



DIOCESE OF BRENTWOOD



Inspection Report

Name of School: St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Local Authority: Barking and Dagenham

Unique Reference Number: 101239

Inspection Date: 14th November 2011

Reporting Inspectors: Dr Michael Sutherland-Harper and
Mr Derek Kelly

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

Type of School: Primary
School Category: 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: March 2010

School Address:
Connor Road
Dagenham, Essex
RM9 5UL
Tel. No. 020 82706480
Fax No. 020 85955061
Chair of Governors: Fr Stephen Myers
Headteacher: Mrs Bernadette Horton

Introduction:

The Inspection was carried out under Section 48 of the Education (Schools) Act 2005 by two inspectors appointed by the Diocesan Bishop at the request of the Governing Body of the School.

The Inspectors acknowledge and are appreciative of the full support, co-operation and courtesy they enjoyed from the Governors, Headteacher, Staff and Pupils of the School both before and during the Inspection. The Inspectors wish to express their gratitude to all concerned.

The focus of the Section 48 Inspection was:

- Classroom Religious Education
- The Catholic nature of the School through;
 1. Worship
 2. Links with the Catholic and wider community
- Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development

The Section 48 Report

**St Joseph's Catholic Primary School
Connor Road
Dagenham
Essex
RM9 5UL**

Head Teacher: Mrs Bernadette Horton

Date of Inspection: 14th November 2011

Description of the School:

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School is a voluntary aided Catholic school situated in the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham and in the diocese of Brentwood. The school is a larger than average sized primary school. The school serves the Catholic parish of the Holy Family.

Record of Evidence Base:

Two Diocesan Inspectors were in the school for the equivalent of two inspection days.

- The study of pre-inspection documentation including the Self-Evaluation Form/ Denominational Provision (SEF/DP).
- The observation of nine lessons.
- Participation in an assembly.
- Scrutiny of pupils' written work.
- Meetings with the Headteacher, the Head of Religious Education (R.E.), the Parish Priest who is the Chair of Governors and R.E. link governor, and the School Council.
- Observations of R.E. displays in the classrooms and around the school.

What the School does well:

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School is a good Catholic school with outstanding features. The school's Mission Statement: 'Each one of us has been created by God and is therefore uniquely special' is at the heart of its work, reflecting the school aim to be an inclusive community which values every individual. The school is nearing the end of an intensive building programme and looking forward to the many exciting opportunities presented at this stage of its development. Pupils' pride in the school is evident from the enthusiastic welcome they give to visitors; they want to demonstrate the quality of their work and believe strongly that they have a role to play in helping to take the school forward. The school is well led by a clear-sighted and experienced Head Teacher who is well supported by committed governors and highly motivated staff, all of whom help to develop and promote the Catholic identity of the school.

Religious Education (R.E.) is at the heart of the school's work. The R.E. curriculum is based on the 'Here I Am' Religious Education programme of study, recommended by the Bishop of the Diocese, and which is fully implemented. Good teacher use of Information Communication Technology (ICT) enhances delivery of the R.E. curriculum and helps to engage pupils with their learning.

Overall, the quality of teaching and learning in R.E. is good. Lessons are well planned and learning objectives are clearly stated. Exercise books contain space for both pupils and teachers to assess whether the pupils have met their objectives. In the lessons observed, pupils were uniformly on task, well-motivated and ready and eager to participate. Good use of visual resources and effective questioning in many classes helps to keep up the pace of the lesson and add challenge. Concepts are explained in a way that pupils can readily understand and these explanations take account of pupils' starting points because lessons are carefully differentiated. Some excellent work in the Early Years Foundation Stage introduced pupils to the concept of baptism and took them carefully through that part of their faith. While there are good opportunities for pupils to offer their perspectives and the reasons for them, pupils across the school were keen to

take an even greater part in leading learning wherever possible. Teachers work well together with support staff and both groups have good knowledge of each pupil. Pupils readily share their experiences and understanding with their peers. Regular assessment procedures, which serve both to encourage and guide pupils, are based on the 'Here I Am' topics and are being developed to ensure that all pupils are aware of how to take their work forward. Behaviour in classes and throughout the school is good and often exemplary.

The R.E. Co-ordinator is a member of the Senior Leadership Team and this reinforces the role of religious education at the heart of the school. An action plan is in place with room for regular review and evaluation. In-service training helps to meet the needs of all staff. The school is working to develop its programme of lesson observations to ensure that the present rate of progress is continually enhanced.

The school meets both the national and diocesan requirements for the allocation of curriculum time for taught R.E.

The displays and resources in the classrooms and around the school are of a good quality and support the pupils' learning as well as their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Displays reflect the importance of global friendship through items like a friends' tree with images of pupils, heritage flags and thanksgiving prayers written by pupils for families linked to American Thanksgiving. Prayers are offered regularly during the day. Classrooms display prayers for the start, middle and end of the day and pupils share reverently in moments of prayer.

The sense of community is clear throughout the school. Pupils enjoy good relationships with each other and with adults. Older children look after younger ones as playground buddies. Pupils are keen to serve as School Councillors so that they may support the school and realise the importance of the efforts they make to raise money for charitable causes around the world. Strong links across the parish and the readiness with which parents and carers feel they can approach the school are indicative of the school's place at the centre of the local community. The governing body has a clear understanding of the school and its work and of the work which still remains to be done. They actively support and challenge the school as it enters this new phase in its development.

Collective worship is carefully planned to furnish opportunities for everyone to participate in the promotion of the school's clear Catholic ethos. An assembly during the inspection provided time for reflection on the loss of those we have loved but ended positively with an affirmation of the love of God which helps us through the darkest times. Pupils behaved prayerfully in setting down paper crosses on a prayer mat. They are capable of leading such moments of reflection and enriching them with their own personal experiences.

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is good. Cultural development is enriched by the many different backgrounds from which the pupils come and by staff from different parts of the world. The Religious Education curriculum

contributes well to spiritual, moral and social development because it encourages thoughtful examination of, and reflection on, the world around us. Pupils have a well-developed sense of right and wrong and of the need for justice to be at the heart of all they do.

What needs to be improved?

- **Develop R.E. planning and teaching across the school by sharing of best practice following the planned programme of further lesson observations.**
- **Revisit the Mission Statement as part of the review prior to settling into the new school building.**
- **Develop opportunities for pupils to take a greater lead in the delivery of learning in R.E. classes and liturgical work.**

The Inspectors endorse the areas identified by the school for improvement in the Section 48 Self-Evaluation Form.

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School displays a good Catholic ethos. Pupil pride in their school and commitment to its work mean that the school has the potential to become an outstanding Catholic school. Pupils are carefully inducted into the school and well prepared for transition to secondary school. The Head Teacher is clear about how she wants to take the school forward and is well supported by her staff in these efforts.