



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 101457

**St Joseph's Catholic Primary School
Old Road
Crayford
Kent DA1 4DZ**

Inspection date: 08 November 2016

Chair of Governors: Mr Matthew Lawrence
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DENOMINATIONAL EDUCATION AND COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

Publication date...12th December 2010

Introduction

Description of the school

St Joseph's is a voluntary aided school situated in the Bexley Deanery of the Archdiocese of Southwark. It is maintained by Bexley Local Authority. The principal parish, which the school serves is St Mary of the Crays. A number of pupils attend other Catholic parishes.

The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholics is 72%. This has reduced slightly since the last inspection, but has stabilised in line with an increased level of oversubscription for places. The average weekly proportion of curriculum time given to Religious Education is 10% in all Key Stages.

The school takes pupils from 4 to 11 years. The number of pupils currently on roll is 210. The attainment of pupils on joining the school is broadly average although an increasing number of pupils are entering the school with low level verbal skills. The proportion of pupils receiving free school meals is below average. 11% of pupils are on the Special Educational Needs (SEN) register. Approximately 56% of pupils are from minority ethnic groups, with these being of predominantly of Black African heritage although there is an increasingly large Eastern European group. A minority of pupils speak English as an Additional Language.

Key for inspection grades

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

Publication date: 12th December 2016

Overall effectiveness of the school in providing Catholic Education

GRADE
2

At the time of the last inspection St Joseph's had seen a change in leadership which commenced a post Ofsted journey of improvement. It is commendable that this has been managed successfully and sees the school in a strong position to build further on the significant progress it has already made.

There is a strong correlation between the school's mission statement and the practice evidenced that sees the, teachers and governors of St. Joseph's providing a broad, balanced curriculum in order to enable each child to achieve the highest standards of education in a Catholic ethos. In 2015, the school adopted a new school motto, "Love, Learn, Live", which was selected by the School Council after consultation with the pupils, parents and governors, to reflect the special charism of the school. This is well articulated by all members of the school community identifying, 'Love' as love God and love your neighbour as yourself; 'Learn': as the core business of the school and 'Live' as to live life to the full.

The overall effectiveness of Catholic education at St Joseph's School is good with outstanding elements, most notably in the areas of Leadership and Collective Worship. The school has a welcoming, caring environment, which has undergone improvements over recent years. Its distinctive nature as a Catholic school is clearly apparent in the displays and artwork around the school. Each classroom has a dedicated area devoted to Religious Education, which is changed and updated in line with topics being studied and the Church's liturgical year. The school has achieved a number of external awards including 'Silver Eco School' and the 'Speakers School Council Award'.

The Headteacher, the Religious Education Coordinator and governors, identify and address areas for development in the Catholic life of the school in a detailed Religious Education Development Plan. This working document has led to significant improvements in provision. The pupils are well cared for, resulting in them developing spiritually and morally, acquiring appropriate religious knowledge, skills and attitudes. The behaviour of the children is excellent and they make a full contribution to the wider life of the school and to a variety of liturgies.

Teaching and learning in Religious Education in the school is good overall. Through 'The Way, The Truth and The Life' Religious Education scheme, children develop a good understanding of the Catholic faith. They are able to recall a great deal of knowledge about the Catholic faith and the life of Jesus. Teachers are very enthusiastic about the scheme of work, stating that the pupils are responding positively and are enjoying their lessons. Through the Religious Education teaching, the children learn about other faiths and further enrich their knowledge of the world through supporting various charities. Since the last Section 48 inspection both the quality and amount of recorded work has improved and children now work to specific learning objectives and success criteria.

The school is blessed with an enthusiastic Parish Priest, who has been in post for just over a year. He has made positive contributions to the Religious Education curriculum, the Catholic life of the school and the development of home, school, parish links. His

contributions are valued by all members of the school community; in which he is held in high regard.

The school has addressed the three development points from the last inspection well. Teachers now regularly assess Religious Education and enter data on Target Tracker. Tracking is then moderated by the Religious Education Coordinator to inform future planning and differentiation by teachers. INSET has been provided in assessment, differentiation and creativity in Religious Education. Other deanery schools have been invited to participate in this INSET. Sharing of good practice in Religious Education including moderation of pupils work with other deanery schools is often lead by the Religious Education Coordinator at St Joseph's.

The introduction of a Pupil Chaplaincy group in 2015/16 has had a very positive impact on the Catholic Life of the school. Pupils are responsible for awarding prayer cards to mark special or personal occasions in pupils' lives, and the monitoring and maintaining of liturgical areas around the school. Pupils also ran a whole school 'Year of Mercy' prayer competition.

As a parent wrote, *"St Joseph's beautifully combines the teaching of Science and Nature with teaching about God. They tell me the world is not ours, but God's. They have a respect for the world around them."*

What steps need to be taken to improve further?

Governors, Headteacher and staff should:

- As planned, review the school's policy for Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) in consultation with staff, governors and parents taking account of the new Diocesan 'Education in Human Love' guidance documentation.
- Embed and further develop the now established use of pupil progress data to maximise progress for all groups of pupils through greater depth of targeted differentiated work and link this to the induction programme for new staff.

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

St Joseph's school has a strong Catholic ethos which is centred around Gospel Values, the school Mission Statement and the school motto 'Love, Learn, Live.' It is a prayerful community. A large majority of pupils are actively involved in shaping the school's mission. They are excellent, enthusiastic promoters of the school's Catholic ethos. Pupils are proud to belong to St Joseph's Catholic community. Behaviour of most pupils is very good and they are alert to the needs of others. They offer their services willingly as demonstrated in the impressive response by the wide range of fundraising initiatives.

The School Council provides a forum for representatives to express the ideas and concerns of all pupils. The pupils have made a powerful impact on the life of the school, the local area and the wider community through fundraising for charities including 'Water Aid,' 'Cancer Research' and the 'Jimmy Mizen Foundation'. The pupils collected non-perishable food for distribution by the 'Salvation Army' at Harvest Festival time and took part in a joint parish and school initiative called 'Love in a Box,' to help underprivileged children. The Infants support 'Mission Together' during Lent by collecting money in 'money box houses.' The Juniors support CAFOD during Lent by holding 'Enterprise Sales' to raise money. The School Council also participated in fundraising activities in 2015 to help Balamorie School in Sierra Leone (linked to a previous member of staff).

Pupils have a strong sense of right, wrong and social justice and they benefit from the staff's response to their personal growth. They feel secure and say, "*we are looked after in our school.*" Pupils are regularly involved and often take the lead in Parish and Diocesan celebrations and activities as evidenced in their musical contributions at Diocesan functions. They understand their responsibility and take ownership of fundraising for charity. St Joseph's has a positive image in the local community, with charity links, inter-faith services and by working alongside other schools through the Corpus Christi Catholic Partnership.

The school issues the weekly 'Wednesday Word' which is well used as a teaching resource and parents confirmed they found it both helpful and useful in supporting their children, particularly at Sunday Mass.

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education

Outcomes for the children are good. They obviously enjoy their Religious Education lessons and respond with enthusiasm. On entry to school a number of pupils have a limited knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith. Pupils' achievements, enjoyment and attainment in Religious Education are good and pupils of all abilities make good progress. There is no significant difference in performance between pupils of different gender, with outcomes for pupils with Additional or Special Educational Needs also being at least good.

Analysis of assessments undertaken provides evidence of pupils generally attaining appropriate levels for their age and stages of development in each Key Stage. Moderation of assessments now needs to be further embedded to provide teachers with an accurate picture, in particular of higher levels of attainment.

Pupils are becoming increasingly more religiously literate. Their knowledge, understanding and skills are developing appropriately for their age or capacity. They are developing the skills that enable them to reflect spiritually and to think ethically and theologically. They are becoming more aware of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life.

Pupils' engagement in and enjoyment of their learning is very good, as demonstrated by their interest, enthusiasm and behaviour. Pupils are encouraged to work independently and collaboratively. Pupils are anxious to learn and improve their knowledge, understanding and skills as they become increasingly independent as learners.

St Joseph's is a school with a long history having just celebrated its 150th Anniversary. Pupils benefit from a light, inviting learning environment in an older building that has been developed and maintained to a high standard. The care shown by all to this environment is exemplary. The school reflects strong elements of community and continuity through past pupils now being parents at the school or members of the wider school and parish community.

How well pupils respond to and participate in Collective Worship

Pupils understand the importance of prayer and worship and engage readily in both small and larger gatherings. They reflect and respond reverently and join in community prayers. Praying and singing joyfully together is an integral part of pupils' experience. Pupils have a good understanding of liturgical seasons and feasts and the implication this has for Collective Worship. For some pupils, this knowledge is outstanding. Older pupils independently lead worship using scripture, liturgical music, artefacts and other forms of prayer to engage their peers. Pupils' prayers, thoughts and feelings are a consistent feature of class liturgies and displays. Pupils express their understanding of the centrality that prayer has on their lives. They understand that other faiths have different traditions and these are respected.

St Joseph's school is a prayerful community and provides pupils with a plethora of opportunities for prayer and reflection: they regularly write their own prayers, for example the School Council created their own prayer which they reflect upon at the start of each meeting. Pupils and staff regularly pray at the beginning of the school day, before meals, after lunch and at the end of the school day. These are visibly displayed in each classroom.

The school is fortunate to have a unique prayer room which can be used by any classes, small groups or individual as a place of learning, prayer or reflection. The children are

given opportunities for Reconciliation in the classroom or the prayer room. There is also a prayer basket for children to write their own prayers for personal intentions. The pupils have represented the school at a number of religious and cultural events, for example, The Mayor's Carol Service, the Diocesan Youth Conference and Picnic and Praise. In addition, they have hosted and attended the annual Deanery Religious Education celebration days.

Classes are regularly timetabled to lead assemblies; these support the faith journey of both the pupils and parents. The whole school attends Mass on Holy days of Obligation and other special occasions. Older pupils mentor the younger pupils during Mass.

Pupils actively participate in Religious Education, not only in lessons, but also in assemblies, Masses and services. These are well attended by parents and parishioners. During October, the governor responsible for Religious Education leads both pupils and parents in the Rosary once a week in the prayer room before school.

The school introduced an outside 'Mary Prayer Garden' in 2015. This is an area for quiet reflection, which can be used by classes as part of Religious Education lessons or by pupils during break times for quiet reflection. Posters of prayers have been purchased by the School Council so that they can be displayed in this special area, which is well used and valued. It makes an important contribution to the prayer life of the school.

Publication date...12th December 2016

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

Leaders, governors and managers are good at promoting, monitoring and evaluating the provision for the Catholic Life of the school and in the way they plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils. The Mission Statement has been reviewed and revised and supports a clarity of vision for St Joseph's that inculcates all aspects of school life, reflecting its ownership by all stakeholders. The exceptionally cohesive nature of leadership at St Joseph's is both highly effective and a great strength. The inspirational Headteacher demonstrates outstanding dedication and commitment. She is well supported by her senior leadership team and all are focussed on moving the school forward to be outstanding.

Opportunities are provided for the staff and pupils to play an active part in the Catholic life and Mission of the school. The Self Evaluation Document provides accurate evidence of the school's analysis of its Catholic life. It is a very detailed document and would benefit from refinement and development in the light of this report. The school's analysis provides a basis to celebrate the school's strengths and outlines areas for development.

The school provides good levels of induction and in-service training to enable staff to further understand the Church's Mission in Education and play their unique part in it.

Leadership at all levels respects difference, values diversity and ensures equal opportunities for all. Prayer, worship and the liturgical life of the school reflects and respects the diversity within the school, which is marked by positive, supportive and constructive relationships.

Parents are consulted and involved in a variety of ways in the life of the school through an open-door policy, which is much appreciated. An increasingly active 'Parents Association' is also serving to further strengthen the strong partnerships between home and school.

Governors are good in fulfilling their responsibilities. They have helped to shape the direction of the school and support a period of significant progress through the use of their own gifts and skills.

The Governing Body take an active role in the religious life of the school, with the nominated governor responsible for Religious Education, working closely with the Religious Education Coordinator. The Chair of Governors, Deputy Chair of Governors and the governor responsible for Religious Education are active members of the parish and visit the school regularly. They undertake learning walks, meet with subject coordinators and attend school services and special events.

As a parent stated, *"The school lives out its stated mission statement daily in the way it deals with pupils and parents. There is clear positive leadership at the school. There are many opportunities provided to share in the life of this inclusive school."*

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

Leaders, governors and managers are very good in promoting monitoring and evaluating the provision for Religious Education and in the way they plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils. Monitoring data is used effectively to evaluate the school's performance and plan for future improvements. There is an increasingly robust programme for the monitoring and evaluation cycle. Teaching and learning is monitored regularly with appropriate feedback and support given as necessary. Good practice is being shared and celebrated and continuing professional development opportunities are provided for all.

Assessment information is collated and tracked by the Assistant Headteacher and shared with the leadership team, governors and parents. Formal assessment tasks are undertaken. Teachers should now be supported to take greater ownership of assessment data.

The subject leader is a member of the leadership team and is passionate and outstanding at guiding Religious Education. She shows great enthusiasm and commitment and introduces new initiatives when appropriate. Documentation is of a high order and effectively guides and directs all staff in the delivery of the subject. It is regularly updated and identifies targets, timescales and lines of accountability.

The school sees parent voice as important and has worked hard to make parents feel welcome. A significantly stronger relationship between home and school has been developed through regular newsletters providing parents with upcoming events; inviting parents to attend assemblies, Masses, plays and services, Headteacher coffee mornings; and encouraging parents to help with weekly Religious Education homework

Feedback from the school's own parent surveys show that: 100% of the parents feel that their children are happy and safe at St Joseph's. 100% of parents also feel that their children make good progress of which they are informed. They hold the view that the children are looked after well, with 98% of the parents feeling that their children are taught well and believe that the children are well behaved. 100% of the parents said that they would recommend the school to others. 100% of parents feel that the school offers a distinctive Catholic education. 98% of parents feel that they are kept well informed about Religious Education and Collective Worship and are welcomed to events in the school. 98% of parents feel that the staff care effectively for the children and that there are good opportunities for the children to serve others. 97% feel that there are good links between the school and nearby parishes.

These statistics were confirmed by the parental questionnaires linked to this inspection which are 100% positive.

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

The quality of teaching and purposeful learning is effective in ensuring that pupils are interested and engaged and make good progress. Teachers' planning is effective in meeting the needs of all pupils. Teachers display good subject knowledge and deploy a range of teaching styles. Where teaching is outstanding, the strategies used by teachers enrich pupils' enjoyment of, and enthusiasm for, Religious Education. Teachers take into account pupils' prior learning and a more consistent whole school approach is being established to ensure differentiated tasks are set which consolidate, build on and extend the knowledge, skills and understanding of all pupils. Good use is made of time and resources, including other adults, interactive whiteboards, audio and visual media etc. to maximise learning opportunities. Pupils are positively affirmed throughout their lessons. Marking informs pupils of their progress and identifies how they can improve. Effort and achievement are celebrated. The school has implemented assessment strategies which provide information on the achievement of pupils. Teachers are developing their skills in maximising their use of this data to impact on pupil progress.

Marking is well developed and consistent across the school. There is strong evidence of regular interactive marking with pupils providing regular responses. Presentation of work is of a very high standard reflecting the value placed on Religious Education. A strong emphasis on clear learning objectives and steps to success along with key words, provide a strong curriculum base to support pupil learning and progress.

In a Reception class pupils were studying the topic of Diwali. The teacher created a very good atmosphere using music and prayer with a focal point of a Diya lamp linked to appropriate use being made of the experiences of a Hindu pupil. Good development of the pupils' understanding of good over evil and knowledge of cultural foods took place. Previous learning was expertly built on with good use being made of talk partners. Pupils were engaged throughout.

A Year 1 lesson on the topic of the Annunciation, utilised excellent pace and cross curricular links with art to show different representations of the event. Clear links were made with modern day life and the role of a mother. The teacher used questions and answers skilfully keeping pupils focussed, while supporting their learning. The lesson was supported by excellent classroom management and strategies for developing pupils' vocabulary including the use of role play.

A Year 6 lesson was outstanding. High expectations were set in challenging pupils to consider the appropriateness of the church being involved in politics. This was explored using the example of Oscar Romero. The lesson was special in generating very thoughtful responses from the pupils through opportunities to debate their individual thoughts and views. The interactive board was well used to display thought provoking pictures.

A Year 3 lesson in the Chapel was greatly enhanced by the gentle manner of the teacher exploring the story of the Annunciation linking feelings Mary may have felt at the time to their own.

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

The curriculum is good at meeting pupils' needs. Staff and governors see Religious Education as a core subject at the heart of the curriculum. The school using the 'The Way. The Truth and The Life' programme, which meets the requirements of the Religious Education Curriculum Directory. Of the total curriculum time 10% is allocated to Religious Education in all Key Stages.

Termly newsletters are provided for parents and carers giving appropriate curriculum information. The school implements new curriculum developments as appropriate.

The Religious Education curriculum provides good opportunities for pupils' spiritual and moral development and vocation. This was particularly evident in discussion with Year 6 pupils who talked about who had inspired them and what aspirational qualities they had.

The curriculum is increasingly customised to meet the needs of groups and individuals as appropriate. The provision for pupils with Additional and Special Educational Needs is of an increasingly high standard. Pupils have opportunities to explore the beliefs and values of Other Faiths. This helps to promote tolerance and respect for those who think differently.

The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school

The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school is good. It reflects the Catholic character of the school, has a high profile and is central to the life of the school. It plays a key part in meeting the spiritual needs of the pupils. Opportunities are provided to enable full, active and conscious participation of the whole school community.

In an assembly led by the Headteacher, good use was made of her personal experiences of a trip to the Yorkshire Dales to exemplify the parable of the lost sheep. Pupil participation reinforced the message of the parable and maintained pupil attention. The assembly was greatly enhanced by singing, signing, and participative story telling that engaged a majority of pupils.

Pupils are confident to pray formally and informally using a variety of prayer methods and styles. The school provides opportunities for staff to develop their skills in planning, leading and evaluating Collective Worship and the teachers provide the necessary resources and opportunities to help children develop the skills necessary to plan, lead and participate in Collective Worship and to evaluate it effectively.

Parents have opportunities to attend and participate in Collective Worship through a variety of celebrations.