



Diocese of Westminster

INSPECTION REPORT

St Joseph's Catholic Junior School

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Headteacher: Mrs P Gibney

Chair of Governors: Mr R Rodgers

Canonical Inspection under Canon 806 on behalf of the Archbishop of Westminster
and inspection of Denominational Education under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

Date of inspection: 5th March 2012
Date of previous inspection: 10th October 2006

Reporting Inspector: Mr D Scott

Description of School

St Joseph's Catholic Junior School is a two form entry primary school situated in the London Borough of Brent in the locality of Wembley. The school predominantly serves the parish of St Joseph's, Wembley, but many pupils are drawn from other local parishes. Of the 280 pupils on roll, 93% are baptised Catholics, the rest being from other Christian denominations. There are 14 teachers in the school all of whom are Catholic. Nine teachers hold the Catholic Certificate of Religious Studies (CCRS) qualification. The proportion of families known to be eligible for free school meals is average. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is over three times the national average. The largest groups are of Indian, Black African and Black Caribbean heritages. Almost two thirds of all pupils speak English as an additional language which is four times the national average. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is average. There are seven pupils with a statement of special educational need. Attainment on entry to Year 3 is above average.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1: Outstanding; Grade 2: Good; Grade 3: Satisfactory; Grade 4: Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of this Catholic school

St Joseph's is an outstanding school with a strong Catholic ethos. The cohesive leadership team has a real sense of its mission to ensure every pupil has the very best opportunities for future success within a caring inclusive community. It strives successfully to include each individual and to make every child feel valued in accordance with its mission statement, 'Christ is Our Model'. This can be seen in all aspects of its work. Standards are high by the end of Year 6 and the overwhelming majority of pupils achieve extremely well. Teaching and learning are outstanding. Religious education is very well planned within the excellent curriculum. Prayer and worship underpin the Catholic life of the school so that pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is outstanding. Not only do pupils behave extremely well and display mature attitudes to learning, but they demonstrate a genuine sense of belonging to and responsibility for their own and the wider community. Strong links with the parish and other local schools help families to feel part of St Joseph's. Pupils are helped to understand the Church's global mission through their support for a number of charities such as the Catholic Children's Society and raising money for the victims of natural disasters. The school is very well led by the executive headteacher and members of the governing body are passionate in nurturing and developing this flourishing Catholic community. As a group of pupils commented, 'At St Joseph's we are just one big family of Catholics who are kind to each other and all look up to Jesus and God'.

Grade 1

Improvement since the last inspection

St Joseph's has made outstanding progress since the last inspection in not only addressing the two improvement points, but also identifying further areas for development that ensure the school moves forward.

Grade 1

The capacity of the school community to improve and develop

The school has demonstrated its excellent capacity to improve further through its progress since the last inspection. The dedication and commitment of its staff, to promote the school's ethos

and the close links with the local parish, all support its current drive for improvement. There is clear evidence of on-going efforts to raise and maintain the quality of teaching and to pursue strategies to widen even further the pupils' understanding of their position within the universal Catholic Church. Provision in religious education is reviewed regularly as part of the on-going self-evaluation. The school has an evaluative culture involving all the main stakeholders. The executive headteacher leads the way but the process involves all staff including governors, and takes into account the views of parents and pupils through questionnaires. The school has made a good start in understanding and compiling the new Diocesan Self-Evaluation Form (DSEF). The results are generally well recorded in the evaluation, although it would be helpful if evidence to support judgements were used more selectively to make the document more concise.

Grade 1

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching still further by:
 - asking more probing questions in lessons, which give pupils opportunities to develop their thinking skills, so that they clearly understand 'next-steps', particularly for the more able
 - making learning intentions more measurable in lessons so that pupils know exactly what they must learn and teachers have clear criteria to evaluate their progress.
- Introduce an extra-curricular club for Religious Education.

The Catholic Life of the School

Leadership and Management

St Joseph's is outstandingly well led and managed. The executive headteacher's excellent leadership of this Catholic community is ably supported by governors and the senior leadership team. They have a real understanding of their community and have generated a common sense of purpose in promoting the Catholic identity of the school. Governors take their responsibilities seriously and play a full part in the school's development. Governors are very supportive and visit the school often. They are committed to the values and aspirations of the school and use their skills, talents and enthusiasm to ensure that the school continues to thrive and flourish. The caring and considerate leadership of the executive headteacher serves to inspire others. Through her collaborative leadership style, personal warmth, and vision she has the respect of staff, pupils and parents alike. As one parent commented, 'St Joseph's is a lovely, brilliant little school where all the children are gentle and are a real credit to the school'.

Grade 1

The Prayer Life of the School

Prayer and worship are at the core of the life of the school. The Church's liturgical cycle is well integrated into its daily work. The provision for prayer life, liturgy and collective worship is outstanding. Assemblies are of a very high quality and pupils clearly enjoy their active involvement in songs, prayers and responses to scripture. The whole school assembly on the theme of 'Thanksgiving' enabled the children to act out and meditate on the story of the Last

Supper and its significance in the Eucharist. The prayer tables in each classroom reflect the colours of the season and are a very positive focus for pupils to recall events during the liturgical year. Display in classrooms and around the school are of a very high standard and provide pupils with stimuli for thought and reflection. The new Prayer Room, located by reception, provides a focal point of the school both geographically and spiritually, and is devoted to worship and reflection. Pupils respond well to prayer and liturgy and appreciate time for quiet reflection. The whole school community benefits from the work of the Parish Priest. He visits the school regularly and works well with the religious education leadership team.

Grade 1

How effectively does the school promote community cohesion?

The school is outstanding in its promotion of community cohesion. There is a welcoming community atmosphere, where pupils' respect for those less privileged than themselves is clearly evident in the high levels of personal commitment to working together for the common good. Numerous examples include entertaining the old folks at Christmas and helping the homeless in the local community. Fund-raising activities support a number of pupil nominated charities including CAFOD, Catholic Children's Society and Mission Together where pupils raise money through their Advent and Lenten alms-giving, as well as throughout the year. Pupils from a diverse range of cultural backgrounds, difficulties and challenges are able to integrate successfully which fully supports the school's philosophy on inclusion. Pupils are encouraged to gain a global perspective as part of their spiritual journey. The school's international links are developing and promote an improving awareness of global issues, for example, through fund-raising for overseas charities such as the Japanese Tsunami appeal.

Grade 1

Religious Education

Achievement and Standards in Religious Education

The achievements and standards in Religious Education are well above average. Pupils make excellent progress in Religious Education by the end of Year 6. The most able pupils achieve particularly well because of the school's efforts to provide them with wider opportunities for extended writing in Religious Education. In discussion, pupils show a thorough knowledge of Catholic faith but also of some of the traditions of other major religions. Pupils' written work is well presented and pupils of all age groups and abilities engage fully in their learning. Key vocabulary is well promoted. For example, pupils in Year 5 were able to confidently explain the meaning of the Eucharist and how God loves everyone. Progression in understanding aspects of the Mass and traditional Catholic prayers is excellent because of the carefully designed curriculum. Pupils, at their own levels, know the pattern of the liturgical year, are familiar with the scriptures, and are clear as to what is expected of a Catholic community. Pupils' understanding of the life and work of the school's Patron Saint were particularly impressive.

Grade 1

Teaching and learning in Religious Education

The quality of teaching and learning in Religious Education is outstanding. Pupils report that 'In religious education you get to do lots of fun activities, and lessons are always interactive'.

Relationships between pupils and teachers are excellent and contribute greatly to their obvious enjoyment and maturity of approach to their learning. Pupils commented, 'Teachers in religious education are very special people who always make lessons interesting'. The use of well-chosen resources were a real strength in the lessons observed during the inspection. Teachers have excellent subject knowledge so that they plan lessons that deepen pupils' understanding of their Catholic faith. This enables pupils to reflect on their own progress. Teaching is characterised by high expectations, stimulating activities and good use of assessment to support learning. Nevertheless, teachers do not always ask sufficiently probing questions, so that they clearly understand the next-steps to improve their work, particularly for the more able. Also, in some lessons learning intentions are not always measurable or specific to enable pupils to know if they have achieved them.

Grade 1

Quality of the Curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is excellent. The time allocated to religious education meets and exceeds diocesan requirements and, in addition, is supplemented daily by the way tradition and prayer permeate the school in class and assemblies. Schemes of work follow the 'Here I Am' programme which ensures progression through the year groups. Work is well matched to pupils' earlier learning and contributes very effectively to promoting not only their Catholic faith but also to their basic skills. The school has worked hard to ensure that assessment procedures are well matched to topics. All pupils are taught to respect other faiths and cultures and study the teachings of Hinduism and Judaism, and visits are arranged to places of worship such as the Hindu Temple at Neasden. The curriculum also supports pupils' outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. For example, every pupil has the opportunity to take on a 'Position of Authority' in the school, such as being a 'Yellow Cap' or a member of the School Council. Through these responsibilities they express their thoughtfulness for those less fortunate than themselves, for example for the homeless in the local community. Resources are excellent, as is the quality of display around the school which is vibrant and relates well to classroom topics and current projects at home and overseas. The school acknowledges that it would a good idea to introduce an extra-curricular club for Religious Education in order to deepen pupils' understanding of the Mass attended on the previous Sunday.

Grade 1

Leadership and management of Religious Education

There is excellent leadership and management of Religious Education. The quality of provision in Religious Education is a high priority in the school, which is well supported by the senior leaders, Parish Priest, members of the governing body and the religious education coordinators. Staff care deeply about their pupils' spiritual development and are very supportive of the executive headteacher's vision for the school. Self-critical monitoring and evaluation of the subject area is at the heart of the school's outstanding progress since the last inspection. Staff are well guided in their expectations of what the pupils can achieve and a portfolio of assessed work for each year group has been established. Regular scrutiny of the pupils' work has ensured that at each Key Stage, pupils' work is recorded regularly and moderated. Work is well in-hand to provide more able pupils with sufficient challenge as are efforts to improve practice and procedures for checking the pupils' performance and progress in Religious Education. There is a regular cycle of monitoring and evaluation of classroom practice. The Religious Education

coordinators show a strong sense of the Church's educational mission and shares this with all staff who display a genuine sense of spiritual purpose in their day-to-day work.

Grade 1