



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 **141566**

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School
Plaistow Lane
Bromley, Kent
BR5 1BL

Inspection date: **15th January 2016**

Chair of Governors:	Mrs Janet Nelms
Headteacher:	Mrs Sharon Grange
Inspectors:	Mr Damian Fox
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EDUCATION COMMISSION

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SECTION 48

Introduction

Description of the school

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School is an academy. It is part of the Bromley Primary School Umbrella Trust. It is situated in the Bromley Deanery in the Archdiocese of Southwark. The principal parish it serves is St Joseph's Bromley. 97% of pupils are from that parish. 3% are from Holy Cross, Catford. The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholics is 98%.

The school takes pupils from Reception to age 11. Currently there are 209 pupils on roll. It is the only Catholic school in the area. The school has aspirations for increasing its roll and Catholic presence in the local and wider community, but presently do not have the buildings to do so.

The attainment of pupils on entering the school is broadly in line with the national average. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. The number of pupils on the special education needs register is within the normal range. There are a small number of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium. The proportion of pupils from ethnic minority groups is significantly above average.

Date of previous inspection:

04th February 2011

Overall Grade:

2

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1 Outstanding
Grade 2 Good

Grade 3 Requires improvement
Grade 4 Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school in providing Catholic Education

GRADE
2

St Joseph's is a good school with many outstanding features. Leaders, governors and managers demonstrate a deep commitment to the Church's mission in education. Leadership and management are good. Governors are supportive and are regular visitors to the school. They are fully informed of the strengths of the school and work effectively with the Headteacher and staff. The Chair of Governors said that the faith life of the school was a real strength. In the school's rapid improvement over recent years, they have not lost sight of the steps that need to be taken to ensure that the Catholic life of the school remains at the heart of their work. There are clear and detailed plans for the improvement in monitoring of Religious Education.

The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. They are excellent ambassadors for the impact of Catholic Education on the lives of young people. They are proud of their achievements and of belonging to St Joseph's school.

Parents, in written responses and in discussion, are overwhelmingly supportive of, and pleased with, the care their children receive. Responses came from 50% of the families. One parent said that in Reception there was "a great deal of focus on kindness and helping others". Other parents confirmed that their children live out the Christian values developed at the school. One said that "parents are always welcome to join in and contribute". This parent has been invited to talk to the pupils.

Parents also commented on very strong parish links with the priests from the parish regularly coming into school. The school has a high profile in the parish by leading Mass every second Sunday of the month. The Parish Priest is impressed with "the commitment of the staff at the school".

The Chair of Governors said that though they are concerned about the small amount of pupils who go on to Catholic Secondary Schools, governors believe that St Joseph's provides a very good Catholic foundation for the pupils.

What steps need to be taken to improve further?

Governors, Headteacher and staff should:

- Continue to build on the current assessment, monitoring and tracking processes in Religious Education.
- Focus on improving differentiation, particularly at Key Stage 2 where there needs to be more evidence of challenge for higher ability pupils.
- Ensure that the Section 48 Self Evaluation Form becomes a regular feature of the self-review process for the leadership of the school.

The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life of the school

The school has a very strong Catholic identity. Pupils know this and are able to articulate their understanding of what it means to be in a Catholic school. They take full advantage of the opportunities the school provides for pupils to develop their faith. They value the presence of the Parish Priest, and other priests from the parish, who contribute to the pupils' faith formation through participation in assemblies and masses. 97% of pupils are from the local parish.

The behaviour of pupils is exemplary. They are happy and proud pupils who show great respect and care for each other. For younger pupils there is a "thinking spot" to help them settle down if they become unsettled. The buddy system has a positive effect on the pupils. In discussion, pupils said that Year 6 pupils show leadership as guardians by caring for the new Reception pupils. Year 6 pupils said they would only have happy memories of the school.

Both pupils and parents recognised the value of the school as a Catholic school. One parent said that "the long journey she has is worth it for the benefits for her daughter" and added "We are very pleased with the Catholic education our children receive."

Another parent said "the school has provided him with a nice environment where he can build good relationships."

Pupils understand and respond to the needs of others in the parish and wider community. They lead a Mass in the parish Church every second Sunday of the month. Several parents said that this enhanced the liturgy in the parish and also showed the impact of St Joseph's on their children. In the Autumn term, the pupils collected goods for the local food bank, and at Christmas they raised money for CAFOD, singing carols in the shopping centre. The pupils said that they know some people are worse off and need help and gladly work to raise funds for them.

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education

Although standards in Religious Education are mostly above average, school leaders acknowledge that more attention has been given to attainment in other core subjects. This is due to recent changes to the National Curriculum. The Religious Education Leader is developing the assessment and tracking procedures and has introduced the "I CAN" sheets to monitor learning. These regularly inform pupils of their attainment levels.

Pupils said that Religious Education lessons were fun and that they enjoyed the various topics. This was evident in Key Stage 1 lessons, where pupils were happily engaged and where progress was evident. In one lesson an Extraordinary Minister of the Eucharist from the local parish was questioned about her role and this led on to a range of very effective group activities. At Key Stage 2, pupils were very compliant and mostly worked well together, though there were a few occasions when some were not engaged. Most pupils in Key Stage 2 made good progress. The school needs to ensure that the monitoring and moderation of standards in Religious Education are robust, and moderation occurs through the local Catholic partnership.

The quality of the written work in the pupils' books was always of a very high standard and clearly shows that the whole school focus on writing is paying dividends in this subject. Pupils are proud of their work and are keen to learn.

How well pupils respond to and participate in Collective Worship

Acts of Collective Worship engage all pupils' interests and inspire them to participate fully. They show great reverence at daily prayer times. In the school assembly, led by Year 4 pupils, the whole school, and the many parents who attended, joined in the opening action of raising their hands up to God in prayer. Year 4 pupils read and acted out the marriage feast at Cana. They conveyed the message of the story in words and actions, combining seriousness and humour to which everybody responded. There was also a period of private reflection which was beautifully done, creating a prayerful atmosphere. The whole school joined in the school prayer to St Joseph and enthusiastically sang the final hymn.

The priest who helped prepare the assembly said that pupils are always happily involved in preparing and participating in collective worship.

Pupils confirmed that they are involved in preparing assemblies and masses. They enjoy their assemblies and said that these were important parts of school life which helped them learn about their faith. They appreciated the chance to contribute their own prayers in masses, assemblies and in class. The prayer corners are of a high quality and central to the life of the school. Pupils said that prayer is part of their life.

How well leaders, governors and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life of the school and plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils

Leaders, governors and managers demonstrate a strong commitment to the Church's mission. The school has had to respond to various external demands over recent years but their vision for the Catholic life of the school has not been lost. The Chair stated the governors are on a learning journey developing St Joseph's into "a beacon of Catholic excellence". Governors were involved in writing the Mission Statement and all but one attended the Governors' Day.

The Home-School-Parish committee is committed to the growth of the Catholic life of the school and improvement in standards. Governors recognise the role the committee can play in the school's self-review process.

The Headteacher demonstrated that with her insight and personal faith, the spiritual growth of the whole community is central to her work. Devolved management empowers and supports staff to be fully involved in the Catholic life of St Joseph's. Parents said that they were very trusting of school leaders and that the spiritual life of the school was having a positive effect on their children.

Parents and pupils recognise the pastoral care and the Christian values which permeate throughout the school. Strong links with the parish and pupils' contributions to the local and wider community, enhance their experiences and understanding of practising the faith.

The issue raised in the last inspection relating to Other Faiths has been successfully addressed. The issue regarding assessment and tracking is being addressed by school leaders.

How well leaders, governors and managers monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education and plan and implement for improvement to outcomes for pupils

Leaders, governors and managers are fully committed to improving standards in Religious Education. In discussions, it was acknowledged that there had been a need to focus on whole school progress, but the appointment of a new Religious Education Leader in September 2014 shows their desire to ensure that Religious Education is central to the school's core curriculum. She recognises the significant role she plays and has clear plans to improve the self-review process.

The acting Headteacher embodies all that is good about St Joseph's. She has a lot of care for the pupils and only wants the best for them. She knows that there has been a need to focus on other core subjects recently, but her vision for and commitment to the pupils was clear. She has completed the National College short course, Leading in a Catholic School.

With her vision and in her teaching, the Religious Education Leader is an example of deep personal commitment to the life and achievement of all pupils. She is building on the excellent work of her predecessor with an action plan for effective monitoring and evaluation, and there is detailed data on pupil progress which informs planning for improving outcomes, although it was acknowledged that this area needs further development. A new tracking system for Religious Education was introduced in September 2015 to align it with English and Maths. There should now be a rigorous programme of lesson observations to complement the work scrutiny already in place.

The Religious Education Leader is given excellent support by the governors, Headteacher and Parish Priest. She reports to the Parish Priest, who is the link governor, every half term.

There is capacity for the leadership of the Catholic Life and Religious Education of the school to be outstanding.

The quality of teaching and how purposeful learning is in Religious Education

The majority of teaching enables pupils to make progress and during the lessons observed, teaching was good. In Key Stage 1 lessons, there were well planned activities which were appropriate for all abilities. Pupils were motivated, engaged and they enjoyed their learning. In Key Stage 2 lessons, although behaviour and initial group work were excellent, inspectors indicated where there was a lack of challenge for higher ability pupils. One pupil, for example, gave an outstanding answer to a question saying "translations may vary but the truth stays the same." This could have been used to inspire others into a deeper reflection on this point.

The support for learning given by other adults was good.

A move forward in the school's quest to raise pupils' attainment levels was seen in the quality of the presentation in pupils' books. The school has given the Religious Education books a unique look to emphasise how important learning about our faith is. Consequently, pupils take great pride in their work.

Marking of pupils' work is meaningful and done regularly. Comments are affirmative and pupils respond to questions and suggestions from teachers.

The extent to which the Religious Education curriculum promotes pupils' learning

The average timetable allocation across the school is 9.5%. Governors are aware of this and have plans to address the issue.

The school introduced the "Come and See" programme in September 2013 to provide more stimulating learning opportunities for all pupils. The Religious Education Leader said that staff enjoy the programme and are comfortable with using it because it encourages more discussion and interest in lessons. The school should continue developing how it monitors the schemes impact through assessment and lesson observations. The programme to teach pupils about Other Faiths is in place. This includes visits to places of worship of four Other Faiths. Parents confirmed that "children are taught to be understanding and respectful of Other Faiths, for example when other children have their own prayer time."

The impact of the curriculum in its wider sense is evident in the way the Catholic identity of the school is displayed throughout the whole school. Images, prayers and celebration were prominent on every wall. Staff and pupils work together to create a calm and spiritual school where each individual is valued.

The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school

Very high quality Collective Worship is central to the life of the school with daily and weekly celebrations. Staff, pupils and parents regularly come together to pray and celebrate, not just in the school, but with the parishioners on Sundays. One parent said that “the liturgy assemblies are fantastic”. Another added that “through assemblies and liturgy, my children are learning a lot about our faith.”

Collective Worship in the school reflects the vision and determination of all the community to praise God and celebrate the uniqueness of his love. The school assembly which Inspectors saw was a beautiful and meaningful experience. Pupils prayed, sang and acted out the wedding feast at Cana. Parents said that it was always this good.

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