



DIOCESE OF BRENTWOOD



Inspection Report

Name of School: St Joseph the Worker Catholic Primary School

LEA: Essex

Inspection Date: Tuesday 23rd June 2015

Reporting Inspector: Pamela Brannigan

This Inspection was carried out under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of School: Primary
School Category: Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils: 4 - 11
Gender of pupils: Check Mixed
Number on roll: 210
Appropriate Authority: The Governing Body
Date of previous inspection: 4th July 2006

School Address:
Highview Crescent
Hutton
Brentwood
Essex
CM13 1BJ

Tel. No. 01277 227282
Headteacher: Miss B. Rossiter
Chair of Governors: Mr A Goldsmith King

Information about the school

St Joseph the Worker Catholic Primary School is one form entry in Hutton, Brentwood in the county of Essex and part of the diocese of Brentwood. It serves the parish of the same name with a few pupils coming from adjoining areas. There are currently 210 pupils aged 4-11 on roll and the school is over subscribed. The proportion of Catholic pupils is 85%. There is a below average number of pupils from minority ethnic groups with a small number who speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is around the national average.

Key grades for inspection

1: Outstanding 2: Good 3: Satisfactory 4: Unsatisfactory

Overall effectiveness of this Catholic school

Grade 1

St Joseph the Worker is an outstanding school where leaders are deeply committed to the Church's mission in education. Outcomes for pupils, the provision for Catholic education and the capacity for sustained improvement are excellent. Opportunities for spiritual and moral development are interwoven through religious education, prayer and an understanding of what it means to be part of a Catholic community. The headteacher and senior leaders are excellent role models and have put in place initiatives linked to the Catholic life of the school as well as teaching, learning, assessment and monitoring. Pastoral care is excellent and shared by all members of the school community. Relationships are very good and pupils feel well cared for and appreciate opportunities given to be involved in all aspects of school life. Parents welcome the Catholicity of the school; appreciate the good communication with staff and the very wide range of extra-curricular activities available for pupils. Pupils' standards of attainment are in line with and often exceed diocesan expectations.

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

Grade 1

The school has an outstanding capacity for sustained improvement. The last inspection in 2009 identified no major areas for development other than those in the improvement plan. Since then the implementation of the agreed understanding of levels of attainment in religious education have informed lesson planning and assessment. Staff inset to assist the introduction of the religious education programme 'Come and See' has also ensured sustained improvement. Currently moderation meetings are held in school to help teachers to level pupils' work accurately. The school gives a high profile to religious education and has very good strategies to share good practice and support new teachers.

The headteacher, senior leadership team and governors have a clear vision for the Catholicity of the school and the central place of prayer, worship and religious education. The headteacher ensures that all staff are given opportunities to extend their knowledge and improve their skills through staff meetings and attendance at diocesan led training. Three teachers hold the CCRS qualification.

The current leadership has an excellent capacity to maintain effectiveness. The experienced headteacher shows outstanding leadership of a Catholic community through her commitment to all aspects of school life. She, her deputy and the subject leader for religious education have a clear focus on prayer and worship in which they are well supported by all staff. Governors are very well-informed, have a wide range of expertise and are involved in the life of the school. Systems are in place to develop and strengthen initiatives which lead to good outcomes for all pupils. The religious education subject leader is well placed to support colleagues. She has attended diocesan training linked to the religious education scheme which she has disseminated to colleagues and governors.

What the school should do to improve further

- Continue to develop the areas identified in the School Improvement Plan.
- Assemble a portfolio of assessed work to illustrate each level of attainment and assist staff.

Outcomes for pupils

Grade 1

Attainment and progress in religious education is outstanding. All lessons observed during the inspection were good or outstanding and pupils worked with interest and commitment. Pupils spoken to said they enjoy their religious education lessons and appreciate the wide range of tasks involved. They are eager to participate in activities and work well together whether in groups or pairs. They have a good knowledge of the Catholic faith appropriate to their age and are able to integrate religious ideas into their own lives. Workbooks are very well presented, show coverage of the curriculum and indicate excellent progress made by all groups. Standards of attainment are in line with or exceed diocesan expectations.

Pupils make a very good contribution to the Catholic life of the school. The mission statement 'With Jesus we learn, we care, we listen, we share so that He might be seen in the people that we are and the things that we do' is on display in every classroom and well known by pupils. They respond very well to opportunities to understand the needs of others in school and the wider community. They are keen to take on responsibilities including membership of the School Council, St Joseph Workers, and as mentors. Some Year 6 pupils run lunchtime clubs for younger children. Several local, national and international charities are supported throughout the year including Cafod, Harvest Food bank and Christmas Shoebox appeal. Pupils are encouraged to see themselves as part of a global community with responsibilities for other people and the environment. They show respect for adults and each other. Behaviour is excellent and pupils value the sense of community and belonging created within the school. One pupil said, 'Everyone is included here. Nobody is left out.'

Prayer and worship are central to school life. Pupils respond very positively to opportunities to develop their faith journey. They are eager to participate fully in assemblies, masses and class acts of worship which follow the Church's liturgical year, its seasons and celebrations. Pupils are developing the ability to pray in different ways and at different times. Traditional devotions including Stations of the Cross, a May Pilgrimage and the Rosary are included throughout the year. Pupils also use scripture, the prayers of the church, meditation and their own prayers, examples of which were seen during the inspection. The school's beautiful prayer room is used by staff and small groups of pupils for reflection and meditation with a quiet musical background. Older pupils are able to apply aspects of Jesus' life and teaching to their own lives and understand that a sense of service is part of being a member of a Catholic community.

Pastoral care is very good and given a high priority by staff and governors and the parish priest from the local church who work closely together to promote the spiritual development of pupils and the Catholic life of the community. Pupils feel safe, well cared for and know where to go when they need support. Pupils value being in a friendly environment where they are listened to and encouraged to help each other. Parents value the care given to their children, the quality of education and the approachability of staff. They also value the good level of communication with the school and the opportunities which religious education homework gives to share their children's faith journey.

Leaders and managers

Grade 1

All leaders and governors are deeply committed to the Church's mission in education. The headteacher supported by her deputy and subject leader demonstrates excellent leadership of the school through the way she inspires and promotes the provision for the Catholic life of the school. She communicates a clear Catholic vision to the whole community which is affirmed by staff and governors who are all committed to providing the best possible environment for the pupils. Her weekly 'tea parties' ensure she has an intimate knowledge of the progress of all pupils over the year. Together

with the subject leader she has developed a system of self-evaluation which is detailed, accurate and identifies areas for improvement. Together the senior leadership team have a very good knowledge of areas for development in religious education and are well placed to support colleagues.

Senior leaders monitor religious education by means of lesson observations, work scrutiny and joint planning which is followed by feedback to individual teachers who self-evaluate their own practice. There is a strong focus on planning and assessment as the school consolidates the implementation of the 'Come and See' religious education programme and the updated Curriculum Directory. The subject leader has introduced 'A Walk Through the Bible' in Years 5 and 6 which is increasing pupils' knowledge of scripture. The school has put in place strategies to give further challenge to all groups of pupils. Much emphasis is placed on staff development which includes teaching assistants who play a key role in the school.

Governors work closely with senior leadership and have an excellent understanding of strengths and areas for development. They are well informed about the life of the school through the headteacher's report and an annual report from the subject leader. This is in addition to frequent visits to classes, assemblies and other celebrations. Each governor is linked to a class which gives a detailed understanding of developments all subjects as well as religious education. There is a joint training day every year for staff and governors which includes workshops linked to religious education and Catholic life. Governors are involved in all aspects of the religious life of the school and are in a good position to challenge and support effectively.

Leaders ensure that the school is a welcoming community where everyone is respected and valued. Diversity is celebrated and pupils are taught to respect other faiths which are well taught. A rabbi visits annually to talk to pupils about Judaism. Pupils are given very good opportunities to develop a sense of service and show compassion for others through charitable fund raising and involvement in the local community. Opportunities for spiritual development ensure that pupils are able to reflect on their own lives and experiences. Parents are invited to many school events and are kept well informed about their children's welfare and progress. They appreciate the good level of contact with the school which includes curriculum information letters which enable them to support their children's education.

Provision

Grade 1

The quality of teaching and learning in religious education is excellent. During the inspection all lessons observed were good or outstanding. They are planned carefully with clear learning intentions and a varied range of activities. The school has made a major investment in resources including sets of bibles for Key Stage 2 which has led to increased familiarity with scripture. Pupils benefit from the high profile given throughout the school to religious education lessons. In all classes observed pupils were fully engaged and made very good progress. Teachers respond well to pupils' comments and take every opportunity to develop understanding. Higher order questioning was a feature of lessons observed. Very good support by teaching assistants is a feature of lessons throughout the school. Marking is positive and verbal comments enable pupils to identify next steps in their learning. Good assessment, planning and tracking supports the attainment and progress of all groups of pupils.

The quality of the religious education curriculum is outstanding. At least 10% of curriculum time is devoted to religious education. The religious education programme 'Come and See' has been in place for two years and is now embedded. The headteacher gives religious education a central place in the life of the school and this is demonstrated by the budget devoted to it and the current level of resources. Pupils are given opportunities to participate in annual retreat days as well as visit Brentwood Cathedral. Vibrant religious education displays around the school emphasise the centrality of faith to the work of the community. The curriculum enables pupils to become aware of their responsibility for each other and their environment. It contributes very well to their spiritual and moral development. The support given to families through before and after school clubs as well as a wide range of extra curricular activities gives a strong sense of community to the school. There is every indication that current high standards are likely to be maintained or improved.

Provision for prayer and worship at St Joseph the Worker is outstanding. Assemblies and liturgies are very well planned and contribute greatly to pupils' spiritual development. They often include visual presentations, bible readings drama, singing and music. During the inspection pupils lead two

assemblies where gospel values and responsibilities were explored with care and sensitivity. Pupils participated through responses and excellent singing. They are involved in collective worship in their classrooms and are given opportunities for personal reflection. Each classroom has a very attractive prayer focus with religious artefacts and display boards which include children's work. Masses and age appropriate liturgies are celebrated in school throughout the year. Parents, families and parishioners are invited to many celebrations. The priest from St Joseph the Worker church calls in most days to talk to pupils as well as to support the school through class masses, liturgies and Reconciliation in Lent. He also acts as chaplain to staff and pupils on an informal basis. Pupils visit the church to develop their knowledge of Catholic traditions. Links with the parish is very good with many pupils acting as altar servers, offertory and readers at Sunday masses.

The inspector would like to express her thanks and appreciation to all members of the school community for their welcome and openness during the inspection