

**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 101651

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School
Plaistow Lane
Bromley
Kent
BR1 3JQ

Chair of Governors
Headteacher
Inspectors

Mrs Joan McConnell
Mrs Sharon Grange
Mr Stephen Beck
Mrs Catherine Green

Inspection dates

4th February 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 is voluntary aided school situated in the Bromley Deanery of the Archdiocese of Southwark. It is maintained by Bromley Local Authority and is deemed to be a smaller than average primary school. The principal parishes which the school serves are St Joseph's Bromley and St Swithun's Bromley. A small number of pupils attend from a total of seven other local parishes. 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 1 and Key Stage 2.

The school takes pupils from 4 to 11 years. The number of pupils currently on roll is 212. The attainment of pupils on entering the school is generally above average. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is below the national average with around 9% of the pupils receiving extra support in class. Whilst pupils are from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds the majority of pupils are from a White British heritage. Other cultural backgrounds represented in the school are Black African, Mixed Race and Asian. The proportion of pupils from homes where English is an additional language is below 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 school that has managed a significant period of transition in a highly effective manner seeing it move quickly from being a school in an Ofsted category to one that is out of category and recognised as being a rapidly improving school. It is clearly a good school with a number of excellent features, most notably the positive relationships that exist between all members of the school community which have been established by a close working partnership between home, parish and the local community. Teachers and other adults offer very good role models providing a good standard of education for their pupils. The school has a strong capacity and determination to move forward. Much work has gone on around the successful establishment of strong leadership. The headteacher is a dedicated leader who with the deputy head and leadership team are committed to the well being of all pupils and to their personal development. The school benefits from a Catholic vision that is both well communicated across the whole school community and is also shared by them. All are committed to its development and implementation. The development of a strong staff team that operates with a collegiate nature sees all members of the school community pulling together. This secures the very best provision possible for pupils and offers clear Catholic direction to the school which is a strength.

The school mission statement is given a high profile. It is widely displayed round the school and in classrooms. Staff and governors recently worked together to produce the current statement which reflects the ethos of St Joseph's in 'child friendly speak'. Its formulation included input from the school council and incorporates aspects of the school prayer, 'We help every child to be gentle and fair and to always do their best' and this is clearly lived out in the day to day life of the school. The school makes good use of the Diocesan recommended 'Here I Am' religious education programme of work. Very good work has been undertaken to address the issues that centred on assessment and planning raised in the previous inspection. This now needs to be further developed to ensure assessment has an even greater impact on attainment. The teaching of other faiths has progressed well and would be enhanced by increased opportunities to consider the wider global faith dimension.

The management of religious education has a number of excellent features and is in a good position to see the subject coordination role reallocated whilst maintaining an input from the school's leadership. The parish priest, as a regular visitor to the school, is very supportive, both in his role offering Chaplaincy and as the school's religious education link governor. His input is both highly valued and appreciated by all members of the school community. The Governing Body as a whole operates effectively to fulfil and discharge its responsibilities to the school and the wider community. Of particular note is the governors' 'Home, School, Parish' committee that discusses and oversees issues that are of relevance to the school and parish.

Pupils have a clear understanding of right and wrong, understanding the notion of accepting responsibility for their own actions.

The school operates in a small building with very restricted space which has been utilised very effectively to provide the best possible working environment for pupils and staff. The environment is respected and well maintained and the care shown by all strongly represents the ethos of the school.

Grade 2

What steps need to be taken to improve further?

- further develop the assessment process and the tracking of individual pupil progress including greater levels of peer assessment so that assessment has an even greater impact on attainment
- further develop the school's current links with other faiths and communities to broaden pupils' awareness by extending the global dimension to their understanding of different faiths and traditions

The Catholic life of the school

Leadership and management

Grade 1

Leadership and management are outstanding. The headteacher, strongly supported by the deputy headteacher, school's leadership team and governors is highly effective in creating a strong Catholic community and a cohesive team. Through her own highly effective leadership, provision of significant encouragement and motivation and clear vision of Catholic education she has secured a shared vision across the whole school community that has a very positive impact on the quality of education the pupils receive. The excellent work carried out recently on a revision of the mission statement has seen it already embedded in the life of the school community. Governors know their school well and willingly share their expertise in order to support the school. Together with the headteacher and senior staff they are committed to moving the school forward academically, whilst maintaining an equally high profile for religious education and developing further its Catholic ethos. The thread of partnership runs throughout the school and is further reflected in home, school, parish links, which are well summed up in the school's self evaluation statement where it states, 'All members of the school community are expected to treat each other with mutual respect which reflects upon Jesus' call to love our neighbour as we love ourselves'. The school's provision of a strong and detailed self evaluation form that reflects a clear and honest approach indicates an understanding of the school's strengths and areas in need of development, which has enabled inspectors to validate the school's self evaluation. This marks the school out as having a strong capacity to improve even further.

There is a strong emphasis on promoting the school's Catholic ethos; by example set to the pupils through explicit teaching, the quality of relationships with each other, the parents and their children and through the pastoral care provided. Attractive displays emphasise the Catholic ethos and leadership promotes spiritual and moral development very well. All school documentation implicitly reflects the school's Catholic context and the school improvement plan gives an appropriately high profile to dealing with priorities relating to religious education. The sacramental programme is parish based and parents expressed much satisfaction with both the programme and the links fostered with the school in the delivery of the programme.

Quality of provision for personal and collective worship

Grade 1

The school has successfully maintained an excellent range of opportunities for prayer and collective worship and meets the statutory obligations for this provision. Over the past two years they have established a programme of Masses, assemblies and class based activities that see prayer and worship as both implicitly and explicitly central to the daily life of the school. The programme includes whole school Masses and a leavers Mass at the end of the school year. The assistant priest from the parish has regularly visited the school and worked with classes explaining parts of the Mass and has supported the teaching of Mass responses. This work has been much appreciated and has had a significant impact on the spiritual development of pupils, their understanding and levels of participation. Each class leads a Sunday Mass in rotation on the first Sunday of the month. Other Masses are also held to celebrate special occasions such as harvest. The Catholic life of the school is strengthened and sanctified by the Masses celebrated throughout the liturgical and academic year. The parish priest and assistant priest make very positive contributions to the prayer life of the school. Pupils are active participants and are provided with many opportunities to encounter God through prayer and the sharing of the word. A parent commented, "I am happy with my child's development in religious education at school, as well as personal relationships he builds, that comes from the teaching he receives in religion". Prayer and worship are central to school life. Prayer is woven into the very fabric of the day. In addition to the traditional prayers of the Church every opportunity is given to pupils to compose their own prayers which are incorporated into the daily prayers of the class. Excellent use is made of, candlelight, music, subdued light and ICT to create an atmosphere conducive to prayer. Every class has a focal point which is well used.

Collective worship is purposeful, planned and contributes significantly to developing the spiritual journey encountered by staff and pupils. Collective worship and prayer make a significant and very valuable contribution to pupils' spiritual and moral development. The assembly attended on the theme of light, was a joyous and reverent occasion and was well attended by parents. Awe and wonder are clearly evident through music, singing, acting, and prayer. Pupils sing with enthusiasm and to a high standard greatly enhancing worship. Pupils reading spoke very well, holding the attention of the rest of the school.

There are key stage assemblies on Tuesdays and Thursdays and the reception year join the Key Stage 1 hymn practice assembly on Wednesdays. On the non assembly day a prayer based act of collective worship takes place in class. Whole school assemblies include reflection and celebration. The Friday liturgy assemblies led by a class in turn commendably reflect on and prepare the Gospel for the coming Sunday. Parents are invited to these assemblies and one wrote "Our family love how Friday liturgy assembly reinforces the context of the Sunday Gospel in a child friendly way".

Community Cohesion

Grade 2

St Joseph's is an inclusive school and harmonious community where Gospel values are lived out in the daily life of the school, where diversity is valued and pupils have a good understanding of community in a local and national sense. A warm, friendly and welcoming atmosphere pervades the school. The schools' promotion of community cohesion has grown over time and is being increasingly effective. There is an acknowledgement that pupils would benefit from an increase in first hand opportunities to increase their understanding of different faiths and cultures. As one parent wrote, 'It would be good if there were more opportunities to serve others especially in a local sense and in terms of the children's time and effort, not just raising money'. Good solid links have been established with the parish community through shared notices in newsletters, a school board in the church, headteacher involvement in parish First Holy Communion and Baptismal meetings and use of the school on Sundays for First Holy Communion classes. Two open air parish Masses and parish celebrations have been actively promoted within the school with school facilities being made available for these events. The school has developed links with other local schools, local residential homes among other organisations. Looking to the wider global community a link has been established with a school in Tanzania. Year 5 recently undertook a visit to a local Hindu temple and work on Islam has been supported by input from the school's English as an additional language teacher. This compliments work undertaken on other faiths through the religious education curriculum.

Pupils are encouraged to support others within and outside the school community and they have a good record in supporting a wide range of charities that more recently included; CAFOD, St Vincent de Paul, Cabrini Society, Poppy Appeal, Harvest food project and the Smile Christmas shoebox collection. Pupils are given opportunities to support each other through a range of roles including service on the school council. Of particular note is the school's 'Guardian' system based on the concept of a 'Guardian Angel' where older children nurture reception children by supporting them in their first year at school. Parents commented on how these links between the children continue through their years at the school and often beyond. The school provides a good range of extracurricular activities. At present the Community Police Team talk to the pupils about safety issues and the school could look to enhancing this programme through the engagement of other speakers.

Religious education

Achievement and standards in religious education

Grade 2

Attainment on entry to the school is generally above average. Effective teaching and monitoring ensures pupils make good progress overall with progress in the early years being successfully built on through each key stage. This is beginning to be reflected in the levels of achievement attained in Key Stage 2. Pupils are well behaved and listen well to each other and adults. Pupils with additional needs are well supported and make good progress. Pupils have a good knowledge of their faith and are able to relate what they are learning to their lives. They are developing a good religious education vocabulary. The presentation of work in pupils' books is of a high standard. The books are well cared for and clearly valued by pupils who identify them as 'special'. Handwriting is of a particularly high standard and the quality of attainment in religious education compares favourably with other curriculum subjects. Very good use is made of photographic evidence to illustrate spiritual aspects of learning. Marking is consistent in offering pupils positive affirmation and would now benefit from a more developmental approach. Pupils have a mature approach to learning in religious education lessons and demonstrate very positive attitudes and a keenness to participate and do well.

Teaching and learning in religious education

Grade 2

The school judges teaching to be good overall and the inspectors concur with this view. Teachers are confident in their use of the 'Here I Am' religious education programme which they supplement with additional resources as appropriate. They are able to maintain pupils' interest and set high but attainable expectations of their pupils. Religious education lessons, in line with others, are planned with a focus on encouraging all pupils to achieve their full potential and become successful learners. In this the school is achieving much success. As the school further develops the assessment process and the tracking of individual pupil progress including greater levels of peer assessment this will have an impact on future levels of attainment.

Pupils demonstrate an ability to work well individually, in pairs and in groups. Pupils settle well in class. This reflects classroom management of a very high order that is well supported by teaching assistants who are to be commended for the professional, supportive and discreet way they offer support to individuals and groups of pupils. The school has established a range of highly effective, supportive, behaviour strategies that include; house points, post cards, reward and praise and 'Good to be Green'. Pupils are as a result very well behaved but in the light of a few parents and pupils expressing a desire for a review of behaviour systems, it may be an appropriate point at which to look at the whole school policy for this area. This could be undertaken in consultation with staff governors and parents, even if this results in a restatement of current policies and procedures.

Parents are very much viewed as active partners in their child's education and accordingly are well informed and guided on how to support their child's learning at home.

In lessons seen, teaching was good and in one case outstanding. Teachers demonstrate very good subject knowledge. Lessons are well planned and resourced. Differentiation by task and outcome is used appropriately. Lessons are well paced and utilise a range of teaching strategies to successfully engage pupils, who sustain concentration and remain on task.

Teachers are developing good cross curricular links within religious education to maximise learning opportunities. An unusually high level of consistency has been established across the school building effectively on prior learning, clear learning intentions and the setting of high expectations. In one lesson seen the teacher related the parable of the 'Good Samaritan' on which the pupils had been set a homework task to be a Good Samaritan at home and bring in a photograph of what they had done. They shared these pictures which linked the story to their everyday lives in a very practical way. The teacher also made good use of singing with signing thereby keeping pupils engaged in their learning. In another lesson on the theme of the Bible, pupils were challenged to find references and demonstrated a very good understanding of the books of the Bible and ability to navigate texts. The work in this lesson and another on the same topic was appropriately challenging.

The religious education curriculum

Grade 2

The quality of the curriculum is good and is age appropriate. The school follows the 'Here I Am' religious education programme. 10% of teaching time is allocated to the subject in line with expectations. Careful planning ensures that all aspects of the curriculum are covered including the teaching of other faiths. Parents articulated their view that this aspect of the curriculum is well managed. Teachers set out to encourage pupils to make connections between their learning in school and their behaviour and relationships with other people. They are encouraged to respect other faiths and cultures, which the school has identified for further development. Pupils' behaviour both in and out of the classroom is exemplary and reflects the high level of respect pupils have for each other and their environment. Personal relationships education is well supported through the use of the 'SEAL' resources and the 'All that I Am' programme. The school could consider further developing its education for personal relationships policy with particular reference to its policy for sex education in upper Key Stage 2, utilising a working party of staff, governors and parents with reference to Diocesan guidelines. Parents feel able to support their children's religious education because they are well informed about the religious education curriculum through regular newsletters. The work undertaken on preparing pupils for the Sunday Liturgy of the Word provides an exemplary and amazing witness for others. The pupils receive copies of 'The Wednesday Word' which is shared in school and taken home. This is further supported through the Friday liturgy assembly. Parents remarked on the usefulness of this process.

The headteacher is currently the religious education coordinator. In a period where the school has had intensive local authority support focused on numeracy and English it is commendable how the governors, headteacher and staff have continued to share a strong common vision of the importance of religious education. The school's own measurement of successful leadership and management is based on its impact on raising standards of achievement and the personal development of staff and pupils. As a result they correctly assess it to be good although it has some outstanding features. It is marked by a strong culture of collaboration, staff support and collective responsibility. This undoubtedly serves to empower staff and develop leaders. The school has benefitted from this strong team approach and from the clarity of vision shown by the coordinator for the development of religious education in the school. The school offers good support to members of staff who are not Catholic, equipping them well to support the religious life of the school.

There is an awareness of the need to maintain an appropriate focus to secure necessary levels of resourcing, to provide in-service training and staff development. As other pressures diminish, consideration should be given to either reallocating the religious education coordination role or to establishing a religious education team in order to provide distributive leadership for the subject. This would enable utilising the strengths of individual teachers to develop and further enhance the religious education curriculum under the headteacher's auspices.

The school issued 213 parental questionnaires with a good return of 38%. The responses were overwhelmingly positive reflecting a high level of parental satisfaction. As one parent wrote, "All staff are committed to improving and developing our childrens' spiritual appreciation and love of God. Our school sets an excellent example to all its pupils and parents".