



DIOCESE OF BRENTWOOD

Inspection Report



Name of School: St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Barking

LA: Barking and Dagenham

Inspection Date: 2nd November 2016

Reporting Inspector: Pamela Brannigan

This Inspection was carried out under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of School: Primary
School Category: Federated Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils: 4-11
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 360
Appropriate Authority: The Governing Body
Date of previous inspection: 2nd November 2013

School Address:
The Broadway
Barking
Greater London
IG11 7AR

Telephone: 0208 270 64 74
Executive Headteacher: Mrs B. Horton
Head of School: Miss L. Warrilow
Chair of Governors: Fr S. Myers

Information about the school

St Joseph's is a two form entry school in the local authority of Barking and Dagenham and part of the diocese of Brentwood. The school serves the local parish of St Mary and St Ethelburga in Barking with some pupils coming from farther afield. There are currently 360 pupils aged 4-11 on roll. The majority of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds with a high proportion speaking English as an additional language. Around 76% of pupils are Catholics with the remainder coming from other Christian denominations or other faiths. The proportion of pupils with special needs is around the national average. There have been many staff changes in recent years and there are a large number of teachers new to the school this term. However, 72% of the teachers are Catholics and eight have the CCRS or equivalent qualification. The school is part of a hard federation and is led by an executive headteacher and a head of school. One governing body oversees both schools in the federation.

Key grades for inspection

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

Overall effectiveness of this Catholic school

Grade 2

St Joseph's is a good Catholic school with very good leadership. The quality of the prayer and collective worship provided by the school is good and the Catholic ethos is evident in its daily life. Pupils are given opportunities for spiritual and moral development through the curriculum and the wider life of the school. The quality of pupils' learning and progress in religious education is good as are the standards of attainment. There is regular, effective monitoring of teaching, learning, and planning. Some governors are of long standing who know the school well and offer a good level of challenge and support. Pastoral care is good and shared by the local parish priest and all staff. Relationships within the school and with the local parish are very good and pupils feel well cared for and supported in their learning. Parents are generally happy with religious education and the Catholic life of the school.

The school has a good capacity for sustained improvement. The last inspection in 2013 identified the school as requiring improvement in the provision of Catholic education and achievement. Since then the executive headteacher and her team have put in place a rapid improvement plan which is addressing the areas identified. They have reviewed resources and methods to make them more engaging for teaching and learning. Pupils are now shown clearly how to improve their work and staff are given opportunities to observe and share best practice. This includes joint moderation of pupils' work with the other federation school. The leader of learning for religious education has produced an annual wide ranging and comprehensive action plan to sustain effectiveness and put in place further improvements. Along with the headteacher and head of school she has given guidance to teachers on classroom worship and prayer tables. Regular, rigorous monitoring is ensuring that teaching is relevant and appropriate to children's needs.

The quality of self-evaluation is good. The school documentation is accurate and gives a comprehensive analysis of the Catholic life of the school and religious education. There are effective strategies in place to share good practice and support new teachers. The curriculum which follows the 'Come and See' programme enables pupils to make connections between faith and their own lives. Staff are encouraged to improve their skills through training and embarking on the CCRS course. There are good links with the other federation school through in-service sessions and staff meetings. All new teachers are very well supported.

The current leadership has a very good capacity to maintain effectiveness. The executive headteacher shows very good leadership of a Catholic community and is well supported by the head of school and leader of learning for religious education. Governors have a wide range of expertise and a good knowledge of the everyday life of the school. The parish priest visits frequently to plan school Masses and liaise with senior leadership. Systems are in place to develop and strengthen tracking, assessment and planning which are leading to good outcomes for all pupils.

What the school should do to improve further

- Continue to implement the current action plan to support the process of improvement of teaching and learning in religious education with particular emphasis on staff development.
- Ensure pupils have additional opportunities to plan and lead worship.

Outcomes for pupils

Grade 2

Pupil achievement and progress in religious education are good. All pupils spoken to said they enjoy religious education and the range of activities involved. Pupils observed during the inspection worked well together and take an active part in the lessons. Behaviour for learning is good and pupils have a sound knowledge of the Catholic faith appropriate to their age and abilities. Lessons observed were well planned with a range of cross curricular activities in all key stages. All religious education lessons begin and end with a prayer. Across the school workbooks are well presented and show pupils' progress and coverage of the curriculum. Regular tracking is ensuring good progress is made and attainment is in line with expectations. Marking is positive and pupils are encouraged to respond to comments which help pupils make the 'next steps' in their learning. Other faiths are taught well.

Pupils make a good contribution to the Catholic life of the school. They all know the mission statement and respond well to opportunities to understand the needs of others in school and the wider community. They support a number of charities including Cafod and Brentwood Catholic Children's Society. Pupils have a good understanding of the work of these charities which they are able to link with the life and teachings of Jesus. They also support the local foodbank and a homeless shelter. Pupils are given responsibilities to support the life of the school as school council members. They also assist with school assemblies and Masses when pupils act as altar servers and readers. The parish priest who provides pastoral support for staff and pupils comes in frequently and acts as an additional teaching resource. There are good links with Brentwood diocese. Pupils show consideration and respect for adults and each other. Behaviour is very good and pupils value the sense of security, friendship and community created within the school.

Prayer and collective worship are an integral part of school life. Pupils understand the importance of prayer and participate readily in class and assemblies. During the inspection the head of school led an assembly based on All Souls Day which enabled pupils to understand the concept of life as a journey to God. She was assisted by a group of pupils who prepared the prayer focus and read an interpretation from the book of Revelations. Pupils were attentive and singing was very good. There are regular whole school Masses and plans for year group Masses in Key Stage 2. The cycle of celebrations reflects the Church's liturgical year and enables pupils to understand how faith links to everyday experiences. They respond positively to opportunities to develop their faith journey through reflective prayer. They learn the traditional prayers of the Church as well as writing their own prayers, many of which were seen during the inspection. There is a Rosary group in May and October and the Angelus is said daily in each class. Pupils also benefit from a beautiful prayer garden in the school grounds. However, pupils would benefit from being given more responsibility in planning and leading class liturgies and assemblies.

By the end of Key Stage 2 standards of attainment meet diocesan expectations and all groups make good progress. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to the learning of individuals and groups of pupils. School leadership gives religious education the same importance as other core subjects and uses staff meeting time and in-service sessions to support teachers.

Leaders and managers

Grade 2

The executive headteacher and head of school together with the leader for learning in religious education demonstrate very good leadership of the school through the way they promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life of the school. They communicate a clear Catholic vision to the whole community and are supported in this by staff and the governing body who are committed to providing the best possible environment for pupils. A 'Rabbuni' group has recently been set up to support the work of both schools in the federation. This group advises the governing body and includes the parish priest of each school, the executive headteacher, both heads of school and both leaders for learning for religious education. The Catholicity of the school is evident in display boards around the

school and in the classroom prayer areas. Masses are a regular feature of school life and parents and families are invited to attend.

Members of the governing body have a long standing knowledge and understanding of the school and are well informed about its life through the Rabbuni group, the headteacher's report, visits to school events and meetings with senior leaders. They also receive a termly report from the leader of learning for religious education to monitor work over the previous term and measure its progress. This report is used to evaluate provision and support future planning. The governing body is fully involved in the strategic development of the school and engages effectively with all members of the community. Governors have accessed training provided by the diocese which has enabled them to evaluate aspects of the religious life of the school and to challenge and support effectively.

The leader for learning in religious education has produced a targeted action plan for religious education and is well placed to support new teachers. Along with the executive headteacher and head of school she monitors religious education through workbook scrutiny, observing teaching and evaluating outcomes. She gives feedback after lesson observations resulting in improvements in teaching and learning. She has led training sessions for all staff to help them ensure that all pupils achieve well. She has also put in place systems to enable pupils' progress to be tracked accurately. Assessment is in place and tasks enable pupils to demonstrate their knowledge of the relevant concepts. Leaders support staff development and teachers are encouraged to undertake further training.

School leaders ensure that St Joseph's School is a welcoming community where everyone is respected and valued. The school offers a range of extra-curricular activities and participates in local community events. There are good links with other diocesan schools including the Catholic secondary school to which most pupils transfer at the end of Key Stage 2. Provision for spiritual development ensures that pupils are able to reflect on their own lives and experiences. Parents are kept well informed about their children's welfare and progress through regular meetings and curriculum information newsletters. A communication book is sent home every day for parents to inform the school or express concerns. In addition, the school employs a full time parent support adviser who is available for families. A number of initiatives including 'prayer bags' in Year 2 and a copy of the 'Wednesday Word' for each family is encouraging parents to share their children's faith journey.

Provision

Grade 2

The quality of teaching and learning in religious education is good. During the inspection, lessons observed were at least good. Pupils are given a good start in Early Years which is built upon as they progress through the school. Lessons are planned with clear learning intentions and a range of interesting activities including role play, drama and discussions. All groups of pupils make good progress and behaviour for learning is also very good. Teachers respond well to pupils' comments and take opportunities to extend knowledge and develop understanding. In most year groups well differentiated tasks enable pupils to work with enthusiasm and interest. Good support by teaching assistants is a feature of many lessons. Marking is positive and there are suggestions of ways to improve. There is every indication that current good standards are likely to be maintained.

The quality of the religious education curriculum is good. At least 10% of curriculum time is devoted to religious education. The programme 'Come and See' has been implemented throughout the school and is now embedded. There are good quality resources although class sets of Bibles would enable pupils to have easier access to scripture. Religious education displays around the school emphasise the importance of faith to the work of the school. The curriculum enables pupils to become aware of their responsibility for each other and their environment. It contributes very well to their spiritual and moral development.

Provision for prayer and worship at St Joseph's is very good. Assemblies and liturgies are well planned and contribute to pupils' spiritual development. They include visual presentations, Bible readings, drama, singing and music. Collective worship in classrooms often involves opportunities for personal reflection. Each classroom has a prayer focus with religious artefacts and a display board which usually includes children's work. Feast day Masses are celebrated throughout the year and the traditions of the Church are explored with pupils. Parents and families are invited to many celebrations and pupils visit the local church to lead a Carol Service at Christmas. The parish priest supports the school through

Masses and classroom visits. Pupils have the opportunity to receive the sacrament of Reconciliation twice a year at Advent and Lent.

The school is constantly seeking to develop practice to improve outcomes for pupils. The leader for learning in religious education is reviewing assessment procedures to enable pupils to demonstrate their understanding of religious concepts more clearly. Tracking of pupils' progress is beginning to provide a clear picture of progress in both key stages. There is evidence that good outcomes for pupils are likely to be maintained or improved as the school consolidates and builds on current good practice in all areas.

The inspector would like to express her thanks and appreciation to all members of the school community for their welcome and openness during the inspection.