



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 101795

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School
Woodend
Upper Norwood
London
SE19 3NU

Inspection date: 11th November 2016

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DENOMINATIONAL EDUCATION AND COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

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Introduction

Description of the school

St Joseph's Catholic Junior school is part of the Federation of St Joseph's Catholic Junior, Infant and Nursery Schools. It is a voluntary aided school in the Croydon Deanery of the Archdiocese of Southwark. The school is 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% in Key Stage 2.

The school takes pupils from 7 to 11 years. The number of pupils currently on roll is 216. The proportion of pupils eligible for additional funding through the Pupil Premium is above average. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups or who speak English as an Additional Language (EAL) is much greater than in most schools nationally. The proportion of pupils with disability and those with a statement of Special Education Needs (SEN) or an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHC) is higher than average.

The school has recently had a Section 5 Inspection which graded it as Requires Improvement, however the school has now achieved a high standard of end of Key Stage 2 results and Local Authority reviews have noted the considerable improvement.

The Religious Education leader is new in post since September 2016 although there was a transitional handover year prior to this to enable effective succession planning.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding	Grade 3	Requires improvement
Grade 2	Good	Grade 4	Inadequate

St Joseph's is a good Catholic school with a strong Catholic ethos. It is characterised by its welcoming and inclusive nature and the excellent relationships between all members of the school community. Attractive displays and high quality religious artefacts reflect the school's Catholic identity and enhance the learning environment. Pupils are polite and courteous. They are proud of their school and enjoy being part of their school community. They are encouraged to consider the needs of others, in their school community and beyond and respond very positively. The mission statement is at the heart of the school's Catholic life. Governors, school leaders and staff are committed to ensuring the wellbeing and personal development of each pupil. Pastoral care is excellent. Leaders and managers show commitment and dedication and are excellent role models. High quality Collective Worship nurtures pupils' spiritual growth and their knowledge of the celebrations and traditions of the Church. Parish links are strong and the school greatly benefits from the support given by the priests.

Standards in Religious Education are good; all groups of pupils make good progress and achieve well. Pupils enjoy Religious Education and appreciate its importance in their own lives.

Self-evaluation of the Catholic life of the school and Religious Education is comprehensive in its detail but is largely descriptive. School leaders and managers should now ensure that it is more evaluative, including the effect of targeted actions for improvement and with clear areas for development. Areas for improvement identified by the last inspection have been addressed.

What steps need to be taken to improve further?

Governors, Headteacher and staff should:

Ensure that school self-evaluation is reflective and evaluative, identifying the impact of previously targeted actions and with strategic plans for future development.

Include the monitoring of Collective Worship in the school's schedule of monitoring and evaluation on a more formal basis.

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

St Joseph's is a warm and welcoming school community in which all feel valued and supported. The mission statement is at the heart of the school; it informs all policy and practice and is reviewed regularly. Pupils are familiar with "We learn to love, we love to learn" and the importance of applying the school's mission to their own lives, at school and beyond. They value their part in belonging to the school community and recognise their responsibilities to others.

A strength of the school is its inclusive nature which embraces all members of its school community. Pupils know that their community includes those with different faith beliefs and practices and that not all pupils share faith backgrounds, however all are welcome and included in the school's Catholic life.

Pupils receive support and challenge to help them make progress and achieve their full potential; however academic standards have been judged to require further improvement. The school has worked hard to address this and recent end of Key Stage results in all the core subjects, including Religious Education have been significantly above national averages.

Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility and are proud to serve their school in this way. Posts of responsibility include the head boy and head girl, house captains, Apostles of Mercy, librarians, Eco Council and peer mediators. Pupils are conscientious in fulfilling these roles, knowing that they are contributing to the harmonious nature of the school.

Pupils value and respect the Catholic tradition of the school and their mission to help others less fortunate than themselves, generously supporting a wide range of charities, local, national and global. Examples include collecting for the local food bank, CAFOD, 'Mission Together' and 'Operation Christmas Child'.

Pupils' achievements and successes are recognised and celebrated. Celebration assemblies, certificates and awards encourage participation in all aspects of school life and help pupils to develop a sense of achievement and self-worth.

Pupils are given many opportunities to develop spiritually. Prayer and worship opportunities are many and varied and include parish and deanery events. Parish links are good, raising awareness of the wider Catholic community. Prayer in school encompasses many forms, including the use of silence and reflection as part of spiritual growth and communication with God.

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education

Despite generally low starting points on entry to the infant school, school assessment data indicates that in Religious Education the great majority of pupils meet or exceed age related expectations by the end of Key Stage 2 although results have fluctuated over the last three years (Level 4+ 87% 2013/14, 78% 2014/15, 93% 2015/16). In addition, significant numbers have achieved the higher levels, again with 2015/16 being a particularly high achieving year (33% 2013/14, 29% 2014/15, 39% 2015/16).

Pupils with disabilities or Special Educational Needs receive targeted support. All groups of pupils including disadvantaged pupils, do well. Pupils enjoy their Religious Education lessons and appreciate its importance in their school curriculum and to their own lives. They show good knowledge and understanding of the topics studied and are keen to participate and respond to teachers' questions. They are able to apply reflection and questioning skills to their learning. They are keen to do well and take a pride in their work. Pupils commented on enjoying the many different activities that form their Religious Education lessons; "We learn a lot and it's fun, I especially like having art and drama in our Religious Education lessons." Other pupils commented that "Religious Education gives us things to think about" and "It helps me in my own life to make the right choices."

How well pupils respond to and participate in Collective Worship

Prayer and worship are central to school life. Collective Worship opportunities are many and varied, reflecting school events and celebrations as well as the liturgical year. Pupils know this is an important part of school life and enjoy coming together as a worshipping community.

The act of Collective Worship observed as part of this inspection was a whole school assembly to mark Remembrance Day. Pupil involvement was a key feature of this assembly, with pupils helping to lead it and participating in reading, prayers and beautiful singing. Pupils were able to use moments of quiet reflection and acted with reverence and respect. It was a very powerful liturgy that touched the hearts of all present.

All pupils are included and welcomed, regardless of their faith background. The school rightly sees Collective Worship as an opportunity to be all embracing and inclusive as well as an opportunity for those with little or no faith background to experience being part of a faith community.

Pupils are familiar with the traditional prayers of the Church and are able to talk about the liturgical year and how they celebrate the Church's feasts and seasons. They are given opportunities to write their own prayers and contribute to a class prayer book to be used in class and school worship.

Priests from the neighbouring parishes visit the school to celebrate Masses and liturgies, strengthening the pupils' sense of being part of a wider Catholic family and providing a valuable link between school and parish link. Priests from all three parishes visited the school during this inspection, illustrating their involvement with the school and their contribution to the school community.

Parents and carers are invited to join their children in school for Collective Worship; this is appreciated and enjoyed by parents, carers and the pupils. Collective Worship also includes events in the wider Church; to celebrate the Year of Mercy a special and very beautiful school Door of Mercy was made by pupils. Pupils spoke appreciatively of the experience of walking through their own Door of Mercy.

During this inspection, pupils observed the two-minute silence to mark Remembrance Day with reverence and respect. Although it was not an act of worship, it was a very moving and meaningful spiritual experience for all concerned and provided an excellent example of how the school uses even secular occasions to nurture pupils' moral and spiritual development.

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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

School leaders, governors and managers are deeply committed to the Catholic life of the school. Senior leaders promote the Catholic identity of the school at all times. This is evident in Collective Worship, excellent relationships between all members of the school community and the comprehensive and rich programme of events in the school's Catholic life.

The school provides effective induction for new staff and professional development to support all staff in promoting the Catholic life of the school and Religious Education. This includes Diocesan training opportunities and events.

Good links between the school and the parishes it serves are a strength of the school. One of the parish priests is a governor and all are frequent visitors to the school. School newsletters are placed in all the parishes, promoting the school and helping to make all of the parishes part of school life.

Governors are fully involved in the Catholic life of the school, regularly attending school celebrations and events. In addition, Religious Education and the Catholic life of the school has recently been introduced as a regular and substantive agenda item at Governing Body meetings. Leaders and governors are clearly carrying out their monitoring role regarding the school's Catholic life. This should now be recorded and form part of formal school self-evaluation and development planning.

School self-evaluation is very detailed and descriptive rather than evaluative. Leaders and managers should use this to clearly identify strengths of the school, areas for development and strategic planning for targeted improvement.

Publication Date: 21 December 2016

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

Provision for Religious Education meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference. The school follows "The Way, The Truth and The Life" programme of Religious Education, enriched by cross curricular links where appropriate.

The monitoring schedule for Religious Education includes lesson observations, planning and book scrutiny. School leaders and governors take part in this schedule. These results form part of school self-evaluation of Religious Education and inform school development planning, however this is not evident in the school self-evaluation form, which needs to be more evaluative and clearly identify the impact of previous targeted actions as well as current areas for development.

The subject leader has been recently appointed and shows dedication and commitment to her role and to driving improvement in Religious Education. Support for staff has included help with planning, staff meeting discussions and INSET training. Aply supported by the Headteacher, she has clearly made a significant impact on standards in Religious Education in a relatively short time and on the evidence seen during this inspection is well placed to take this further. The Religious Education subject leader is also a member of the Senior Leadership Team, reflecting the importance of Religious Education, which has a high profile in the school and a profound impact on the moral and spiritual development of pupils. Levelling of pupils' work is well established. Samples of work have clear annotation sheets giving the context of the work and the reasons for the level awarded. Moderation takes place internally and also externally as part of the local group of Catholic schools in order to validate judgements made.

The Religious Education curriculum is well resourced and receives an appropriate budget allocation. High quality resources and artefacts are evident in the school.

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

The school's own monitoring indicates that teaching is good and that work in Religious Education is of the same expected standard as work in other core areas of the curriculum. This is in line with the findings of this inspection.

Four lessons in three year groups were observed as part of this inspection. The standard of teaching and learning was good in all cases with some outstanding features.

In the best lessons, pace was good throughout and activities closely matched to the needs of the learners. Questioning was used effectively to facilitate and check pupils' understanding. All lessons began with an opportunity for reflection and prayer, creating a special atmosphere. Lessons had a strong scripture basis and fostered the development of religious literacy.

Teachers demonstrated good subject knowledge and encouraged pupils to explore and share their understanding in discussion.

Pupils enjoy their Religious Education lessons and appreciate its relevance to their lives. One said "It helps us look deeper into our faith".

Behaviour for learning was good. Pupils were attentive and engaged. They were focused on their tasks and keen to do well, although occasionally opportunities to involve all pupils were missed.

Work in books is very well presented and of a high standard. It shows good coverage of the curriculum including evidence of AT1 and AT2. There is evidence of developmental marking which gives pupils feedback regarding whether they have met their objectives and suggests steps towards further improvement. Pupils value the dialogue between pupil and teacher and respond thoughtfully as well as following the suggestions offered. Peer and self-assessment are largely informal and by discussion. Other adults in the classroom effectively support individuals and groups of pupils, including EAL pupils and those with SEN, enabling them to fully access the curriculum. Parents appreciate the Religious Education provided at St Joseph's and its relevance to family life. One commented "We are very pleased about the way Religious Education is taught at St Joseph's. My son always says his favourite subject is Religious Education and it is reflected in his behaviour."

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

The Religious Education curriculum offers pupils a wide variety of learning styles and experiences, enriched by cross curricular links, events in the Catholic life of the school, visits and Religious Education weeks. Pupils enjoy Religious Education and appreciate its importance in the school and to themselves.

The study of other faiths is well established. This helps pupils to understand and celebrate diversity and to treat the beliefs and practices of others with respect and tolerance.

The school has well established programmes of Sex and Relationships Education and Personal, Social, Health and Citizenship Education. These are linked with the Religious Education curriculum and in line with the teachings of the Catholic Church.

All pupils are enabled to access the Religious Education curriculum. SEN Pupils are sensitively and effectively supported. Clear differentiation ensures appropriate levels of challenge.

Formal assessment tasks are completed half termly. Assessment data is recorded and used to measure progress and inform planning. Pupil tracking ensures that support can be appropriately targeted. As a result, school data shows that all groups of pupils make good progress and attainment in Religious Education at the end of Key Stage 2 this year has increased in line with outcomes in English and Mathematics.

The school works in partnership with other Catholic schools in the area to share best practice and improve provision.

The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school

Collective Worship is central to school life. Pupils are offered a range of opportunities to experience the liturgical life of the Church and to become familiar with its feasts and seasons. These may take place in the school, the parish church or on school visits, such as Year 4's visits to Westminster Cathedral as part of the Year of Mercy.

Collective Worship is carefully planned and of exceptionally high quality, designed to allow all pupils to take part and encourage personal reflection on their spiritual journey.

Families are invited and welcomed to the school's many celebrations. They

appreciate the opportunity to join the school in prayer and worship. Many parents attended the act of Collective Worship observed as part of this inspection.

Excellent support provided by senior leaders ensures that staff are encouraged and enabled to develop their skills in providing high quality Collective Worship opportunities to the pupils. Collective Worship should now be included in the school's schedule of monitoring and evaluation on a more formal basis.

Prayer is an essential part of school life. Pupils have opportunities for prayer throughout the school day. Staff and governors start meetings with prayer, seeing this as essential to their work and for the school community.

High quality prayer focus areas are a feature of every classroom. They feature attractive, child friendly artefacts and prayers and displays created by the pupils. Beautiful displays linked to Religious Education feature in classrooms and around the school, inspiring prayer and reflection.

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