

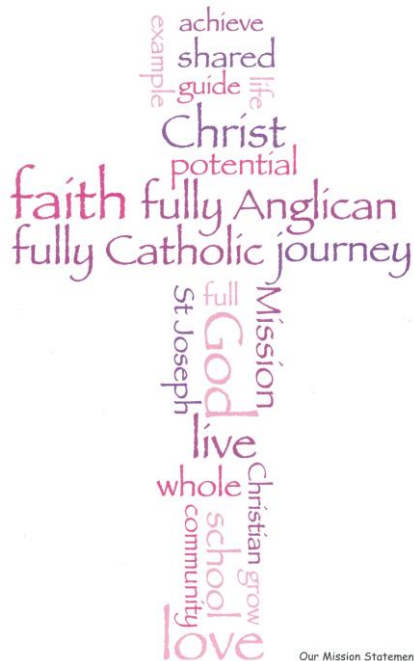
Best practice

St Joseph's Catholic and Anglican High School, Wrexham

Number of pupils: 689

Age range: 11-16

Date of inspection: January 2014



Our Mission Statement

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.

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:

Our shared Catholic and Anglican ethos is the warp and weft of our school community. Since we became a shared faith school we have been on a journey in which we have grown in confidence in both affirming the unity and, more recently, in celebrating the distinctiveness included within our joint denominational affiliation.

A commitment to this ecumenical adventure is embedded in every layer of school life: It is written into all our policies, it is a key consideration in recruitment and is reinforced through staff development as well as being evident in the prayer, teaching and learning throughout the school. St Joseph's seeks to communicate this joint commitment to the wider church family; including parents and parishes through, for example, attention given to the welcome

that is extended to visitors to ensure that the school is recognisably faithful to each tradition. A regular calendar of celebrations and charitable work is planned which seeks to honour both traditions and inclusive communication is disseminated through the weekly Gazette and via the website. The senior leadership team (SLT) reflect and actively support the shared faith ethos and the school is served by a trinity of chaplains comprising a Catholic religious sister and both a Catholic and an Anglican priest who work collaboratively and also relate to the local diocesan and parish structures. The chaplains work with a wider chaplaincy team and with pupils and members of the SLT to develop and review our worship and pastoral ministry. Worship is always as inclusive as possible whilst maintaining the integrity of both church traditions and respecting the needs of all. Collective worship, led by staff and pupils, is regularly monitored and seeks to build a bridge to the work of the parishes, dioceses and to the world church.

Important links addressed in this way include engaging with environmental matters as well as with justice and development issues and exploring Welsh culture and identity.

All pupils have opportunities to visit and engage with places of pilgrimage, retreat and prayer in each diocese and both Bishops have an active and supportive role in our community.

Our shared faith work is resourced and monitored by the Governing Body, especially through a Mission and Ethos committee and also by regular meetings of a Mission and Purpose Working Party which provides an arena for communication and challenge between school and the dioceses. Meetings with local clergy of both traditions and growing involvement and partnership

working with the parishes to which our pupils and staff belong is a current priority. A growing relationship of mutual sharing and learning with our dioceses enables our churches ecumenical journey and allows for an exchange of good practice.

All of the above is supported by the ministry of prayer, word and sacrament shared throughout the school. Most especially this ministry finds a focus in the Eucharist which uniquely characterises the offering of gifts, the brokenness which is part of our humanity and the transfiguring love of God which calls us to learn more of God's Way, Truth and Life.

"Worship is celebrated meaningfully through Catholic and Anglican traditions and practice."

"Excellent provision with leadership and management based upon a shared vision ...embraced by both the Catholic and Anglican communities."

Impact on provision and learners' standards:

Pupils at St Joseph's have a broad-based faith and understand the meaning of mission. Respect for the things of God underpins the discipline and ethos of the school community and is evident in behaviour and attitudes to prayer and learning. The shared faith ethos has:

- Enabled the "exceptionally strong caring and inclusive ethos of the school".
- Contributed to the "outstanding commitment demonstrated to the school and local community, through extensive charity fund-raising and community projects."
- Helped pupils to grow in confidence and respect in engaging with matters of faith and diversity and in the ability to learn and communicate effectively with others.