

**ARCHDIOCESE OF SOUTHWARK
COMMISSION FOR SCHOOLS & COLLEGES**

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

St Joseph's Catholic Infant School
Pitman Street, Camberwell,
London SE 5 0TS
URN 100854

Chair of Governors
Headteacher
Inspectors

Fr D Gibbons
Mrs C Holdsworth
Mrs J Lenahan
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Inspection date 02 February 2010

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Introduction

Description of the school

St Joseph's is a voluntary aided infant school. It is situated in the Camberwell Deanery of the Archdiocese of Southwark. It is maintained by Southwark LA. The principal parish which the school serves is the Sacred Heart and St Wilfred's with a small number of pupils coming from the parishes of Saints Philip and James and St Anne's. The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholics is 98%. The average weekly proportion of curriculum time given to religious education is 10% in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1.

The school takes pupils from 4 to 7 years. The number of pupils currently on roll is 178. The attainment of pupils on entering the school is broadly below average. Socio-economic data indicates that pupils are from significantly deprived backgrounds and the proportion eligible for free school meals is above average. Around 29% of the pupils receive extra support in class. The school serves an ethnically diverse area. All but a few pupils come from minority ethnic groups. Pupils of Black African heritage form the largest group. 75% of the pupils do not speak English as their first language and there are 25 different home languages represented within the school, which is above the national average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness as a Catholic school

St Joseph's is an outstanding school. It has a strong Catholic ethos which is committed to excellence in spiritual, moral, social and academic education. The school fulfils its mission to be a place where gospel values of "faith, hope, love, peace, justice and truth" are lived out in its daily life. Pupils make very good progress and teaching is good or outstanding. There are consistently high standards in religious education, which is at the heart of the curriculum, and is well planned, monitored and evaluated. Prayer and worship underpin the Catholic life of the school. Spiritual, moral and social development is very well addressed through religious education and cross-curricular links and permeates the wider life of the school. Pastoral care is outstanding with pupils' emotional well-being supported through policies and systems that are based on valuing the self-worth of each child. Pupils' behaviour is excellent. Pupils and parents speak very highly of their school and value the sense of community where every child is respected and nurtured. There are very good links with the local parish through the support given to the school by the clergy. School and parish work very closely together through shared celebrations and support for charitable activities. Key to the success of the school is the strength of the leadership. An inspirational headteacher encourages staff to embrace the school's mission and work as a team to foster the holistic development of each pupil in accordance with Christian principles. The issues raised in the previous inspection have been fully addressed. Self-evaluation documentation is reviewed regularly by staff and governors and is well referenced, accurate and used to inform the school improvement plan. There is much evidence that the school constantly strives for improvement and places a strong emphasis on staff development at all levels. The governing body is experienced and members have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development.

Grade 1

What steps need to be taken to improve further?

Formalise documentation to reflect the established programme for assemblies and class collective worship.

Integrate the programme for Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE), including the 'Education in Human Love', into the 'Here I Am' religious education programme in line with Diocesan guidelines for Education in Personal Relationships (EPR).

The Catholic life of the school

Leadership and management

Grade 1

The school is very well managed. There are strong links between the governing body, the headteacher and leaders at all levels who demonstrate excellent leadership of a Catholic community. The governing body is representative of the school's cultural diversity. Members know the community very well, have a wide range of expertise and understand their role in promoting the Catholic identity of the school. The local parish priest is on the governing body, is a frequent visitor to the school and his guidance and support is greatly valued by the school. High expectations are part of the school's ethos and there is clear vision for quality care and education, which is shared by everyone. The level of pastoral care is exceptional with a designated 'Pupil Development Centre' that reflects the schools' mission. A consequence of this is the sense of trust that exists between pupils, parents and staff. Spiritual and moral development is effectively promoted through religious education and the broader curriculum, which is rich in creativity, awe and wonder. The school environment is a haven which exudes the joy of learning. Exceptional displays, which value pupils' work, and a curriculum supported by high quality and well-managed resources, are a hallmark. Opportunities for pupils to show leadership through the school council are valued. Excellent relationships with home and parish are promoted through an up-to-date informative web-site, meetings, newsletters and invitations to school and parish events.

Quality of provision for personal and collective worship

Grade 1

Prayer is integral to the life of the school. Mass is celebrated regularly in school. The school places emphasis on teaching pupils about the significance of the component elements of the Mass. An example of this 'The Listening Mass', which helped pupils understand that God speaks to us through the gospel message in the Bible when we gather together to celebrate the Eucharist. Pupils are provided with a wide range of opportunities to develop in their understanding and growth of their faith. Attractive prayer areas are a feature in each class. Worship and prayer are enriched by the use of visual presentation as well as the active participation of the pupils with drama, dance and singing. Evidence of the pupils' positive response to prayer was seen in spontaneous reflections in class and in their written intercessions, which are prominent in high quality displays in classrooms and throughout the school. Prayer and worship are carefully monitored to ensure that pupils access a rich and diverse prayer and liturgical life within the school. Pupils are respectful and focused during acts of collective worship as seen in the Foundation Stage, where pupils listened and responded to intercessions from their peers as they prayed for 'Special Friends'. The clergy make a significant contribution to the sacramental and prayer life of the school. The school undertakes the preparation programme for pupils to receive their First Holy Communion. Parents and clergy appreciate this undertaking and view it as an

enhancement in uniting home, school and parish as a worshipping community. Devotion to the rosary is integrated into the school's prayer life and led by a member of the support staff. This offers pupils and staff the opportunity to come together daily to pray on a voluntary basis. School assemblies are child-centred and pupils engage with respect. During the inspection, excellent and enthusiastic singing was a strong feature of the assembly based on the theme of 'Friendship'. The programme for whole school assemblies and class collective worship celebrates the liturgical year and is linked to the religious education programme. Although, school documentation and planning for Masses is outstanding, written planning for assemblies and class liturgies is not reflective of current provision and this should be addressed.

Community Cohesion

Grade 1

Community cohesion is a strength of the school. Inclusion of all is a central goal and shared vision. The whole community is very welcoming and fosters a strong sense of belonging. Leaders promote respect for difference, value cultural diversity and ensure equal opportunities for all. Pupils are taught about other world faiths and learn about aspects of Judaism and Hinduism. Pupils are encouraged to show concern for the weak and vulnerable within and beyond their own community. Contributions to fund raising charities are exceptionally generous, examples being, donations to CAFOD Lenten Appeal, Pattaya Orphanage in Thailand and to 'Anerly Across', a charity that enables a local disabled child to visit Lourdes. The school invites visitors to share their expertise and talents with the pupils in areas such as art, literature, PE, music and drama. An extensive range of visits by pupils to local places of interest serve to broaden the pupils' perspective of the wider community. Work experience and teaching practice students are welcomed by the school. The school fosters good relations with the adjoining junior school and the local senior school. A comprehensive induction programme serves to facilitate a smooth transition for the pupils from the infants to the junior school. The partnership with parents is given prominence. Parents are encouraged to attend Masses, liturgies and assemblies and the school premises is available for use as a 'Parents Drop in Centre'. Partnership with the local parish is very good and this serves to unite the whole school community.

Religious education

Achievement and standards in religious education

Grade 1

Standards and attainment in religious education are high and this is particularly significant given the below-average attainment of pupils on entry. Pupils are gaining religious literacy at a very good rate. They are able to express their understanding of their topics with growing confidence because of the regard given by teachers to key concepts and vocabulary when setting learning objectives. The extent to which pupils can share their newly found knowledge was seen in a Year 2 lesson when they discussed 'The Flight into Egypt' and the relevance of the time Jesus spent with the elders in the temple.

Pupils display a positive approach to the subject. Written work shows evidence of coverage, differentiation, a wide range of activities and marking is thorough and affirmative. Pupils' workbooks and work on display reflects their ability to empathise with topics taught and how the teachings of Jesus relate to their lives. From the earliest age, pupils are eager to actively engage in lessons because teaching encourages them to relate scripture to personal experience. A remark from a pupil summed up this observation when they said, "God wants us to become like Him by being good, praying and loving one another". The school provides an excellent atmosphere for spiritual, moral and social education and conversations with pupils indicate that this has an impact on behaviour and attitudes, demonstrated by a strong sense of respect for one another.

Teaching and learning in religious education

Grade 1

Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and set high expectations of pupils. Lessons observed during the inspection were good or outstanding and enabled pupils to engage in interesting and challenging tasks. Lesson plans challenged the more able to think and extend their learning. This is a significant improvement since the previous inspection where the teaching of the more able was identified as an area for development. Teaching assistants are very well trained and deployed. Their contribution in lessons ensures that those with learning needs are well supported and have full access to the curriculum. Through effective use of the 'Pupil Development Centre', the 'Learning Mentor' uses her expertise to enable individuals and groups of pupils to overcome barriers to learning and this, in turn, serves to ensure that the classroom experience is beneficial to all. Lessons end with a simple liturgy and/or prayer and time for a short reflection on how pupils can apply learning to their lives. Assessment processes are established and enable staff to plan effectively. This again is an improvement since the previous inspection. The school is committed to further develop its assessment procedures by compiling a portfolio of work and bringing its procedures for religious education into line with those already established for tracking attainment in the other core subjects so that they are better placed to transfer more comprehensive records to the Junior School. Parents spoken to expressed a high level of satisfaction with the religious education provided by the school and the very good communication offered by all members of staff.

The religious education curriculum

Grade 1

The quality of the curriculum is outstanding. At least 10% of curriculum time is used for religious education which follows the 'Here I Am' programme. This is complemented by the Personal, Social, Health and Education (PSHE) programme of study and taught as a discrete subject, PSHE now needs to be cross referenced with religious education and encompassed under the umbrella of Education in Personal Relationships (EPR) including a policy for Education for Human Love, in line with diocesan guidelines. Staff work hard to make the curriculum relevant, interesting and ensure it is given high priority

as a core subject. Pupils' needs are taken into consideration when preparing lessons. Planning is in place and indicates that teachers are building on prior attainment and experiences. Information technology (ICT) is used very effectively to enhance the learning experience. The curriculum is enriched by links to other subjects such as art, music, role play and drama. The curriculum in Year 2 is enhanced with the programme 'Meet Christ with Joy', which the school uses to prepare pupils for their First Holy Communion. The curriculum is further enriched by the extensive number of liturgies and Masses which help pupils to extend and understand their faith, as does the high level of involvement with the local parish. Resources for teaching religious education are outstanding and reflect the high status which the school gives to the subject.

Leadership and management of religious education

Grade 1

There is very good leadership and management of religious education. The headteacher and co-ordinator ensure that a high profile is given to the subject. Well established policies and procedures are embedded in practice. Leaders should now ensure that the current good practice in teaching about the major world faiths is included in documentation. Leadership is very effective in monitoring performance, curriculum planning, teaching and learning. Staff are given high quality support and guidance, including the induction of staff new to teaching the programme. As a result, pupils' performance is high. Parents are well informed about current topics in religious education and how they can help through newsletters and the school's website. The parish priest, in his capacity as chaplain, gives support and guidance on a regular basis and this is greatly appreciated by staff. The school keeps abreast of developments at Diocesan level through staff training and recently felt privileged to be at the forefront of piloting an element of the newly revised 'Here I Am' programme. Religious education and the Catholic Life of the school are prominent and detailed in the School Improvement Plan. Governors are supportive and well informed and are actively involved in school development and play a key role in the school's success.