



Archdiocese of Westminster

INSPECTION REPORT

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

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D/ES Number: 919/3327

Headteacher: Miss C. McFlynn

Chair of Governors: Mr C. Quinn

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: 16th January 2007
Date of previous inspection: 29th November 2001

Reporting Inspector: Mrs M. Betts

Description of School

St Joseph's Catholic School is a one form entry primary school with a part-time nursery class, for pupils from 3 to 11 years. The school is heavily over-subscribed. It serves the parish of St Joseph and is maintained by Hertfordshire Education Authority. There are 238 pupils on roll, 100% of whom are Catholic. About half the pupils are from white British heritage and there are pupils from each of 12 other ethnic backgrounds. Two pupils are at an early stage of learning English. Pupils are from a mix of economic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is about a quarter of the national average. The school has a proportion of about half the national average with learning difficulties and disabilities.

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 Primary School has a strong Catholic ethos with committed leadership from the headteacher, deputy and governors who are instrumental in effectively maintaining and developing the school's Catholic identity. Prayer has a strong central role in the school's life. The inclusion of all pupils is central to the school's vision. All staff are committed to upholding the principles of the Catholic faith and are effective in providing high quality care within a safe, purposeful and well ordered environment. The pupils' spiritual, moral and personal development is outstanding and this is reflected in their behaviour and attitudes. The headteacher, as religious education co-ordinator, leads and manages the religious education curriculum very well. The governors and staff are committed to the high profile given to religious education. Good progress is made by the pupils and excellent standards are achieved.

Grade 1

Improvement since the last inspection

The last inspection report described the school as "a very good and successful Catholic school". The areas for improvement were concerning developing the role of the religious education co-ordinator; ensuring homework was given; introducing a sex education programme and developing an outside prayer area. The school has made a very good response to these issues. The religious education co-ordinator's role is clear and well defined. Religious education homework is now included in the school homework policy and home activities are given regularly. The recently implemented sex education programme links with other areas of the curriculum and has been written for Catholic schools to assist the holistic growth of children. The new prayer garden is used regularly by pupils and staff and provides an outstanding space for quiet reflection and as a stimulus for prayer.

Grade 1

The capacity of the school community to improve and develop

The headteacher and deputy have a very good overall view of the school's strengths and development needs. Regular and rigorous monitoring ensures a consistent quality of provision and identifies areas for development. The school improvement plan includes specific reference to raising standards in religious education and maintaining the high profile of the school's Catholic life. Staff are committed to the success of the school and have undertaken any necessary training. One objective in all teachers' performance management is linked to the school's Catholicity. The school's self-evaluation process involves all staff, governors and the parish priest. The school's self-evaluation is accurate and comprehensive.

Grade 1

What the school should do to improve further

- Plan trips to places of worship to enhance the teaching and learning of other faiths.
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The Catholic Life of the School

Leadership and Management

The headteacher, deputy and governing body form an effective partnership for promoting the Catholic life of the school and raising standards. The mission statement "At St Joseph's we live, love and learn by the example of Jesus" is understood by the whole school community and pervades the school's daily life. The governors share the school's vision and are pro-active in helping and supporting the school to achieve it. The school is effectively managed in a way that ensures regular monitoring and evaluation of its work. High quality displays in the school emphasise the Catholic ethos. Relationships within the whole school community are very good. The pupils display respect towards each other and adults. They value the friendly, caring attitude of the teachers who listen to them and encourage their learning. Pastoral support provided for pupils is effective. Success is recognised and celebrated. The pupils' spiritual and moral development is very good. Very good links exist with the parish. The pupils raise money regularly for charities.

Grade 1

The Prayer Life of the School

The prayer life of the school is very good. Pupils are provided with a range of imaginative and creative opportunities to engage in prayer. High quality displays and artefacts; scripture passages; well-chosen music; stimulating visual power point presentations; the natural environment of the garden and the results of pupils' aesthetic experiences, all provide effective worship foci. Acts of worship engage pupils' interest and develop their thinking. Pupils are given reflection opportunities within worship sessions and during religious education learning, to think how they might apply the message to their own lives. Pupils write their own prayers. Pupils are involved in worship by presenting their class assemblies, by helping to deliver the class and whole school Masses and prayer services. Parents are invited on these occasions and attendance is high. Worship makes an excellent contribution to the spiritual and moral development of the pupils. The headteacher monitors and evaluates the worship provision. A pupil survey to assess the impact of worship on them has been conducted.

Grade 1

Religious Education

Achievement and Standards in Religious Education

The standard learners achieve in religious education is very high. Pupils are gaining knowledge, skills and understanding at a good rate across all key stages. Teacher assessment indicates that pupils are working well in line with their ability. The pupils have a secure understanding of the life and teachings of the Catholic Church. They are able to articulate what they have learnt, express opinions and work collaboratively and independently. Pupils have great pride in their work which is extremely well presented. A good coverage of the religious education programme was evidenced. The pupils' books contain a variety of imaginative and challenging work including bible research. The pupils enjoy religious education especially when given the

opportunities to express their ideas. They are very aware of the overriding importance of religious education in the school. Their behaviour is outstanding. Their personal, moral, social and cultural development is very good.

Grade 1

Teaching and learning in Religious Education

The majority of teaching observed was outstanding. Teachers are enthusiastic and have secure subject knowledge and plan very thoroughly. Their expectations are high and in the main achieved. All pupils were able to access the curriculum taught and made progress with their learning. Appropriate differentiated tasks are given to those pupils with special needs and for those who are able to be further challenged. The lessons are generally well paced. Pupils are motivated and involved. Work is well marked, giving suitable praise and indicating how improvement could be made. Evidence indicated that these improvements were mostly undertaken. Pupils are challenged to reach the attainment target that they are working towards. Regular assessments record pupil achievement and inform future planning. Parents receive information telling them of the religious education topics for the term and how they can help with these at home.

Grade 1

Quality of the Curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is very good, and suitable for the age and abilities of the learners. It fulfils the requirement of the Bishops' Conference. 10% of curriculum time is used for religious education following the "Here I am" programme. Religious education is often linked with other areas of the curriculum, for example drama, literacy, art, craft, information and communication technology (ICT), and to personal, social and health education (PSHE). The school teaches Judaism and Sikhism as their other faith topics. The parish priest is used as a resource for learning about the Catholic faith as well about the two other faiths studied. The curriculum makes a significant contribution to the spiritual and moral development of the pupils. Attractive religious education displays throughout the school give added value to this core subject.

Grade 1

Leadership and management of Religious Education

The headteacher, as religious education co-ordinator, gives a very high profile to this subject and its contribution to the educational mission of the Church. She has high expectations for standards and faith development of the pupils. She is very well supported by the deputy who takes responsibility for whole school liturgies. Teachers are effective and enthusiastic in their teaching. The co-ordinator models lessons, gives individual support to teachers especially to those who are not Catholic and leads training in development areas. Religious education is effectively managed in a way to ensure thorough and incisive quality assurance. The school has identified the improvement issue noted in this report. Religious education has very good resources. The budget for religious education and worship is high and well above that allocated to other core subjects. Four teachers hold the Catholic Certificate of Religious Studies.

Grade 1