

**ARCHDIOCESE OF SOUTHWARK  
COMMISSION FOR SCHOOLS & COLLEGES**



***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 101803

St Joseph's Catholic Infant School & Nursery  
Crown Dale  
Upper Norwood  
London  
SE19 3NX

Chair of Governors	Mrs Elaine Jones
Headteacher	Mrs Tamsyn Lawlor
Inspectors	Mrs Bernadette Dowswell
	Mrs Catherine Green

Inspection dates                      22 June 2011

**ARCHDIOCESE OF SOUTHWARK  
COMMISSION FOR SCHOOLS & COLLEGES**  
St Edward's House, St Paul's Wood Hill, Orpington BR5 2SR  
Tel 01689 829331 Fax 01689 829255  
Director of Education: Dr Dilys Wadman

# Introduction

## Description of the school

St Joseph's Infant and Nursery school is a Catholic voluntary aided school, situated in the Croydon Deanery of the Archdiocese of Southwark and maintained by Croydon Local Authority. The principal parishes, which the school serves are Virgo Fidelis, Upper Norwood, St Matthew's, West Norwood and St Margaret Clitherow, Dulwich Wood Park. The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholics is 93%. The average weekly proportion of curriculum time given to religious education is 10%.

The school takes pupils from 3 to 7 years. The number of pupils currently on roll is 227. The attainment of pupils on entering the school is slightly below average. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average. Around 25% of the pupils receive extra support in class. The pupils come from a diverse range of ethnic backgrounds particularly, Black African, Black Caribbean, White British and a growing number of Portuguese, Spanish and Polish pupils. The proportion of pupils from homes where English is an additional language is above average.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness as a Catholic school

St Joseph's is a good Catholic school with outstanding features. Its strengths lie in the quality of relationships, partnership with parents and the strong sense of community within the school. Developing the self esteem and well being of all pupils is given a very high priority and as a result pupils feel valued, respected and well supported. In the words of one young pupil, 'This school is about respect'. Excellent systems for pastoral care ensure that all pupils including the more vulnerable and those with additional needs of learning English as a second language are able to learn and grow in confidence. The strong partnership with parents and the parish priest nourishes provision and helps to develop the school as a caring Catholic community. The Headteacher provides effective and focussed leadership and clear educational direction within a strong Catholic ethos. Warm and positive relationships are a key feature of the good teaching overall that enables pupils to make steady progress in religious education. Pupils generally reach national expectations of attainment but the more able pupils are not always suitably challenged. Governors are strongly committed to the school, providing support and challenge as appropriate. They are knowledgeable and well informed and involved in the Catholic life of the school and religious education. The issues identified in the previous inspection have been addressed. The school has clear procedures for self evaluation and is not complacent. The Headteacher, Senior Management Team and governors have an accurate view of the schools' strengths and areas for development. It is therefore well placed to build on its strengths and to make further improvement.

**Grade 2**

### **What steps need to be taken to improve further?**

- The good and outstanding teaching in Religious Education needs to be shared across the school in order to raise the overall quality of all teaching.
- Ensure that the assessment of pupils' work is consistently accurate, by providing further support for staff through shared moderation exercises.

# The Catholic life of the school

## Leadership and management

**Grade 1**

The overall leadership and management of the Catholic life of the school, its ethos and mission are outstanding. Leaders at all levels, together with governors collaborate effectively to provide a cohesive direction for the school. The Headteacher has a clear vision of the Catholic mission of the school, which she has successfully shared with all members of the community. She empowers staff to undertake their various roles effectively and encourages a climate of co-operation, support and teamwork throughout the school. The Catholic identity of the school is clearly evident in the high quality artefacts and many attractive displays throughout the school. These include the beautiful statue of St Joseph in the entrance and those in the hall on The Ascension, Pentecost and the Trinity. Pupils are fully engaged in the life of their school and thoroughly enjoy all aspects of learning. They live out their school motto, 'We learn to love, we love to learn', with joy and enthusiasm. The school's dynamic relationship with parents is a great strength. Parents are recognised and valued as the first educators of their children and the school seeks to involve them as much as possible in the life of the school. Many parents expressed their appreciation of the school with comments such as, 'we always feel welcome', 'staff are very caring', 'my children are very happy' and 'they love their teachers'. The parish priest is a regular and welcome visitor who is well known by pupils, staff and parents. His involvement in the life of the school makes a significant impact on the well being and liturgical life of all members of the community. Governors exercise their responsibilities very effectively and know their school very well. The Chair of Governors meets regularly with the Headteacher and governors attend assemblies, Masses, liturgies and other school events. They sometimes join staff at staff meetings.

## Quality of provision for personal and collective worship

**Grade 1**

The school has a well planned and structured programme for worship, which includes assemblies, liturgies and Masses. Assemblies are based on the 'Here I Am' programme, the liturgical year, aspects of Personal and Social Education and the celebration of pupils' achievements. Each term two class assemblies are celebrated for parents and the whole school. Great effort is made to ensure that assemblies are relevant to the ages, interests and abilities of the pupils. An excellent example of this was seen at the assembly presented by a Reception class, which was of a very high standard. All pupils were involved in reading, drama, prayer and song. The behaviour of other pupils was exemplary and they were attentive, respectful and engaged. Pupils were given time to reflect and asked to apply the message of the assembly, 'To love one another', in the playground, the classroom and at home. A large number of parents were present at the assembly and expressed their appreciation of assemblies and other liturgies. Prayer is an integral part of the life of the school. Many opportunities are provided for staff and pupils to engage in prayer throughout the school day. Pupils compose

their own prayers or a shared class prayer with their teacher as was seen in a reception class. There were many lovely examples of pupils' own prayers in books, portfolios and displays. Every Friday during May and October pupils and staff pray a decade of the rosary and parents are welcome to join them. Prayer and reflection are part of all religious education lessons and teachers use candles, music and sometimes power point to create a peaceful atmosphere. The guided meditation observed in a Year 1 class was an excellent example of the breadth of experience these young pupils are offered. All classrooms have a focal area for prayer, which without exception are of a high quality. Artefacts used in these areas are of a high quality and attractive and support the pupils in their prayer life. Pupils attend Mass in the church on special occasions such as St Joseph's feast day and beginning and end of the school year. Parents and governors are always welcomed to these celebrations. A variety of other liturgies and special assemblies take place during the year, for example for Harvest, the Stations of the Cross during Lent, and a procession in honour of Our Lady during May. The school is to be commended for the excellent contribution of prayer and worship to the spiritual and moral development of its pupils.

## **Community Cohesion**

## **Grade 1**

St Joseph's is a warm, welcoming and inclusive school, which promotes a strong sense of family. It is a harmonious community, which is clearly based on Gospel values and where pupils from a wide range of social, ethnic and cultural backgrounds work and play happily together. Pupils are very happy and feel safe in their school environment where they say that adults take good care of them. One child said, 'All the classes have lovely teachers'. Pupils are articulate and confident. They are encouraged to express their thoughts and feelings during circle time and PHSE lessons. Their voice is heard through questionnaires, conferencing and a strong and active School Council. Many of their ideas on how to improve the playground have been acted upon. Council members are involved in interviewing and training playground buddies and considering the young age of these pupils they are to be commended for their responsible attitudes. Pupils are involved with their local community through a variety of sporting and musical activities. They participate in fund raising activities, which deepen their awareness and understanding of the needs of others. Parents feel part of the school and are welcomed at every opportunity. Their views are sought and they are involved in decision making through an established working party of parents. A recent 'Bring a Family Man to school' was a great success and pupils' Dads or another male relation or family friend spent time in the children's classrooms and had lunch with them. The diversity of pupils' cultural and linguistic backgrounds are welcomed and celebrated, for example all classroom doors display the word 'Welcome' in many languages. The annual 'International Week' is very popular and is an excellent example of the whole school community celebrating the richness of its diversity. Parents are very involved in this through a variety of activities, dance, music, cookery and talking and demonstrating to pupils. Through a link with a local secondary school, pupils in Year 2 have the opportunity to learn Mandarin and take part in such things as dragon dancing. Links with the nearest parish are maintained through a proactive relationship with the parish

priest. He visits the school regularly and makes a strong contribution to the pastoral and spiritual life of all members of the community. Some staff and governors are active members of all three parishes that the school serves. The school works closely with the nearby Junior school and pupils transition is well managed and ensures a smooth and happy transition for all pupils. Each school year starts with staff from both schools sharing a 'joint' breakfast, which is sometimes followed by shared staff training. The school is part of a strong local cluster of Catholic schools with whom it shares good practice and which provides mutual support. There are excellent links with a variety of outside agencies, which make a significant contribution to pupils' care, development and wellbeing. Through work on other world faiths, specifically Judaism and Islam, pupils are beginning to understand and respect different religious traditions. This was seen through some good displays and work in pupils' books. Through a member of staff the school has established very good links with a local Greek Orthodox Church and school and some pupils have visited the church.

## Religious education

### **Achievement and standards in religious education**

### **Grade 2**

Some pupils enter the nursery with low levels of language development and others with English as a second language. Clear routines, excellent care and a warm, positive learning environment help these young pupils to settle quickly so that they are happy and confident to learn. A firm foundation for future development in religious education is quickly established as pupils flourish in the positive, lively atmosphere. These young pupils were able to sit still and listen carefully to their teacher and to one another. They know the Bible is a special book and pictures remind them of what makes a good prayer time. Many pupils are articulate and have good oral skills. Pupils in a Reception class were able to explain and discuss what sharing means in very practical terms and the consequences of not sharing and how they would feel. Pupils enjoy their lessons and say that they often do 'fun things'. Pupils in Year 1 enjoyed the small plays they were asked to do to show how they could put into practice Jesus' golden rule to love one another. While many pupils grow steadily in knowledge and skills and make good progress this is inconsistent across the school. All pupils have very positive attitudes to their lessons and their behaviour is excellent. They work well in pairs and in groups and listen very well. Work in books is generally well presented and pupils are given opportunities to present their work in a variety of ways.

### **Teaching and learning in religious education**

### **Grade 2**

The quality of teaching observed during the inspection ranged from satisfactory to outstanding. There are examples of good and outstanding practice, which should be shared to ensure a greater consistency in teaching. All teachers deliver religious education lessons with commitment and

enthusiasm. Learning objectives are shared with pupils and referred to at the end of lessons and sometimes during them. Most lessons have a very good pace and a good balance between teacher input and pupil activity. Teachers establish friendly and supportive relationships with pupils and manage them very well. This helps to create a positive and purposeful learning environment. Teachers use a range of strategies to make lessons interesting. For example pupils in a Year 2 class were asked to consider qualities they thought they would need when they move to the Junior school. These were written down and placed in a Junior school book bag. Very good use is made of the interactive whiteboard during lessons, which helps to maintain pupils' interest. Talk partners are used to good effect in many classes. The deployment of teaching assistants and their impact on pupil progress is a strength of the school. The assistants' sensitive and skilled interaction with the pupils, keep them focussed, enabling them to engage fully in lessons and to make good progress. The teamwork between teachers and assistants is to be commended. All pupils' work is marked carefully and consistently. The school now needs to consider how pupils could be involved in the marking process and made aware of the next step needed in their learning. Assessment procedures have developed well since the previous inspection. Pupils' work is assessed each term and individual tracking is in place. Staff have undertaken moderation of pupils' work within the school but need further training in assessment in order to ensure their judgements are accurate and consistent. The way in which all teachers make prayer and reflection an integral part of religious education lessons makes a very positive contribution to their pupils' spiritual development.

## **The religious education curriculum**

## **Grade 2**

At the time of the inspection, the school follows the 'Here I Am' programme for Religious Education. In September 2011 the school will begin to use 'The Way, the Truth and the Life' programme in line with the Junior school with whom they are to be federated. Sufficient time is allocated to the teaching of religious education. Teachers from each year group use the 'Here I Am' planning proforma to plan their work together, which provides mutual support. While the needs of pupils with additional needs are well met through targeted activities and excellent support there was little evidence of activities to challenge the more able pupils. All lessons build very well on pupils' prior attainment and this was clearly evident. Teachers work very hard to ensure that work in religious education relates directly to pupils' life experiences and is relevant to their own lives. This was clearly evident in all lessons, during the assembly and throughout the general life of the school. Some creative cross curricular links are made with other subject areas, so that the use of art, drama and literacy enriches religious education and makes it more enjoyable for the pupils. The parish priest supports teachers in their teaching of the various religious education topics, for example by welcoming pupils to the parish church and showing them parts of the church and sharing in role play on Baptism. Parents are involved in their children's learning through invitations to assemblies and liturgies, religious education newsletters and additional information in Headteacher newsletters. One parent commented

that she learns a lot about her faith because her daughter is always eager to tell her what she is learning in school. Aspects of Religious Education are linked to the programmes for Personal, Social and Health education and the materials for Social and Emotional aspects of learning when appropriate. The resources for the teaching of religious education are very good and of a high quality.

## **Leadership and management of religious education**

## **Grade 2**

The leadership and management of Religious Education are very good. The Headteacher, subject leader and parish priest work together to ensure clear direction for the teaching and development of the subject and that it has a high profile in the school. They are very well supported by a strong and effective governing body. The subject leader is knowledgeable, very hardworking and committed to her role and to raising standards. She is a very good role model and contributes significantly to the spiritual life of the community. Several parents commented on her positive influence. Teachers are well supported by the subject leader informally and through staff meetings and in-service training. The monitoring role of the subject leader has developed well since the previous inspection and includes learning walks to look at displays and prayer areas, scrutiny of pupils' books and teachers planning and observation of lessons. Feedback is given to staff individually and collectively. The action plan for Religious Education is an integral part of the school improvement plan. The plan could include a sharper focus on strategies to further improve the quality of teaching and learning. Good use is made of support from the diocesan advisory team and through attendance at meetings and conferences. The subject leader's attendance at conferences and meetings enables her to keep abreast of new initiatives. The strong network of schools within the Croydon Deanery provides mutual support and the sharing of good practice. The subject leader has visited several schools in relation to the introduction of the new scheme, the 'Way, the Truth and the Life'. The parish priest is the link governor for religious education and the subject leader meets with him regularly. The governing body is kept informed on aspects of Religious Education through the work of the link governor, the Headteachers' report and occasional input from the subject leader. The policy for Religious Education now needs to be reviewed in order to reflect the very good practice in the school and Diocesan guidelines. Teachers make good use of the wide choice of resources, which are well displayed and organised. All staff work hard to create a stimulating and attractive environment incorporating pupils' work and maintaining the many beautiful displays, which celebrate the life and work of the school.