



SECTION 48 INSPECTION REPORT

Canonical Inspection under Canon 806 on behalf of the
Archbishop of Southwark and inspection of
Denominational Education under Section 48
Of the Education Act 2005
URN 100833

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School
Gomm Road, Lower Road
Rotherhithe
London SE16 2TY

Inspection date: 18 September 2012

Chair of Governors:	Ms Jane Christofi
Headteacher:	Mr Chris Wilcocks
Inspectors:	Mrs Ann Oddy Mrs Teresa Hills

EDUCATION COMMISSION

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SECTION 48

Introduction

Description of the school

The school is voluntary aided. It is situated in the Southwark Deanery of the Archdiocese of Southwark. It is maintained by Southwark LA. The principal parishes which the school serves are St Peter's, Rotherhithe and St Gertrude's, Bermondsey South. The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholics is 75%. The average weekly proportion of curriculum time given to Religious Education is 10% in Key Stages 1 and 2.

The school takes pupils from 3 to 11 years. The number of pupils currently on roll is 245. The attainment of pupils on entering the school is broadly below average. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average. Around 22% of the pupils receive extra support in class. Approximately nine out of ten pupils are from a wide range of minority ethnic heritages. 40% of pupils come from homes where English is an additional language.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding	Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 2	Good	Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness as a Catholic school

GRADE

1

St Joseph's is an outstanding school. The Catholic ethos is immediately apparent in the warm welcome afforded to visitors, the modern and attractive pictures, artefacts and displays and the supportive relationships within the school community. The learning environment is calm, well organised and well resourced. The school and its grounds provide excellent, beautifully maintained facilities for its pupils. Standards in teaching and learning are excellent, and pupils make very good progress throughout the school. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive and appreciative of the school. One wrote "We are thrilled with our children's Religious Education and how their spiritual life is encouraged to develop". Religious Education is central to the school curriculum; activities are rich in variety as well as fulfilling statutory requirements. Leaders and managers at all levels are highly effective, conveying a clear vision that is embraced and implemented by an enthusiastic and dedicated staff team. School self-evaluation is detailed and accurate. All recommendations from the last inspection have been fully addressed.

What steps need to be taken to improve further?

Governors, headteacher and staff should:

- Continue to share the current good practice to provide outreach and support to other schools, particularly within the Diocese.
- Continue to develop the leadership role of the Religious Education coordinator.
- Consider making Religious Education a regular annual agenda item at Governing Body meetings, to include reporting of assessment and pupil progress in Religious Education and a report from the Religious Education coordinator.

The Catholic life of the school

Leadership and management

GRADE 1

The school's leadership is deeply committed to the Church's mission in education. Leaders are enthusiastic, good role models and a source of inspiration to the whole school community. All leaders, including the Governing Body, work in partnership to promote the Catholic life of the school. The parish priests make highly significant contributions to the life of the school as a Catholic community. Both are frequent visitors to the school, ensuring a strong link with both parishes. Governors are actively involved in their role of evaluation, support and challenge. They are conversant with analysis of school data and monitor pupil progress. Governors may now wish to consider making Religious Education a regular annual agenda item at Governing Body meetings, including reporting of assessment and pupil progress in this subject. Staff are fully committed to the Catholic life of the school. The school has a high proportion of Catholic teachers, of these 92% have completed or are currently completing the CCRS. Pupils love their school and they spoke warmly of "the love and friendship shared in this school". They understand how the school's mission should be reflected in their behaviour and their lives.

Quality of provision for personal and collective worship

GRADE 1

Prayer and worship are central to the life of the school and the school day offers many opportunities for personal and collective prayer. Religious Education lessons always include opportunities for prayer and reflection. Every classroom has a prayer focus area. These are attractive, reflect the liturgical year and the current Religious Education theme. Prayers written by the pupils are shared in class prayer times and in Religious Education lessons. A beautiful prayer written by a Year 6 pupil provided a reflective start to the lesson.

The assembly, impressively led by Year 1 pupils, was well organised and presented and offered a prayerful and joyous reflection on the theme of 'Family'. It was shared with the whole school community and was well attended by parents. Pupils are aware that prayer is communicating with God. They were respectful and reflective during quiet prayer and participated joyfully and enthusiastically in their singing and music. Mass is celebrated regularly during the school year. Staff are skilled in helping pupils prepare and present liturgies. The recently introduced "Wednesday Word" strengthens the home / school / parish relationship and contributes to pupils' greater understanding of, and participation in, their Sunday liturgy.

Community Cohesion

GRADE 1

Since the last inspection, the school has comprehensively addressed its contribution to community cohesion. Pupils are aware of their role in the wider community and their responsibilities towards others. They learn about the work of CAFOD and have been active in raising funds for this and many other charities. The school has close links with HCPT and pupils from the school have participated in the HCPT pilgrimage to Lourdes. Pupils are encouraged to be environmentally aware and have taken part in a project to save a local park. They have developed links with local businesses. The curriculum includes work on diversity and pupils spontaneously volunteered how much they enjoyed studying the beliefs and practices of other cultures. The school has shared its good practice by working with other schools in the local area as a 'Good Writing' school. It has also developed links with other Catholic schools, including the local secondary school. It should now consider developing this supporting role further as part of its mission and ethos, particularly with regard to its exemplary provision for Religious Education and Catholic life.

Religious education

Achievement and standards in religious education

GRADE 1

Achievement and standards in Religious Education are excellent.

Lessons observed ranged from good to outstanding. Work in pupils' books is consistently of a very high standard throughout the school. Marking relates to the Religious Education topic and encourages pupils to reflect on and extend their learning. Teachers are aware of their pupils' capabilities and of their prior learning and understanding and build on these effectively. Good use of resources and appropriate support provided by other adults optimise learning. Pupils enjoy their lessons, respond with confidence and enthusiasm to effective and probing teacher questioning and make excellent progress. Pupils display exemplary behaviour in lessons and around the school.

Teaching and learning in religious education

GRADE 1

Teachers communicate high expectations and deliver the curriculum with commitment and good subject knowledge. Effective learning is ensured using a variety of teaching strategies and lesson time is managed appropriately. Teachers regularly check pupils' understanding throughout the lesson, skilfully guiding their next steps to learning and assessing their progress. Pupils answer questions with confidence and show a high level of religious literacy. One spoke of God's unconditional love as having "no time, no limits" and others had no difficulty in relating the parable of the Prodigal Son to modern times and their own lives. Rigorous systems of monitoring, assessment and pupil tracking are in place, including analysis of the progress of vulnerable groups. Samples of levelled work are moderated internally. The school may wish to extend this to moderation carried out collaboratively with other Catholic schools. Parents and carers receive regular information regarding Religious Education topics, celebrations and events through newsletters and the school website.

The religious education curriculum

GRADE 1

The school has recently introduced the "Come and See" scheme of work. The Religious Education curriculum matches the full range of pupils' needs and ensures continuity and progression in their learning. It enables pupils to grow in their experience, knowledge and understanding of the beliefs, practices and rich tradition of the Catholic church and to enhance and develop their spiritual life journey. Pupils are also given the opportunity to study other world faiths on a regular basis throughout their time at the school. Religious Education is well resourced, with an appropriate budget allocation. The curriculum meets statutory requirements in all respects.

Leadership and management of religious education

GRADE 2

The Religious Education coordinator is enthusiastic and committed to ensuring high quality teaching and learning in this subject as well as whole heartedly supporting the ethos of the school. He is well supported and guided by senior leaders. This is enabling him to develop his coordinator's role, particularly with reference to lesson observations, monitoring and assessment. He makes a significant contribution to the Catholic life of the school and is developing links with other Religious Education coordinators and the Diocese. Increased experience will assist him in his role, building on his current good practice and further developing his skills and expertise in leading this curriculum area.