

**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 100834

Saint Joseph's Catholic Primary School (The Borough)
Little Dorrit Court
Redcross Way
London
SE1 1NJ

Chair of Governors
Headteacher
Inspectors

Mr Andrew Hurley
Mrs Sue Barber
Mr Stephen Beck
Mrs Catharina Mayhew

Inspection dates

7th February 2012

**ARCHDIOCESE OF SOUTHWARK
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Introduction

Description of the school

Saint Joseph's school is voluntary aided. It is situated in the Cathedral Deanery of the Archdiocese of Southwark. It is maintained by Southwark Local Authority. The school serves two principal parishes, Our Lady of La Salette and Saint Joseph (Melior Street Bermondsey) and the Church of the Precious Blood (Borough) although families attend a wide variety of different places of worship totalling more than 29 in total. The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholics is 93%. The average weekly proportion of curriculum time given to religious education is 10% in all Key Stages.

The school takes pupils from 3 to 11 years. The number of pupils currently on roll is 230. The attainment of pupils on entering the school is below average with 69% of nursery children in 2011 entering the school well below the expected level of 30-50 months. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average at 33%, a figure that has risen 10 percentage points in the last three years. Around 27% of the pupils receive extra support in class. The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic heritages is well above average, with a large majority of these pupils speaking English as an additional language. With 68% of pupils having English as an additional language the school has over 30 different languages represented.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness as a Catholic school

The provision of Catholic education at Saint Joseph's School is good with a number of excellent attributes. It is marked by a secure, supportive community underpinned by a very strong Catholic ethos. Pupils are respected, affirmed and supported. The school's very inclusive nature continues to be one of its great strengths. It supports the very positive relationships that exist between all members of the school community which have been established by close working partnerships between home, parish and the local community. The self evaluation statement provided reflected clear and honest approaches to self evaluation. The inspectors have been able to affirm the school's analysis overall which shows it has significant clarity regarding its strengths and areas for development.

Saint Joseph's has been through a period of staff turnover and has been focussing on raising attainment in mathematics. It is to the school's credit that during this period it has continued to see religious education as 'The foundation subject from which the curriculum flows'. The school reflects its Catholic ethos in the very good, caring and professional relationships that exist between adults and pupils explicitly based on Gospel values. The strength of the school's current ethos reflects its involvement in its Catholic community which it has a determination to sustain and extend.

The Headteacher has a clear vision for the school which is built on its Catholic ethos as well as securing and maintaining a strong staff team that is both mutually supportive and works well together on the ongoing improvement of teaching and learning. The school's mission statement is given a high profile following its formulation four years ago in consultation with staff, parents, governors and pupil involvement. It is reviewed annually and clearly sets out how Saint Joseph's as a Catholic family seeks to develop the individual through the example of Jesus, *'To increase in wisdom, in stature and in favour with God and men'*. This it does successfully. In the last inspection the spiritual, moral and cultural development of learners was marked as outstanding as reflected in pupil behaviour and to the school's credit this has in no way diminished. A hall display headed, 'Our Garden of Good Manners', provided a ready reminder of the value in the use of key words, 'please, thank you, sorry, may I, and excuse me'.

Since the last inspection, progress has been made on the areas identified for improvement and as new staff become established and capacity grows this work will undoubtedly be continued and consolidated, reflecting the schools strong wish and capacity to improve further.

Grade 2

What steps need to be taken to improve further?

- Continue to develop assessment and tracking of progress through the building of staff confidence in the levelling and moderating of pupils' work.
- Continue to support staff in their planning for religious education lessons to ensure a range of differentiated activities matched to the abilities of all pupils.
- Formalise through the school's leadership team, the induction programme for the new religious education coordinator to provide focus and a time frame for this induction to be completed.

The Catholic life of the school

Leadership and management

Grade 2

The headteacher gives very effective, resolute and determined leadership to the Catholic life of the school. She has a clear vision of Catholic education and the role of the school in the mission of the church. She is well supported by the management team and governors. This has seen the creation of a strong Catholic community and a cohesive team which is having a very positive impact on the education pupils receive. The mission statement has a high profile around the school and in all school documentation. Pupils are aware of the statement and it may be an appropriate time for them to produce their own versions of the statement to further their understanding of its meaning. The excellent work carried out when the statement was formulated and the ongoing annual reviews have ensured that it is fully embedded in the life of the school community. It is also reflected in school practice, which is based on the common good, ensuring that Saint Joseph's is a highly inclusive school where every pupil is nurtured as a unique and valued individual. Governors know their school well and willingly share their expertise in order to support the school. They play an active part in school life.

It is commendable how well the school has managed significant works over the past five years to update the school building and more recently staff changes. There is a strong sense of purpose to ensure the school returns to 'good' Ofsted gradings across the board, whilst retaining an aspiration to be outstanding. All members of the school's leadership have retained throughout this period the commitment to regularly review and improve the Catholic identity of the school, including teaching and learning in religious education. All teaching staff have a performance management target related to religious education and Catholic identity and feel well supported by senior staff. This has provided well for non-catholic teachers. The headteacher has been proactive in establishing regular contact with Catholic Headteachers in Southwark who now meet at least termly. A programme has also been established for the religious education coordinators from these schools to establish a network and meet regularly.

The range and quality of provision for personal and collective worship continues to be of a very high order. All classes have prayer three times a day including an opportunity to share a prayer from the home-school prayer book. A school assembly for years one to six based on the current religious education theme takes place each week and is seen as an important opportunity to develop children's knowledge and understanding of the practices and beliefs of their Christian faith, as well as bringing the community together in worship. Weekly Tuesday singing practices are held for each Key Stage and during these sessions, the children are also taught to think about the liturgical year. There is a cycle of worship for the whole school and individual classes that includes whole school and class Masses, Liturgies of the Word, class assemblies, reconciliation services and silent prayer. Year 3, as part of the parish based First Communion programme, along with family members, the headteacher and clergy spend a day at Aylesford Priory which ends with a service in the Saint Joseph's Chapel. In November a Remembrance Service is held, during which any child who wishes to is invited to bring forward a cross that they have made at home as a sign of remembering the life and death of a loved one. During Lent and Advent the whole school meets each week for a Liturgy of the Word, based and developed on themes which families are asked to contribute to. For the past two years the school has been very involved in a Christingle Service at Saint George's Cathedral organised together with the DePaul UK charity. This is attended by all children from Years 1-6. Other liturgies are held to mark Feast days which are no longer Holy Days of Obligation. They also celebrate Saint Joseph's Day with a non-sacramental liturgy. During the service a local carpenter comes and makes something during the service so that the children really know about Joseph's occupation. Liturgies are carefully planned with the children to ensure they have opportunities to use a range of expressions of prayer – e.g. music, dance, silence, litanies, actions and drama. A focal area is central to prayer and reflection times, and there is a strong emphasis on the use of symbolism throughout. Excellent displays are visible all round the school reflecting the liturgical year and religious education themes. Good classroom focal points are well used both for prayer and as a lesson resource.

The assembly attended recognised and celebrated a range of positive inputs made by pupils to the life of the school. This was followed by an introduction to the coming Lenten season. The celebration was marked by the involvement of a team of staff and very good unaccompanied singing in which the pupils enthusiastically participated thereby enhancing the celebration. Particularly good use was made of building scripture understanding on pupils' real life experiences. A very prayerful and reverent silent prayer service for Year 6 led by the headteacher was attended by the inspectors. The pupils responded well to this opportunity for a time to reflect and it was impressive how at the end of the day they grasped the opportunity for stillness and contemplation. This was greatly enhanced by an outstanding focal point that drew the pupils to reflective prayer.

The parish priest of one parish the school serves is a governor and regular visitor to the school. The liturgical support and chaplaincy role he provides is highly valued and appreciated by the whole school community. The school's programme of worship is very effective in contributing to pupil's spiritual and moral development.

Community Cohesion

Grade 1

Pupils, parents and governors all described their school as a very happy and safe place to be. Saint Joseph's says it prides itself on its inclusive ethos in terms of ethnicity, faith, ability, social and linguistic backgrounds. It goes on to state in its mission statement that *"We strive to maintain and develop an atmosphere of love and trust and respect for all the different people who make up our community. We are a small multicultural family, welcoming, joyful and relaxed; a family of faith, ready to meet each other's needs. And we are all individuals with our own gifts and talents, a mix of diverse cultures, in which we strive to bring out the best in ourselves and in everyone, and where we never give up on anyone"*. It proactively lives this out through explicitly respecting and valuing the faiths of others in its community. This includes Hindu, Muslim, Orthodox and other Christian families who make valued contributions to the prayer life of the school, helping pupils to learn about the similarities and differences in beliefs and practices of others. Pupils talked effusively about a recent visit made to a synagogue and a number choose written work they had undertaken on the visit as something they were particularly proud of. This aspect of the curriculum reflected the school's wider commitment to teaching about other faiths.

The school actively supports education within the wider community accepting regular work experience and teacher training placements. It provides Core Extended Services to its community. In January 2011 it set up its own Breakfast Club which is targeted at families in need and the school also signpost families to local provision. The school accesses annual citizenship workshops and has also used the Community Police to talk to the children about gangs, bullying and knife danger. Strong links have also been established with a Kent school in a very contrasting area that includes a programme of reciprocal visits. As a community Saint Joseph's takes its responsibility to others less fortunate than itself very seriously. The school contributes to a broad range of charities both home and abroad including, gifts to the Manna Centre for the Homeless, collecting for DePaul UK during Advent and sending regular financial support to SOS Children's Village of orphaned children in Bakoteh, Gambia. There are established links with a school in Helsinki and Saint Joseph's has been awarded ECO School (2009) for its twinning projects. All children are able to contribute and participate with actions, (based on Makaton), that are used within many of the chosen hymns and songs. These are carefully monitored to ensure that all children, (including the very youngest, disabled or EAL children), can join in at their own level. Each class is partnered with another so that the older children 'bring' the younger children to the liturgies and help them focus and join in with the celebration. During Mass an older child takes the younger child for a blessing at Communion time. Great care is taken to ensure that children from

other faiths are able to take part in a way which is comfortable for them. Children who are Hindu or Muslim have contributed (optional) prayers to services and are often keen to take on a ministry.

Religious education

Achievement and standards in religious education

Grade 2

When pupils enter the school their attainment is below that expected for their age, due principally to their limited English language skills. Focussed teaching in Early Years Foundation Stage provides pupils with a good start developing basic learning skills on which Key Stage 1 and 2 can build. This ensures that all pupils make progress in religious education so that by the end of Key Stage 1 standards in this subject area are at least satisfactory. As a result of attainments generally improving from year to year in the upper classes of Key Stage 2 many pupils are approaching, with some exceeding, expected attainment levels. Standards achieved are broadly similar to those achieved in other core subjects. Pupils gain religious education knowledge, skills and understanding at a good rate. They are particularly able to apply this learning to their own lives and experiences. Pupils respond well. Behaviour in lessons is good, with strong pupil engagement and opportunities provided for spiritual and moral development. Very good use is made of limited space to provide attractive interactive displays of pupils work round the school. This work benefits greatly from the input of an artist who undertakes some of teachers' PPA cover. An example of this is exemplified in an impressive 'Madonna and Child' painting displayed in the school. All year groups input into display work which is of a high standard. Some notable work has been undertaken on the theme of 100 days peace leading up to the Olympics and this is displayed in the school hall. The school is working on the development of pupils' oral skills and this would benefit from teachers modelling and encouragement in speaking to an audience. There is emerging evidence of developmental marking and consideration should be given to identifying good practice for sharing, to secure consistency across the school.

Teaching and learning in religious education

Grade 2

Teaching and learning at Saint Joseph's has benefitted from good subject leadership. Teachers set high expectations of behaviour and this supports a positive learning environment. Work is differentiated mainly by outcome and the school could look to providing more differentiation by task to provide further challenges for the broad range of pupils in classes. Independent learning at Key Stage 2 could be further developed to support more opportunities for investigative work. The majority of teaching seen was good and well matched to the overall needs of pupils. Teachers incorporate a range of strategies to engage the interest of learners. The good start being given to pupils was evidenced in a Nursery lesson that saw routines established to settle pupils with the teacher constantly providing

encouragement, modelling and positive praise. Previous learning was effectively built on with pupils gaining understanding of the importance of family through a 'thank you' prayer. In Year 6 a lesson on the topic the Sacrament of Confirmation, pupil's religious vocabulary was well developed through the spelling of key words and the lesson was further enhanced by a Baptism display utilising artefacts brought in by the pupils. ICT is well used in the delivery of religious education. In a Year 4 lesson on the topic of Psalm 23, a film clip of the psalm being sung with reflective pictures being displayed, focussed the pupils understanding of the Lord as a shepherd and us as the sheep. While challenging behaviour occurs, this is well managed by teachers and support staff which secure positive learning outcomes for all pupils.

A good response of 26% of parental questionnaires was received of which 100% were affirmative of the school. Parents who met the inspectors were equally affirmative of the school confirming strong parish links and very good communication links with the school. They were very complimentary about the level of support given to them by the school during the difficult period of secondary school transfer. They also felt well informed about the religious education curriculum through regular newsletters and direct communication with their childrens' teachers. They expressed appreciation of the school's approach to the Education for Personal Relationships curriculum and the availability of information on this aspect of the school's teaching. As a result they feel able to support their children at home with their learning.

The religious education curriculum

Grade 2

Saint Joseph's has continued to use the Diocesan recommended 'Here I Am' religious education programme for the Early Years Foundation Stage and has adopted the 'Learning and Growing as the People of God' programme as the framework for religious education in Key Stage 1 and 2. This appears to be working well and the religious education curriculum is well organised with the school clearly seeing it as a core subject. The curriculum fulfils all the requirements for 10% of curriculum time to be used for religious education. The school's approach to the religious education curriculum could now be developed to facilitate the use of a wider variety of teaching methods and styles, a good example of which was seen in Year 2 through the use of drama. The curriculum builds well on prior attainment.

In all lessons seen classroom support staff were very well deployed and their role clearly defined. Their input is sensitively given and their expertise and active participation in lessons greatly supports and enhances learning. The new religious education coordinator is developing whole school assessment in her subject and evidence was seen of this impacting on pupil progress. A good example of pupil self assessment was seen in Year 6 that saw pupils identifying what they had learnt and posing questions to deepen their learning and understanding and this could be usefully shared. Religious education is well resourced with a growing resource bank to support the new religious education scheme. Pupils remarked on how much they enjoyed their religious education lessons and the opportunity they provided to do other things like drama.

Teaching and learning at Saint Joseph's has benefitted from good subject leadership. With the current religious education coordinator only being in her second term she is to be commended for how well the subject continues to be developed under her stewardship and the impact she is already making on provision and practice. She is enthusiastic and growing in confidence partly as a result of the active support being given to the subject by the governors, headteacher and senior management team who are committed to increasing the profile of the subject and further enhancing the Catholic ethos of the school. Newly qualified and non-catholic teachers are especially well served by her supportive approach. She is greatly supported herself by the whole school clarity of vision for the subject that is focussing on the raising of attainment. The coordinator maintains a full and well organised coordinator's file and has commenced class portfolios of work, religious education linked activities and visits.