

Section 50 Inspection Report



St. Joseph's Catholic & Anglican High School - Sontley Road, Wrexham. LL13 7EL

St Asaph Diocese and Roman Catholic Diocese of Wrexham

Local authority: Wrexham

Dates of inspection: 24th February 2020

Date of last inspection: January 2014

School's unique reference number: 6654603

Headteacher: Mr Chris Wilkinson

Lead Inspector: Mrs Alison Burrowes

Inspectors: Mr Gareth Williams, Mrs Jennie Downes

St Joseph's Catholic & Anglican High School is a voluntary aided 11-16 shared faith Anglican and Catholic high school. The school is popular and regularly over-subscribed with pupils applying for places from across Wrexham and the wider area. The school currently has 727 pupils on roll. Attendance is excellent and consistently high. Around 8.3% of the pupils are entitled to free school meals (FSM). A very few pupils have English as an additional language or speak Welsh as a first language. The current headteacher has been in post for four years.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Joseph's Catholic and Anglican school as a Church in Wales school are excellent.

Every member of the school is totally committed to living out its mission as a joint Catholic and Anglican Church school. Leadership at all levels passionately and effectively promotes the religious life of the school and Religious Education. The Christian character and values of the school have a significant impact on the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils. Every child is known and loved, and they feel valued and supported. All areas of the school reflect the high-quality provision which enables all pupils to achieve.

Established strengths

- Relationships at all levels across the school create an inclusive, caring and nurturing Christian ethos, enabling all members of the school community to flourish, belong and become the best they can be.
- The leadership and quality of Religious Education provision is a significant strength of the school.
- The behaviour and attitude of the pupils is exemplary and the pastoral system and support extremely effective
- The quality of Collective Worship and Liturgy is excellent and contributes to the spiritual development of all members of the school community.

Focus for development

- To continue to evaluate and improve Schemes of Learning and resources at KS4
- To develop systems which include Governors in the monitoring of the prayer life of the school
- To further develop Student Voice to give them opportunities to harness their ideas and energies to engage in transformational projects both in and outside of the school community

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

An outstanding feature of the Christian character of St Joseph's Anglican and Catholic Secondary School is how the Gospel scripture 'I am the way, the truth and the life' John 14:6 is lived out by all within the school. Students describe the distinctive Christian character of the school as, 'part of who we are' and say it 'gives us a sense of belonging'. The headteacher and senior leadership team are strong and all within the school community are fully committed to living out the school's joint Anglican and Catholic mission with pride. The Christian character of the joint faith school has a high profile and is central to the strategic direction taken by the leadership team. The headteacher ensures that high standards of behaviour, attendance and uniform are consistent and expected of all pupils. One parent commented 'teachers provide clear expectations for the high standard of work and behaviour they want, ensuring my children know how to improve'.

The Gospel Values are highly visible around the school and are evident in all aspects of school life, including lesson planning and policy development. The school's distinctive Christian ethos and the spiritual development of all learners is supported and enriched by visual displays which include colourful, inspirational artwork throughout the school. Value is placed upon providing time, space and support for students to explore and develop their own personal journey of faith and spirituality. This impacts positively on the high standard of pastoral care, support and guidance offered to all students. The excellent relationships evident throughout the school community are a notable example of the impact of living Gospel values in practice. The staff in the school provide positive direction and guidance. One pupil described the teachers as being, 'like your school parents' who act as 'sign-posts'.

Gospel values provide pupils with a deep understanding of empathy. The pupils are fully aware that Christianity is a multi-cultural global faith. The school fully embraces diversity, all learners are valued, cared for and the highest regard is given to their wellbeing, a pupil explained '(staff) go out of their way to show they believe in you'. Teachers support the development of learners' positive self-image through encouraging greater confidence and self-worth through the creative arts which are used to enhance Liturgy. The governors' commitment to wellbeing is demonstrated in the resourcing of pastoral support which includes a full-time Anglican chaplain and two part-time Catholic chaplains. Peer to peer support is developing as a valuable part of the school culture, with pupil prefects offering compassion and understanding to younger pupils. The headteacher and senior leadership team have identified, through evaluation, the need to further 'harness the energy' of pupils in order to develop student voice within the school.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is Excellent

Prayer and collective worship are integral and central to life of all in St Joseph's school. Value is given to ensuring every member of the school community can reflect and relate their personal faith to daily life. One pupil expressed how St Joseph's school provides a 'safe' place to express personal faith without judgement.

The school chaplaincy team successfully foster a spirit of prayer and reflection which are faithfully rooted in Anglican and Catholic teachings and traditions. A member of staff described the chaplains as 'nurturing the staff and whole school community'. The impact of the school's commitment to prayer and collective worship is evident in the calm and peaceful Christian ethos found throughout the whole school environment.

The school's chapel is an outstanding part of the Christian life of the school. The special and sacred space is situated at the heart of the school. It provides a peaceful and supportive place for all within the school community to feel heard and supported on their developing faith journey.

Collective worship is held in the school's social court. Nearly all pupils of the school community regardless of background feel included and affirmed by worship. In whole school liturgies learners animate the worship with music, dance and drama. The students are supported in recognising and developing their own spirituality through the experience of prayer and creativity. A member of teaching staff described being 'moved to tears' by the pupils' creative and imaginative expression of faith during collective worship.

The pupils respond to issues of social injustice such as homelessness, through developing 'Christ the King' assemblies and liturgy which inspire spiritual and moral reflection. Themes of worship are deeply rooted in Christian beliefs. Learners develop a secure understanding of the feast days and festivals of the Anglican and Catholic Church. Pupils are given opportunities to consider and focus on the season of Lent during both class and whole school worship. A range of leaders from different Christian traditions offer the whole school community a rich experience of worship and whole school Eucharist.

The effectiveness of the religious education is Excellent

The Religious Education department is a strength of the school. Pupils achieve well at each Key Stage.

Standards of attainment are excellent, and the department makes a significant contribution to the school's key performance and accountability measures. In 2019, 88.5% of learners achieved A* - C for religious education at GCSE. This exceeded the aspirational Fischer Family Trust (FFT) target of 82.7% and 50.8% achieved A*/A against FFT of 47.2%. These outcomes for RE at GCSE in 2019 were 25 percentage points above the Wales figure at A* - C (cumulative) and 25 percentage points above the Wales A*/A figure.

All groups of learners perform well in religious education and the department performs significantly above the national floor target for FSM pupils. Standards of attainment of nearly all learners are in line with core subjects and a significant number attain higher.

The quality of teaching and learning in the department is excellent. The Head of RE is an Assistant Head teacher and she provides effective and efficient leadership of the department. All four members of the department are specialists and have excellent subject knowledge. All lessons observed were judged to be good or better and the rigorous monitoring and evaluation processes and systems in the department provide opportunities for the RE team to work together to keep their practice innovative and compelling.

The curriculum in both Key Stages is rich and varied and enables and empowers pupils to acquire a thorough knowledge and understanding of the Christian faith. Schemes of learning are under constant review to ensure they respond to school and national requirements and are differentiated so that pupils are given opportunities to learn in a range of different ways. Teaching is very well planned and organised resulting in structured and creative units of work. Pupils spoke of their love of the subject and shared a confidence that they knew they were going to achieve well in it.

Pupil progress is rigorously tracked through the effective use of assessment data. Challenging formal, informal and summative assessment and target setting enables many pupils to meet or exceed their target level. Individual pupil portfolios of formal assessments are tracked over the Key Stage and early intervention prevents any pupil from falling behind.

The department is well resourced and has a suite of rooms. Displays are high quality and support learning. The level of funding for the department is commensurate with the other core subjects. All pupils have a discreet Personal, Social, Health, Education lesson which also provides opportunities for a cross curricular approach to relevant aspects of the RE curriculum in Key Stage 3. In other subjects' opportunities are planned to enable them to contribute to the social, moral, spiritual and cultural development of the child. In an art lesson visited the pupils were creating a structure which reflected who they were as a person and required them to produce a hashtag that identified their uniqueness. All students spoken to had created something that was deeply spiritual and personal.

The RE department is central to the religious life of the whole school. Together with the chaplains, art, music and drama departments they involve all pupils in a range of opportunities to explore their own faith and beliefs in the most creative, innovative and relevant way.

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

Leaders at all levels of the school consistently and confidently articulate, live out and promote a vision rooted in distinctively Christian values. The Christian mission drives all aspects of policy and practice and this is evident in the quality of education that is consistently delivered in each Key Stage. The Head teacher and his senior leadership team have created a climate and culture that enables all members of the school community to be the person they are called to be. Together they work together as a highly effective team to ensure the promotion of joint Anglican and Catholic life is at the centre of its strategic direction. The inclusive nature of the school means that the needs of the most disadvantaged and vulnerable are prioritised and these pupils flourish in the caring, supportive and nurturing environment which has been developed and resourced. Pupils settle quickly when they join the school. Liaison with partner primary schools is good with a planned programme of Transition events. Year 7 pupils spoke of Rocket Week as being a significant factor in their seamless transition to secondary school.

The distinctive Christian character and values of the school ensure the development and achievement of the whole child. The Rainbow Centre provides innovative and effective support to some of the most vulnerable children enabling them to take a full and active part in mainstream education and the Matrix of Vulnerability ensures that the needs of all children are met. The pastoral system is inextricably linked to the mission of the school.

All aspects of the strategic planning of the school is immersed in the school's mission and vision. Self-evaluation of the school's distinctiveness and effectiveness as a Church school is honest and accurate. The governing body provide support and challenge and they have effective systems in place to monitor and evaluate the Christian life of the school and the Religious Education provision. They fully understand their role in holding the school to account for the Anglican and Catholic life of the school.

The leadership of worship and RE is given the highest priority and this leads to exemplary practice in both areas. The Assistant Headteacher with responsibility for leading RE also line manages the Chaplaincy Team and the quality of liturgy throughout the year is outstanding. There is an effective Induction programme for all new staff and one Staff Development Day a year is allocated to the Religious Ethos of the school.

A culture of self-evaluation and improvement exists across the whole school and was very evident in the RE department. A robust system for monitoring all aspects of the teaching, learning and assessment is in place and informs the on-going developments of the department.

Excellent relationships exist between the school and local parishes, the dioceses and the wider community. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school with one parent commenting, 'The school has a strong religious ethos....it embraces diversity among students and teaches tolerance to all religious views'

The school meets the statutory requirement for collective acts of worship

Yes

The school meets the statutory requirement for religious education (where inspected)

Yes

The church inspectors would also like to thank the Headteacher, Staff, Governors and Pupils of St Joseph's school for their welcome and cooperation

