</li> </ul>

# FULL REPORT

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

- St Joseph’s is a residential and day school for learners with moderate and severe learning difficulties.
- The school is non-maintained and is in the trusteeship of the Diocese of Arundel and Brighton. It is situated in the Guildford Deanery.
- There are sixteen placing authorities from the London boroughs and south eastern counties.
- The proportion of learners who are baptised Catholics is 14.29%.
- The average weekly proportion of curriculum time given to religious education is 10% across all key stages.
- The school takes learners from 5 to 19 years.  
The number of learners currently on roll is 72.
- The attainment of learners on entering the school is well below average. Most learners have complex needs within the SLD (Severe Learning Difficulties) range and all have statements of special educational need. Most learners are also on the autistic spectrum and require specialist provision.
- The majority of learners are of White British heritage and others are from a range of ethnic backgrounds including Black Caribbean, African and Asian.
- There are fourteen looked after learners.
- The school has achieved autism accreditation and Specialist Schools Status in the areas of Communication and Creative Arts.

## WHAT DOES THE SCHOOL NEED TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER

- Continue to develop the integration of religious education into the whole school learning experience.

## CATHOLIC LIFE

### THE QUALITY OF THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

- The extent to which learners contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school.
- The quality of provision of 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 learners contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school is outstanding.**

- The learners are at the centre of all spirituality and the Catholic life of the school. Excellent support by their carers and educators enables them to experience all the school has to offer and to make their own contribution.
- The school's programme of religious education, prayer and worship has been specially adapted to suit the needs of the learners. They are supported to participate fully in masses and liturgies and also in school charity and fundraising events.
- Learners enjoy coming to school and have a strong sense of belonging to the school community. They learn to establish friendships and good relationships with others and feel valued members of the school. The school programme of Sex and Relationships Education is tailored to their individual needs and follows the teaching of the Church.
- Learners are encouraged to care for others in their school community and beyond. Events such as 'Kindness week' and 'Feeling Good week' help them to explore themes of love and kindness and self-esteem.
- The school is a multi-cultural and multi-faith community where diversity is celebrated. All individuals are valued and welcomed into the Catholic family which is St Joseph's.
- Good links exist between the parish and the school. The annual parish picnic and family mass take place in the school grounds.
- The school mission 'Christ in our lives – no limits, just possibilities' is known and lived by the whole school community. It underpins all aspects of school life and is reflected in all policies and practice.
- The care and support provided to learners is exceptional and as a result they make excellent progress. One parent wrote "My child gets 100% support at school and they support the family and home life too. I'm so happy that my daughter goes to St Joseph's."
- St Joseph's enriches the lives of its learners with a wealth of activities and experiences, enabling them to live life to the full, within school and beyond. On leaving, a learner commented "I was worried that without St Joseph's I would be nothing, but I guess I am everything I am because of them."

**The quality of provision of the Catholic Life of the school is outstanding.**

- The mission statement is at the heart of the school. All staff are fully committed to its implementation across the curriculum and the whole of school life.
- The school embraces all members of its community into its Catholic life, including parents and governors. It has good links with other schools and participates in deanery and diocesan events.
- A spirit of joy and strong sense of the worth of each individual as a valued and loved member of God's family is evident in the school and embodied in the many events of its Catholic life.
- An attractive learning environment, including high quality artefacts and displays reflects and proclaims the school's Catholic identity. This is also clear in the warm and welcoming atmosphere that pervades the school.

- Pastoral care is outstanding. Learners and their families receive care and support at all times. Learners are sensitively supported to overcome challenging behaviour and to take responsibility for themselves and their actions. Care and Education link workers build strong relationships with families, who are always invited to be fully involved in their children's school lives.
- Relationships within the staff team are excellent. Morale is high, with all members of staff united in their prime purpose of doing their best for the learners in their care. Despite the large number of staff, a personal approach ensures that staff achievements and personal milestones are recognised and celebrated. The school also recognises the emotional demands of working at St Joseph's. Debriefing and therapeutic sessions are available to staff as appropriate. Staff feel valued, form a cohesive team and cheerfully give of their best.
- Learners are well prepared for transition both on entry to the school and when leaving. A family link worker works closely with parents and carers to ensure smooth transition for learners and their families.
- The chaplain plays an essential and valued part in the Catholic life of the school, providing guidance and support to all members of the school community. His dedication and commitment to the school enhance the provision for the school's Catholic life.

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

- Leaders and managers at all levels are fully committed to the Catholic life of the school.
- The Principal inspires a cohesive staff team dedicated to the school as a caring Christian community enabling and empowering its learners. She communicates a strong sense of spiritual and moral purpose with a focus on promoting high standards and the fullest personal development of the learners, based on the principle that all are created in the image of God.
- Governors appreciate their responsibilities and play an important and effective part in the school's Catholic life. They are well informed; they receive regular reports and presentations regarding the school's Catholic life and use these to inform school development planning. They attend liturgies, masses and many school events.
- The school is a strategic partner of two Catholic Teaching School Alliances. This reflects its forward looking nature and willingness to share its considerable expertise and skills.
- Induction for all new staff ensures that they are aware of the school's mission and ethos and are supported in promoting it.
- School self-evaluation of the Catholic life of the school is well established and reflective. Robust systems of monitoring and evaluation are in place, resulting in the school celebrating its strengths and continually striving towards greater improvement.
- The previous Chair of Governors has been involved in a research project centred round enabling young people with severe learning disabilities to prepare for the sacraments. The findings of this research have been used to improve sacramental preparation for learners at St Joseph's.

## COLLECTIVE WORSHIP / PRAYER AND WORSHIP

- How well learners respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship.
- The quality of provision for Collective Worship.
- How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship.

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### **How well learners respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship is outstanding.**

- Two acts of collective worship were observed. In both of these, learners participated actively and joyfully.
- Effective modelling by adults, the use of signing and excellent use of technology and resources enabled all learners to participate fully.
- Music is a strength of the school and added to the enjoyment of the lively singing assembly.
- Opportunities for prayer and reflection were offered in both liturgies observed. Learners were also at ease with contributing to spontaneous prayer. One learner prayed that his birthday would come more quickly; this was skilfully used by the chaplain in a general prayer for patience when waiting for good things.
- Learners are effectively prepared for liturgical celebrations in order to ensure the fullest participation and understanding. They learn responses to prayers and develop their ritual competency. This helps them to feel at home in a parish community.
- Learners respond very positively to the many and varied prayer and worship opportunities the school offers. The Palm Sunday liturgy, featuring a real donkey and procession with palms was enthusiastically received and spoken of by learners.
- Learners are aware that the chapel is a special place and that special behaviour is required during collective worship. Despite their evident enjoyment and natural exuberance during the collective worship observed, they were reverent at all times.

### **The quality of provision for Collective Worship is outstanding.**

- Prayer and worship are central to the life of the school. Learners are given a wide range of opportunities including candle time and singing assembly as well as liturgies and masses. The use of MAKATON signing reflects the inclusive nature of the school and brings all learners into the celebration.
- Learners are encouraged to become familiar with the seasons of the liturgical year and important celebrations in the life of the Church. Advent and Lent, Harvest, feasts of Our Lady and the school's patronal feast day are occasions celebrated with great joy and reverence.
- Prayer opportunities are carefully planned to be meaningful to the learners, including their own experience and educational themes being studied. Music and candles are often used to create a prayerful atmosphere.
- Staff support learners in planning and participating in prayer and worship.
- Parents and staff join learners as active participants in the school's collective worship and prayer life. Staff appreciate opportunities for prayer. Parents are invited to liturgies and masses; parental attendance is good, despite many parents living some considerable distance from the school.
- A wide range of prayer and worship opportunities is designed and adapted to suit the needs of the learners. These include high levels of multisensory input and a wealth of different activities.
- Artefacts, pictures and elements of the outside environment are effectively used to provide areas of reflection and peace. Calming therapies and resources such as the 'Magic Carpet' and multisensory room help learners to be at peace with themselves and to develop their spirituality.

### **How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship is outstanding.**

- Prayer and worship opportunities are carefully planned, taking into account the needs and experiences of the learners. They are an essential part of the life of the school and planned as part of the school and Church year.
- Leaders and managers are excellent role models, leading and participating in school worship. All staff participate fully as well as supporting and enabling learners.
- Governors attend school collective worship events as part of the school community and also to fulfil their monitoring role.
- Prayer and collective worship are included in school improvement planning. The school continually strives to enhance the spiritual experience of its learners.
- Staff training is provided to inspire staff in the delivery of Catholic worship and also to help them develop their own spirituality. Prayer is an important part in the life of the staff and is part of staff meetings and INSET days.
- Collective worship forms part of school monitoring and self-evaluation. Feedback from governors, families, school leaders and 'Independent Listeners' is included in this.

# RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

## THE QUALITY OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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- How well learners 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 learners achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education is outstanding.**

- Learners enjoy their religious education lessons. Excellent use of resources, including ICT, enhances lessons and engages learners. During the lessons observed, learners' interest was evidently engaged and they remained focused throughout the lesson.
- Learners are able to talk about their learning and are developing religious literacy skills.
- Learners make excellent progress from their starting points. Meticulously kept records of individual learners' progress show that they are achieving well, taking into account the framework of their learning difficulties.
- Learners are supported to fully access the religious education curriculum. Personalised learning ensures learners make maximum progress.
- Lessons are carefully structured to maximise learning; manageable steps and the skilful use of a visual timetable enable learners to progress towards lesson objectives which may be challenging.
- 'Godly Play' is an effective resource which enables learners to focus on their learning. MAKATON signing helps learners to access the curriculum.



### **The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education is outstanding.**

- The school follows the 'Come and See' programme of religious education. This has been specially adapted to meet their learners' needs. Time allocated to religious education is in line with the requirements of the Bishops' Conference.
- Outstanding teaching and learning was observed. Meticulous planning included details of individual learners' learning needs and appropriate tasks. Differentiation was exemplary. Classroom support was outstanding, enabling learners to make maximum progress. All adults in the classroom were very sensitive to the needs of the learners. Any challenging behaviour was dealt with gently and effectively and always with the dignity of the learner in mind.
- Varied teaching styles and resources were effectively employed, including the use of multisensory stimuli.
- Excellent use was made of cross-curricular links reflecting how religious education permeates the whole curriculum. The school has identified this as an area for further development.
- Teachers showed excellent subject knowledge and well-structured lessons had good pace.
- The school has a well-established schedule of monitoring and assessment. Assessment is matched to P scales and levels of attainment. The subject leader has modified these to include the use of very small steps to enable more effective tracking of progress and provide more meaningful target setting. All staff are involved in assessment. Monitoring includes lesson observations and moderation of assessment tasks.

### **How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education is outstanding.**

- Senior leaders inspire confidence and whole hearted commitment on the part of the school team. Their vision focuses on the continued improvement of religious education in the school and adapting it to the needs of the learners.
- Rigorous systems of monitoring inform school self-evaluation and development planning. As a result of this, a comprehensive action plan is in place. Religious education is clearly at the heart of the school and this is recognised by all staff.
- Provision for religious education is regularly reported to and discussed by the Governing Body. The link governor for religious education takes her responsibilities very seriously. She is extremely well informed, conversant with school data and passionate about the Catholic life of the school and religious education.
- Religious education is very well resourced. High quality resources and technology contribute to an imaginative and exciting curriculum.
- The school has many links with other schools and agencies to provide an outstanding range of enrichment activities to enhance the learners' experience of religious education. An example is the connection with Wintershall, providing drama experiences at Christmas and Easter.

## Summary of Inspection Judgements

How effective the school is in providing Catholic Education.

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### Catholic Life

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The extent to which learners contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school.

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The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school

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

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### Collective Worship

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How well learners respond to and participate in the schools' Collective Worship.

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The quality of provision for Collective Worship

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

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### Religious Education

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How well learners achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education.

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The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education

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How well leaders and managers monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education

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