



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 100729

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School
Crossfield Street
Deptford, London
SE8 3PH

Inspection date: 22 January 2015

Chair of Governors:	Mr Francis Brett
Headteacher:	Mrs Patricia Chantrey
Inspectors:	Mrs Joan Lenahan Mrs Deirdre Wright

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SECTION 48

Introduction

Description of the school

St Joseph's School is voluntary aided. It is situated in the Lewisham Deanery of the Archdiocese of Southwark. It is maintained by Lewisham Local Authority. The principal parish served by the school is Our Lady of the Assumption, Deptford. The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholics is 56%. The average weekly proportion of curriculum time given to Religious Education is just under 10% in both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.

The school takes pupils from 4 to 11 years. The number of pupils on roll is 275. Over the past four years, the school has accommodated three 'bulge' classes. The attainment of pupils on entering the school is broadly below average. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is 36%. Two pupils hold statements of special educational need. The percentage of pupils on the special educational needs register is 9.5%. Pupils come from predominantly Black Africa, Black British and Caribbean heritages. The proportion of pupils coming from homes where English is an additional language is above average.

Date of previous inspection:

03/02/2011

Overall Grade:

3

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school in providing Catholic Education

GRADE
1

The overall effectiveness of St Joseph's School in developing pupils' experience, engagement and understanding of the Catholic way of life is outstanding. A culture of high expectations, teamwork and a strong ethos of commitment, openness and support pervade.

The school's provision for its Catholic life is exemplary. It is highly effective in promoting the development of the whole child: spiritually, morally, socially and culturally.

The behaviour of pupils is excellent. They are enthusiastic to participate in and benefit from the wide range of opportunities on offer. Pupils are proud of their school and they know and believe that "Jesus is at the heart of everything we do."

Collective Worship and opportunities for personal prayer are exemplary, enabling pupils to actively participate and reflect.

Teaching is good with a range of outstanding elements. The delivery of the well planned Religious Education curriculum together with the many opportunities for pupils to benefit from the Catholic life of the school, ensure that pupils make excellent progress. It is testament to the strength and dedication of leaders, managers and governors that standards have risen year on year since the previous inspection (February 2011). Outcomes for pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 are high given that attainment on entry is below average.

The Catholic character of St Joseph's is visible and tangible. Displays are excellent as they reflect the pupils' engagement with their Religious Education programme and the liturgical year. The effort that has gone into creating an environment that is purposeful and orderly is indicative of the value and prominence, which all members of staff give to celebrating the school's identity and traditions.

Parents are overwhelmingly appreciative of the school's Catholic ethos, leaders and staff. They are unequivocal in their praise and state that they "place great trust in the school because of their personal experiences of being warmly welcomed" and "receiving unstinting care and support."

Strong links with the parish church and support from the Parish Priest serve to give pupils an understanding of a worshipping community.

The key issues raised in the previous inspection, namely: development of assessment; broadening the pupils' understanding of the Liturgical Year; upgrading teaching resources for Religious Education and developing cross curricular links have all been successfully addressed.

The school's self-evaluation is accurate and comprehensive as leaders know their strengths and have a clear understanding of the areas that require further development. Therefore the school is well placed to achieve even higher levels.

What steps need to be taken to improve further?

Governors, Headteacher and staff should:

- Extend provision for Acts of Collective Worship from three to five days in line with statutory guidelines.
- Cross reference aspects of Personal, Social, Cultural and Health Education (PSCHE) with the Religious Education programme to formulate a policy for Education in Personal Relationships (EPR) in line with Diocesan guidelines.
- Continue to focus on raising standards in teaching to the highest level.

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

The manner in which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life of the school is outstanding. Pupils interviewed stated that they are proud of their school because it is “a community where we all live as true Christians.”

St Joseph’s exemplifies a thriving sense of community and as a result the pupils benefit. Within school, cultural diversity is celebrated and nurtured making the school a cohesive community. The strong links, which the school forges with the parish, give the pupils a full understanding of belonging to a living faith community.

The pupils’ attitude to learning and behaviour is excellent. Pupils cited that they understand the tenets of the mission statement to “show love and respect”. This is a result of the caring and systematic approach the school adopts to augment the ‘Stay on Green’ discipline code, which is linked to living out Gospel values. Members of the School Council appreciate that they have a voice “to make their school better” and enjoy their role in thinking up ways for fundraising events. Pupils are aware of the Church’s teaching about almsgiving and are proud of their achievements in supporting charities such as CAFOD and Mission Together. At interview, pupils articulated how much they appreciate their roles as ambassadors for the school. Examples being, how Year 6 pupils are encouraged to become informed about local and global issues and then present their views in the annual inter-school debate and members of the School Choir participating in events such as ‘Live Voices’ at Catford’s Broadway Theatre and Carol singing Lewisham.

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education

Pupils achieve very high standards in Religious Education. Progress across both key stages is excellent, as demonstrated by comprehensive assessment and tracking systems, which effectively inform teaching and learning.

In the lessons observed, pupils displayed an enthusiasm for the subject, concentrated very well and were focused when undertaking paired and group discussion work, as seen in Year 1 when pupils discussed the story of *The Presentation*. Pupils are very keen to do well and endeavour to do their best work. Their responses to teachers’ marking comments are reflective and show how much they engage with the Religious Education topics.

Generally, teaching assistants are very well deployed thus ensuring that pupils with special education needs are well supported to access the curriculum and achieve their potential.

It is testament to the pupils’ enjoyment of Religious Education that a lunch-time ‘Gospel Club’ is a feature of provision.

How well pupils respond to and participate in Collective Worship

St Joseph’s is a prayerful community. Pupils respond exceptionally well to the many varied opportunities the school provides for Collective Worship and their contribution is outstanding. Collective Worship is central to the life of the school and the pupils have an excellent grasp of what worship is about, displaying, engagement, reverence and respect

as witnessed during the whole school assembly relating to the parable of 'The Talents'. Pupils participate extremely well in all forms of prayer. Prayer focal areas in classrooms are carefully designed to evoke reflection and show how pupils apply learning in Religious Education to the practice of their lives. The pupils' written intercessions on class 'prayer trees' convey their understanding of the purpose and power of prayer.

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, managers and governors at St Joseph's are deeply committed to the Church's mission in education and outstanding in the manner in which they promote, monitor and evaluate provision for the Catholic life of the school. This leads on to well targeted planning and action taken by the school involving all stakeholders.

The leadership of the Headteacher is inspirational as she is dedicated to the school, conscientious in her role and committed to Catholic teaching. She has a clear vision of what a Catholic school should be, a vision she shares with and is well supported by a dedicated governing body and a hard working senior leadership team.

Provision for pupils' spiritual and moral development is given priority. Leaders and managers work hard to witness that Christ is at the centre of its school community. This is evident in the palpable living out of the mission statement, the determination of leadership to continually strive for improvement and avoid complacency and the obvious care given to ensuring that the school is resourced and maintained to a high standard.

Leaders monitor and evaluate provision for Collective Worship and prayer. Strong links with the parish are appreciated and fostered and this enables pupils to be part of a worshipping community.

Governors demonstrate their commitment to the school by attending designated 'Governors' Mornings, assemblies, Masses, liturgies and parents' evening.

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

Self-evaluation by leaders, governors and managers is a comprehensive reflection of rigorous monitoring, searching analysis and self-challenge. Outstanding use of the assessment process results in well targeted planning and strategic action taken by the school.

Outcomes on Religious Education accurately match pupils' aptitude.

The leadership of Religious Education is very good. There is clear evidence of the co-ordinator's impact upon improving standards across the school. Her enthusiasm and vision are evident as is her commitment to the educational mission of the Church. The quality of teaching is regularly monitored and development feedback given to teachers. Staff development is very well managed and newly qualified and less experienced teachers receive appropriate support.

Professional development of leaders, managers and staff is given priority and its impact is evident in the confidence with which the staff implement the curriculum.

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

The quality of teaching and learning in Religious Education is never less than good with some outstanding elements. Evidence from the four lessons observed by inspectors, scrutiny of pupils' books across the school and discussions with pupils give a clear insight into how enthusiastically the pupils engage with the subject. Key strengths of provision are the manner in which teachers plan lessons creatively, set high expectations and inspire pupils to relate learning to their own lives. Teachers use questioning skills effectively to challenge thinking. A good example of such probing was witnessed in Year 6 where pupils showed depth of understanding of the components the Bible. Teachers pay due attention to keywords when introducing topics. Consequently, pupils are confident when using appropriate religious vocabulary.

Lessons set clear learning objectives and are planned to accommodate wide-ranging abilities, however, differentiation is mainly by outcome. To raise all the elements of lessons to the highest levels, teachers need to address two key components. Firstly, refrain from too much 'teacher talk' during the exposition phase. Secondly, plan more challenging tasks that cater for independent learning for pupils of middle and higher ability.

Assessment procedures are well developed with teachers able to level pupil attainment against national criteria. Moderation undertaken internally and validated by external moderators shows that teaching is 100% good with 45% outstanding.

Parents are well informed about the programme of study and given advice about how to help their children at home.

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

The quality of the Religious Education curriculum meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference. Just under 10% of curriculum time is designated to the teaching of Religious Education. The curriculum responds well to the diversity of the pupils. It is inclusive and follows the planning and scheme of work 'Come and See'. PSCE and Social Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) components of the curriculum are taught as a discrete subject. The school should integrate the programmes into the Religious Education and Education in Personal Relationships programmes in line with Diocesan guidelines.

The range of cross-curricular links is extensive and includes art, music, dance, role-play, drama, use of IT and visitors to the school, such as representatives from CAFOD, to speak to the pupils. These initiatives serve to enhance provision and learning across the school. The linking of weekly assemblies to the Religious Education programme and the liturgical year compliments provision. The school is to be commended on its commitment to developing the pupils' understanding of social harmony, one example being the close links with St Benedict's, a contrasting school outside London where sharing prayer partners, communication and hosting exchange days serves to promote community cohesion.

The naming of each class after a saint promotes learning as each year group studies and celebrates the life of their patron. The rolling programme to teach pupils about the major world faiths enhances the pupils' understanding of other cultures and faiths. The curriculum is also greatly enriched by the support of the Parish Priest when pupils learn

about the celebration of the sacraments. The Religious Education curriculum, with its wide range of enrichment and cross-curricular links, contributes strongly to the pupils' personal, spiritual, moral and cultural development.

The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school

The quality of Collective Worship is outstanding. Opportunities for prayer and reflection offer pupils a rich and positive liturgical experience that serves to deepen their relationship with God. Pupils respond to acts of worship with reverence and respect.

The act of Collective Worship observed by inspectors was exemplary as staff and pupils assembled, rejoiced by singing 'Christ be our Light', listened attentively to 'The Parable of the Talents', acknowledged exceptional talents of some pupils and were given a clear message to take into their school work and their lives. Exceptional singing of 'Sing unto the Lord' added to the prayerful and reverential atmosphere. Hymn singing by the excellent school choir, under the direction of a highly talented teacher, serve to raise the spiritual dimension of acts of Collective Worship.

Pupils explore different types of prayer and reflection, know the traditional prayers of the Church and are encouraged to compose personal intercessions.

Parents are involved in the pupils' prayer life and help their children with learning scripts, hymns and lines for Class Assemblies and Bidding Prayers for liturgies and Masses.

Staff lead by example and daily briefings commence with a prayer or 'thought for the day'.

The celebration of the Mass is central to the pupils' experiences at the school. Class Mass is a regular feature, taking place in the parish Church. Pupils are involved in preparing these celebrations, actively participating in liturgies and writing bidding prayers. The quality of Collective Worship is greatly enhanced by the input of the Parish Priest and staff, parents and pupils appreciate his support and guidance.