

Westminster Diocese Inspection Report



St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Goodson Road, Willesden, London NW10 9LS

Date of inspection: 15 June 2016

A. Classroom Religious Education

What is the overall effectiveness of classroom religious education in developing pupils' religious literacy?

Overall Grade I

The school is outstandingly effective in ensuring that classroom religious education develops pupils' religious literacy. The quality of planning and use of innovative teaching strategies ensures that the pupils make excellent progress in religious education. The pupils are actively engaged in their learning and make links between their knowledge and their way of life. Teachers are skilled in their employment of challenging questions which help the pupils see the next steps in what they are studying. The school's systems of support and monitoring of teaching and pupil achievement ensure that teachers find the optimal ways of engaging with the pupils, and the pupils are assisted to progress to the next level of achievement. The governors, executive headteacher, associate headteacher and leadership team work with vigour to ensure that the pupils' religious literacy is enhanced, resulting in pupils that can confidently talk about and celebrate their discipleship. The use of ICT and unsparing emphasis on key words result in the pupils being articulate in speaking of their learning in religious education

B. The Catholic life of the school

What is the overall effectiveness of the Catholic life of the school in developing pupils' experience of the richness of a Catholic way of living and believing?

Overall Grade I

The school is outstandingly effective in developing the pupils' experience of the richness of a Catholic way of living and believing. The example of the executive headteacher, associate headteacher, leadership team, parish priest and all the teachers underpin and provide an effective witness for the strong community that is their school. This strength was wonderfully demonstrated in the response to the adversity of the school building being burned down and the school continuing in temporary accommodation. The pupils have experienced that it is the respect, energy and dignity of people working together, rather than the actual bricks and mortar which founds a community that follows the teachings of Jesus Christ. The quality of the school's liturgical life along with the generous drive to raise money and resources for people in need illustrate how effective the school has been in introducing pupils to following in the footsteps of Christ, as its mission statement puts it.

Introduction

The inspectors would like to thank the governors, headteacher, staff, pupils and parents for their co-operation over the conduct of the inspection. The inspectors spent one day in school, visited fourteen lessons and one assembly, and carried out six interviews with school staff, pupils and governors. Other evidence was gathered from contacts with parents through a questionnaire, discussion with local clergy, scrutiny of a sample of pupils' work, observation of pupils in and out of lessons and examination of school documents.

The Inspection of St Joseph's School, Willesden was carried out under the requirements of the Canon 806 and Education Act 2005, and in accordance with the Framework for Section 48 Inspections approved by the Archbishop of Westminster. The inspectors are appointed by the Archbishop. The inspection reviews and evaluates how effective the school is in providing Catholic education. This process begins with the school's own self-evaluation.

Inspection Team

Deacon Anthony Clark
Mrs Maureen O'Donoghue
Mrs Noreta Reece

Lead Inspector
Associate Inspector
Associate Inspector

Description of School

This Voluntary Aided school is a two form entry school in the LA of Brent and the locality of Willesden. The school serves the parish of Our Lady of Willesden in Harlesden. The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholic is 90%. The proportion of pupils who are from other Christian denominations is 10% and there are no pupils from other faiths. The percentage of Catholic teachers in the school is 89%.

There are 538 pupils on roll, with 13 pupils with statements of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)/ Education Health & Care Plans (EHCP). The proportion of pupils from ethnic minority groups is well above average. The number of pupils speaking English as an Additional Language is well above average. There is a well above average rate of families claiming free school meals. One hundred and thirty six pupils receive the Pupil Premium.

Telephone: 020 8965 5651
e-mail address: admin@stjo.brent.sch.uk

DFE Number: 304 5203
URN Number: 101555

Executive Headteacher: Mrs Dawn Titus
Chair of Governors: Mr Clive Romain

Date of previous inspection: 23 March 2011
Previous Inspection grades: 2

Key for inspection grades:	<i>Grade 1</i>	<i>Outstanding</i>
	<i>Grade 2</i>	<i>Good</i>
	<i>Grade 3</i>	<i>Requires improvement</i>
	<i>Grade 4</i>	<i>Causing Concern</i>

A. Classroom Religious Education

How religiously literate are pupils in the teachings and traditions of the Catholic faith and how well do they know, understand and appreciate the importance of religious faith and practice in everyday life?

What has improved in classroom religious education since the last inspection?

The previous inspection highlighted three areas for improvement in classroom religious education, linking RE tasks to more cross curricular, practical and creative subjects; further development of assessment by the use of RE targets and involve pupils in reviewing their achievement by self-evaluation and peer group marking. All three areas have been fully responded to and the improvements suggested are in place. The school has developed a system of folders holding pupils' work which include assessment levels, targets and outcomes so that pupils have to hand immediate reference to their progress.

How well does the content of classroom religious education meet the requirements of the Curriculum Directory?

Grade 1

The content of classroom religious education fully meets the requirements of the Religious Education Curriculum Directory (RECD). The RE coordinator leads staff in their own preparation of units of teaching, based a variety of resources, including a programme for extension and backup work. These resources are very closely mapped against the RECD and comprehensive coverage of the main areas and strands of it are in place. The planned units of work are linked to the liturgical cycle. The school is outstandingly effective in encouraging the teachers to be creative and inspirational in the lesson plans they build based on the RECD. High expectations lead to pupils being engaged in their learning. Discussions with pupils showed that they had reached high levels of religious literacy as they described what they had learnt and what it meant to them.

Pupil achievement (as well as attainment and progress) in religious education

Grade 1

The pupils achieve very well and display confidence and eagerness. They are enthusiastic learners and actively participate in lessons with a strong level of appropriate religious literacy. There is evidence of challenge in all lessons which stretches pupils' knowledge and understanding. The school tracking system shows that attainment over time has improved. Progress is at least good and sometimes outstanding as the vast majority of pupils are making expected or better than expected progress. Based on replies to the parents' questionnaire, the parents agreed or agreed strongly that their children are making good progress in religious education. Children's learning is assessed against the levels of attainment using the agreed understandings proposed by the diocese. The tracking system shows in particular that there is an upward trend in the number of pupils achieving Level 3 at the end of Key Stage 1 and Level 5 at the end of Key Stage 2.

The quality of teaching

Grade 1

All the teaching seen was at least good with several instances of outstanding practice. The typicality of lessons are good to outstanding and the good lessons had outstanding features. The inspectors saw examples of inspirational and creative RE teaching with focussed and engaged learners. Behaviour is truly outstanding and routines and strategies were consistently applied across the

school. Questioning was often skilful and it both extended and stretched pupils. Teachers frequently checked pupils' understanding and their intervention enabled pupils to improve the quality of the work they were producing. There is a firmly established ethos of high expectations, deep respect, and commitment to share the best in teaching insights and plans on the part of the teachers. The school's leadership team has in place a system of monitoring and feedback which leads to all teachers both knowing their strengths and working on areas of development. The school has developed its own Creative Curriculum and this leads to cross curriculum reinforcement of pupil learning in RE supported by dance, drama, art and role play. The use of ICT as an effective teaching tool was widely evident and teachers were confident in employing it imaginatively.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of religious education

Grade 1

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of religious education at St Joseph's is outstanding. There is a unity of vision clearly displayed by the executive headteacher, associate headteacher, senior leadership team and the governors. Leadership in the school is very strong and the sense of purpose that all decision making must transparently focus on making the pupil experience of being part of a Catholic learning community was evident. The pupils were vocal in their confidence that they were learning about Catholic beliefs and traditions in a milieu that made them feel proud of being disciples of Christ. The executive headteacher embodies their motto 'our vision for our school and pupils is limitless' and articulates the meaning of Christ's teaching in a concrete way which is life-giving. The associate headteacher is confident and secure in the very effective structures and arrangements that are in place to deliver outstanding religious education. The RE link governor is the parish priest and his contribution was clearly seen, arising from his weekly visits to the school. The governors show great interest and support in the horizon and progress of religious education in the school.

What should the school do to develop further in classroom religious education?

- Continue to promote progress in the employment of developmental marking of pupils' work.
- Articulate and communicate the strands within the Levels of Achievement to the pupils.
- Build on the evident pupil interest in knowing about and understanding world faiths.

B. The Catholic life of the school

How well do pupils experience the richness of a Catholic way of living and believing through all areas of school life?

What has improved since the last inspection?

The previous inspection report suggested that the school should devise more opportunities for pupils to prepare and lead their own acts of worship. The school has fully responded to this by involving pupils in leading classroom prayer and helping in turn with Masses celebrated by the parish priest. It has made a particular initiative of building up teams of Mini Vinnies drawn from pupils in Years 4 to 6. They prepare and lead whole school assemblies and thus model in an exemplary way how pupils can lead acts of worship.

The place of religious education as the core of the curriculum – time, staffing, accommodation, resources, budget

Grade I

This section has to begin by speaking of the fire that completely gutted the school at the beginning of the autumn term 2015, less than eight months before the present inspection. The inspectors found a school functioning very well in the outbuildings of the old school and in a three storey prefabricated construction on the playing field, adjacent to the shrouded school building currently being rebuilt. There is a sense of pride and joy among pupils and staff that they had found a way of keeping the school together and in the limited space available while maintaining an outstanding education enterprise. The place of religious education is at the forefront of school life in its new temporary home. At least 10% curriculum time is devoted to religious education, the corridors are hung with beautiful photographs reflecting aspects of Catholic life, the teaching and ICT resources for religious education are fully in place, including new bibles in every classroom.

The experience of Catholic worship – prayer and liturgy – for the whole school community

Grade I

It is clear that prayer and worship are central to the life of St Joseph's – seen through the evidence of the assembly, staff prayers, class prayers and folders. It is clear that the school community celebrates key events of the liturgical year together. The quality of classroom and school displays and prayer foci across the school are of a very high standard. The parish priest visits classes weekly and talks with pride of the school's ability to continue to flourish and come together to pray. Pupils' spiritual development is enabled through plentiful and excellent opportunities for reflection, sharing, discussion and quiet. An outstanding act of worship led by the Mini-Vinnies was observed which offered all children opportunities to gather, hear the Word, respond and have a mission.

The commitment and contribution to the Common Good – service and social justice

Grade I

St Joseph's demonstrates a clear understanding of the Common Good and pupils have many opportunities to contribute to the Common Good. Pupils know who they are fundraising for and why, and contribute to a wide variety of charities. The Mini Vinnies also have opportunities to be modern day disciples through a variety of projects led by themselves including writing home to

parents to explain the Mary's Meals backpack project and leading assemblies to explain the rationale to pupils. The school's support of St Mary's Catholic Primary School has been a practical embodiment of the Common Good. The executive headteacher spoke to us about 'ethos of care' at St Joseph's and we have been very impressed by the respect that we have seen the children show to each other and to the adults in the school.

Enabling the authentic partnership between parents, school and parish as an integral part of the Diocese, particularly through its relationship with the Diocesan Bishop and those acting on his behalf

Grade I

The school has established outstandingly effective partnerships with parents, the parish, and the diocese. Along with a very informative and attractive school website and a weekly school newsletter, the school provides a number of occasions at which parents can talk with the teachers, including weekly parent/carer meetings on a rolling rota. The relationship with the parish is close and the weekly visit of the parish priest ensures the partnership continues to develop. The school is involved in helping organise Brent Catholic Headteacher meetings. In spite of the fire and with extraordinary generosity, the executive headteacher and the school is in a soft federation with St Mary's Catholic Primary school, assisting it to take the steps forward to improve. This willingness to go out of the way to help is a characteristic of the school. The school works closely with the two Brent secondary schools, Convent of Jesus and Mary Language College and the Newman Catholic College, accepting pupils from both schools to come on work placements at St Joseph's. It also assists in training teachers, in the past with Roehampton University and currently with St Mary's University, Twickenham.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management in promoting the Catholic life of the school

Grade I

The leadership and management of St Joseph's are outstandingly effective in promoting the Catholic life of the school. The headteacher is unstinting in finding new initiatives to promote the Catholic life of the school and the leadership of the school ensures that they are carried forward and sustained. The governors, the executive headteacher, associate headteacher and leadership team are closely united in their vision for the development of the school and are the engine of change to achieve their dreams for their pupils. The governors attend diocesan and local authority training to ensure their role is fully grasped and that they are effective. The senior leadership team including the executive head teacher and associate head teacher provide strong leadership and guidance and are committed to developing the children's love of God, knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith. The effectiveness of this leadership is demonstrated in the pride, the good behaviour and joy of learning that characterises the pupils. It is also demonstrated in the unity of purpose and commitment to quality teaching and innovation on the part of the teachers.

What should the school do to develop further the Catholic life of the school?

- Give whole classes opportunities to lead school assemblies.
- Develop further the desire evident in the pupils to serve their community and the poor.