

Best practice

St Joseph's Catholic and Anglican High School, Wrexham

Number of pupils: 689

Age range: 11-16

Date of inspection: January 2014



Area of sector-leading practice which has been identified during inspection and relates to a particular quality indicator:

Key Question(s): 1 Outcomes, 2 Provision
3 Leadership and management.

Quality Indicator: Overall effectiveness of the school. The Christian life of the school. The work of Chaplaincy

Context and background to sector-leading practice:

St Joseph's is a co-educational, voluntary aided 11-16, shared Catholic and Anglican high school in Wrexham. The school became a shared-faith school in 2006, following an agreement made between the dioceses of Wrexham and St Asaph. St Joseph's is a popular and oversubscribed school. Families apply for a place from a wide area and pupils currently on roll originate from over 50 primary schools.

The school's mission statement states that the school "strives to guide the whole school community to achieve their full potential, grow in their journey with God, and live a Christian life, which we will do in Christ's love, by the example of St Joseph the Worker."

The school has 689 pupils on roll; approximately 60% of whom are baptised Catholic and with up to 40% baptised Anglican (Church in Wales). Two pupils are looked after by the Local Authority, 58 pupils are on the SEN register and 32 pupils have English as an additional language. 22% of pupils are from minority ethnic groups, which is a high percentage compared with local authority and all-Wales average.

Nature of strategy or activity identified as sector-leading practice:

"The Christian life of the school is inspirational" (Section 50 Inspection 2014)

Inspired by God's spirit and enfolded in the Father's love, it is the special privilege of the Chaplains and Chaplaincy Team to work together holding and supporting the whole school community on its journey of faith by following Christ, who is 'our way, our truth and our life' (School Motto)

The Chaplaincy Team comprises a member of SLT, three designated part time chaplains, together with other members of the teaching staff with specific areas of

"The three part-time chaplains provide an important and unique role. They dedicate themselves to the faith life of the school and make themselves available at all times of the school day and beyond, to support and listen to the students with a quiet sincerity and concern". (Sect 50 2014)

expertise. Weekly timetabled meetings enable us to plan, deliver and evaluate all our activities in order to consolidate good practice and consider new developments. We hold the compass of gospel values and the lens of faith as we approach each day.

“The quality of prayer and worship and planning is outstanding” (Sect 50 2014)

Prayer is the heartbeat of the school. Its focal point is the chapel ***“a sacred space available for the whole school to access”***. A wide range of liturgical celebrations, which include the Eucharist and Reconciliation are celebrated regularly. Other forms of spontaneous prayer emerge naturally during the day. These varied experiences of prayer with their attendant attitudes, such as stillness, respect and reverence, become embedded in the very atmosphere of the school ethos.

Staff Development Days provide opportunities to explore the faith dimension of the school and share resources for prayer. The Chaplains are always available to provide help and support which enables staff to feel confident in the planning, development and delivery of prayer.

Holding the vision and rooting it in prayer, provides the basis for all our caring and nurturing of staff and children, especially the most vulnerable. Our pastoral care is essentially a ministry of presence and service. The contribution and dedication of our Safeguarding Officer and Chaplains, together with our Pastoral Leaders of Learning and all staff, is especially valued. What is particularly precious is that we can see our young people grow and flourish and they in turn ‘life’ others. This inspires us all as staff and reminds us that children are our ‘raison d’etre’. With each other and with

the children, we enjoy the challenge – experience laughter and tears in the Emmaus moments of recognition and draw strength from insights of lasting worth.

Impact on provision and learners’ standards:

“The commitment of the pupils shown in the life of the school is outstanding. Their voice is heard and every pupil is respected”. (Sect. 50 2014)

Nurtured by living gospel values and reflective prayer during their life in school, our pupils grow in maturity and depth. The Christian life of the school has:

- Enabled pupils ***“to become religiously literate and to reflect spiritually, theologically and ethically”***. (Sect 50 2014)
- Helped pupils to ***“respect worship and prayer as part of each school day... to be deeply committed to this aspect of school life, recognising the importance of it to them as individuals and as a school community.”*** (Sect 50 2014)
- Contributed to the ***“outstanding commitment demonstrated to the school and local community, through extensive charity fund-raising and community projects.”*** (Sect 50 2014)
- Enabled pupils to take responsibility for their own life of faith and become ambassadors of faith in the next stage of their journey.