



Diocese of Westminster

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

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DFE Number: 307 3506

URN Number: 123214

Headteacher: Mr B. Cassidy

Chair of Governors: Mr G. McMahon

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: 15th January 2013

Date of previous inspection: May 2008

Reporting Inspector: Mrs M. Betts

Introduction

The inspector would like to thank the governors, headteacher, staff, pupils and parents for their co-operation over the conduct of the inspection. The inspector spent one day in school, visited 6 lessons, 1 assembly and two acts of class worship, and carried out 4 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 Catholic Primary School was carried out under the requirements of the Education Act 2005, and in accordance with the Framework and Schedule for Section 48 Inspections approved by the Archbishop of Westminster. 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.

Description of School

The school is a two form entry in the LA of Ealing and the locality of Hanwell. The school serves the parish of Hanwell. The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholic is 99.8%. The proportion of pupils who are from other Christian denominations is 0.1% and from other Faiths 0.1%.

There are 473 pupils on roll, with 7 pupils with a statement of Special Educational Need. 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 below average rate of families claiming free school meals.

Key for inspection grades:

Grade 1: Outstanding;*
Grade 1: Very Good;
Grade 2: Good;
Grade 3: Requires improvement;
Grade 4: Causing Concern.

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

Overall Grade: [1]

The quality of RE is very good with the inspector concurring with the school's self-evaluation judgements. The school has a distinct vision for future action and a strong commitment from staff to further their skills in this subject. The school has embraced all the recent changes to RE promoted by the diocese and has a very good capacity to continue to improve. Pupils are gaining religious literacy at a very good rate and are becoming aware of how their Catholic faith affects daily living. Pupils enjoy their religious education lessons especially when given practical activities to express their ideas such as by drama, art and craft, and ICT.

What has improved in classroom religious education since the last inspection and what should the school do to further improve in classroom religious education?

The school has improved well in the areas highlighted during the last inspection. The school now moderates assessments externally at deanery level and internally within the teaching teams to ensure accuracy of judgements. Regular monitoring of teaching and learning is undertaken by the senior leadership team and the RE subject leader.

The school has identified future improvement strategies linked both to continue monitoring the full coverage of the RECD and to continue relating future assessments to each strand of the attainment targets. The inspector concurs with these. Also, in some classes, marking needs to be further developed so that all pupils are aware of what they should do to achieve the targeted strand of the next attainment level.

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

Grade [1]

A new RE programme of work has been implemented this year and teachers are mapping their RE topics and their additional curriculum, such as work linked to the Year of Faith, against the key areas of the Curriculum Directory, checking both how these are being taught and that the balance between areas is ensured. Training for teachers to become familiar with the document has been undertaken. Very good medium term planning adapts the Directory objectives so that learning and resources are relevant to the age and abilities of the pupils. For example younger children have learnt the correct names for the priests' vestments through inter-active computer graphics that dress him appropriately for Mass. Pupils learn about other faiths and invite local visitors to share their faith. This enhances their knowledge of the diversity of their local community.

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

Grade [1]

All pupils are gaining an understanding of the teaching of the Catholic Church at a very good rate and display a growing depth of thought. This was evidenced during a year 6 lesson when, after studying St Paul's letter of guidance to the early church, pupils were challenged to compose advice to their local community and to worldwide leaders. They responded with mature and knowledgeable ideas. Pupils work steadily and with interest. Although pupils' attainment on entry is below age-

related expectations, the standard gained in religious education is good. The inspector's evidence and the school's own data suggest that pupils are on track to make very good progress. The pupils' books are very well presented and evidence a full coverage of the curriculum with a very good range of written activities.

The quality of teaching

Grade [1]

Teaching is very good overall. The best lessons effectively used visual presentation and open questioning to motivate pupils' interest. Where teaching did not reach this high standard, there was a slower learning pace and strategies were not used that engaged pupils in the learning. Learning is linked very well with Scripture. For example, in a year 5 class the pupils were challenged, after reading Jesus' calling of Levi, to discuss what qualities he possessed to fulfil an apostle's role. Lessons often consist of reflection opportunities for pupils to apply the learning to their own lives and experiences. During this year 5 lesson, pupils reflected on how their own gifts and talents can be used in Jesus' service today. Lessons are well planned and differentiated with clear learning intentions and success criteria. Assessments are linked to the National Levels of Attainment and pupil progress analysed. Marking of work is thorough, giving appropriate praise and often including questions to extend learning, with pupils given opportunities to respond. However, pupils are not always aware of the strategies needed for them to achieve their next attainment level.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of religious education

Grade [1]

The headteacher, senior staff and RE subject leader have a clear, enthusiastic vision for the subject and support staff very well. The management of staff is very well organised, with less experienced staff supported and encouraged by their team leaders and the RE subject leader. Further training is encouraged by the leadership and governors, and seven teachers either hold the Catholic Certificate of Religious Studies (CCRS) or are at present on the course. At the same time as teaching a new RE programme, the school is implementing recent developments in RE curriculum and assessments, and embedding these well into school practice.

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 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: [1*]

St Joseph's is an outstanding Catholic school and provides pupils with extremely rich experiences of the Catholic way of living and believing. Prayer and worship have a powerful role in school life. The high priority given to the promotion of pupils' spiritual and moral development is reflected in their excellent behaviour and positive attitudes. Pupils say "as Catholics we try to be Jesus' disciples". The dedicated leadership of the headteacher and senior staff is instrumental in very effectively maintaining and developing the Catholic identity and fostering pupils' growing awareness of their Catholic faith.

What has improved since the last inspection and what should the school do to further develop the Catholic life of the school ?

There were no Catholic life development issues from the last inspection. Since then the school has formed stronger links and integration with the Polish Catholic community and encouraged pupils to plan and prepare class liturgies.

The school plans to provide more activities to deepen the knowledge and understanding of the faith amongst the adults in school.

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

Grade [1*]

The leadership team together with the RE subject leader is strongly committed to the very high priority of RE in the school. Its importance is also evidenced by the subject receiving at least 10% of curriculum time and by a budget that matches and sometimes exceeds that of other core subjects, as it did during last year. All staff induction is linked to the diocesan school policies "Red Book".

Teachers have a team performance management objective linked to RE, and participate each year in a staff spiritual retreat. Governors, particularly through the Catholicity committee, offer the school firm support and encourage teachers to undertake future training in the Catholic life of the school by supporting them financially.

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

Grade [1*]

Worship and prayer are central in the school's life and make a very strong impact on pupils' spiritual and moral development. Worship is inter-active involving all pupils in powerful spiritual reflection. For example at the beginning of the worship observed, pupils, on whiteboards, listed gifts they have of which they are proud. Following the Bible story of God affirming Jesus at His baptism, pupils were encouraged to link this with God's affirmation of their gifts. Parents have access through the school website to the worship content and so are able to continue the discussion with their child.

Parents mentioned that this was particularly supportive during a recent death in the community. Pupils' liturgical formation is extremely well planned to ensure the widest possible experiences of the richness of the Catholic tradition of prayer and worship, such as the procession of pupils all wearing crowns through the high street to the church at Epiphany; and Art work throughout the school at Lent depicting the "Way of the Cross". During worship pupils show deep reverence and respect and the high quality of their singing powerfully enriches the experience. Older pupils plan and lead class liturgy as evidenced by the deeply spiritual worship the inspectors experienced in Year 6. Mass is regularly celebrated. The parish priest makes a significant contribution to the liturgical life of the school. Prayer groups for parents are offered and the priest from the Polish community leads these regularly.

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

Grade [I*]

Pupils are very aware of the importance of service to others and link this to their Catholic faith. They explained "Jesus loves us and wants us to love all others". The school ensures that pupils know why and how they are helping others whenever they fund-raise. For example, linked to Cafod's Lenten appeal, each year group, with a different activity, experienced water deprivation. Pupils often decide the charity they will support and organise the fund-raising activities. Ethics of commerce are discussed and practised, exemplified by pupils' commitment to Fairtrade produce. Pupils are extremely proud of their school and appreciate the friendliness and care of staff who listen to them and help with problems. Relationships within the school are very good. Pupils say "We look out for each other here". Pupils' pastoral needs are supported very effectively and their talents are celebrated and shared. This contributes very well to pupils' confidence and well-being. The headteacher is active within local authority and deanery groups that help facilitate improvements for the education and well-being of all children in the local community.

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*]

Partnership is a vibrant and central part of the school's mission in practice. The school has very strong links with the diocese evidenced by contributing to and accessing diocesan training; sharing good practice with other diocesan schools, for example, distributing their new RE handbook; and implementing diocesan programmes and policies. The school has very good links with parents who value the contribution the school makes to the faith development of their children. This is borne out through the very high number of parents (88%) agreeing and strongly agreeing with all aspects of the school's RE and Catholic provision. The school has a very good partnership with the local and the Polish parish and works closely with the parish priests to reinforce the home, school and parish link.

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

Grade [I*]

The headteacher is passionately committed to the clear vision of the Church's mission in education and very successfully inspires and engages all staff in implementing and developing the school's Catholic ethos. The mission statement "... a welcoming, a learning, a vibrant, a holy School" is well known and underpins all school activities. The Catholic identity of the school is pivotal to school life evidenced by many and varied high quality displays; the very high priority attached to worship; and to pupils' faith and moral development. The leadership understands very well the school's strengths and development needs through their thorough and accurate self-evaluation. Governors fulfil well their responsibilities and are influential in determining its Catholic direction.