



DIOCESE OF BRENTWOOD

Inspection Report



Name of School: St Joseph's Junior School
LEA: London Borough of Waltham Forest
Inspection Date: 11th December 2015
Reporting Inspector: Pamela Brannigan

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: 7 - 11
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 230
Appropriate Authority: The Governing Body
Date of previous inspection: 24th September 2009

School Address:
Vicarage Road
Leyton
London
E10 5DX

Tel. No. 020 8539 5971
Headteacher: Mr J. Alexander
Chair of Governors: Mrs F. Joseph

Information about the school

St Joseph's Catholic Junior School is a two form entry school for pupils aged 7-11 in the London borough of Waltham Forest in the diocese of Brentwood. It serves the parish of St Joseph's in Leyton and part of Leytonstone. There are 230 pupils on roll, 98% of whom are Catholics. Over 90% of pupils have ethnic minority backgrounds with more than 52% speaking English as an additional language. The school has an above average proportion of pupils with special educational needs and of pupils eligible for the pupil premium. Families and pupils are supported by the provision of breakfast and after school clubs as well as a Home/School practitioner. The school is part of a newly formed Catholic federation.

Key grades for inspection

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

Overall effectiveness of this Catholic school

Grade 1

St Joseph's Junior is an outstanding Catholic school with a Catholic ethos that is part of all areas of school life. The headteacher has a clear vision for Catholic life which he has communicated to the whole community. There is a strong leadership team with an effective subject leader for religious education. Pupils are given many opportunities to experience prayer and worship which is central to the life of the school. A prayer garden is a recent development which is used for class worship. The quality of teaching is consistently good or outstanding which leads to high levels of attainment. The school has a strong pastoral care system and staff are excellent role models for pupils. Behaviour is exemplary, pupils work hard and say they enjoy religious education. During the course of their time in the school, pupils make very good progress.

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

Grade 1

The school has a very good capacity for sustained improvement. The school has a strong Catholic identity with excellent leadership from the headteacher and his team supported by the governing body which includes the parish priest from St Joseph's. The headteacher has built a strong middle management team which includes the experienced subject leader. Self-evaluation is accurate and a regular cycle of monitoring results in high standards in religious education. Staff are committed to improving their skills through training opportunities. There is every indication that current effectiveness is likely to be maintained.

What the school should do to improve further

- Continue to consolidate those areas currently identified in the school development plan.
- Develop moderating links with other Catholic schools to ensure a better understanding of the higher levels of attainment in religious education.

Outcomes for pupils

Grade 1

The quality of pupils' learning and progress in religious education is very good. Pupils' behaviour for learning is excellent. The implementation of the 'Come and See' religious education programme together with rigorous monitoring is resulting in a very good level of attainment for all groups. During lessons observed, pupils were engaged and interested. They co-operate and work well individually and in pairs. Pupils' knowledge and skills are developing well and they enjoy a wide range of cross curricular activities including discussions, drama, role play and art. They are gaining religious literacy at a good rate throughout the school. Workbooks are well presented and demonstrate a wide range of tasks. Overall pupils make very good progress and achieve or exceed diocesan expectations by the end of Key Stage 2.

Pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life of the school to a very great extent. There is an active school council which meets weekly to debate concerns and suggest improvements. In recent weeks a campaign to combat bullying behaviour has been effective and pupils are clear about the ways they can seek help when necessary. Pupils have a strong sense of belonging and are keen to take on responsibilities as play time monitors, RE Ambassadors, Liturgical team and as councillors. Pupils express their own views with confidence and are eager to participate in all aspects of school life. Their achievements in and out of school are valued and recognised in special assemblies and awards. Pupils respect the Catholic traditions of the school and are able to refer to the teachings of Jesus. They are aware of the needs within their own community and the wider world. Charities supported include Cafod, Haven House, Water Aid and the British Heart Foundation. The last one was in response to the death of a popular and long serving caretaker when pupils suggested a sponsored walk which raised almost £400.

Prayer and worship are central to the life of the school. During collective worship they are attentive and responsive. An example of this was a Year 3 liturgy which took place in the new prayer garden. Pupils were given a range of Advent readings for reflection followed by prayers as well as a period for silent worship. Pupils know some traditional prayers of the Church appropriate for their age group and are also encouraged to compose their own prayers examples of which were seen during the inspection. Rosary groups in May and October are very well attended. Older pupils benefit from being given opportunities to plan and lead worship including their own class masses. All classrooms have a prayer table with a bible and other religious artefacts which provide a focal point for reflection. Pupils attend Mass in the parish church as well as visiting as part of their religious education lessons. There are excellent links with the parish and the priest who is also a governor is a frequent visitor to the school.

Pastoral care is also a strength of the school and a shared responsibility of all staff. Pupils spoken to said they know where to go for help if they have a concern about themselves or other children. Older pupils take their responsibilities as play monitors for younger children seriously. In conversation pupils said they feel safe, well cared for and believe their views are valued and taken into account. They talked enthusiastically about their involvement in the wider life of the school.

Leaders and managers

Grade 1

The leadership of the school's Catholic life is excellent. The experienced head teacher has a clear vision for the school which is shared by all members of the community. Although there is no deputy headteacher members of the middle management team have been given a range of responsibilities which has led to strong leadership. Non Catholic teachers are supported by being paired with a Catholic colleague as well a Catholic teaching assistant. All staff promote the Catholic life of the school and are excellent role models for pupils. Pastoral care of pupils is very good. The headteacher and his team regularly evaluate provision for Catholic life and the ethos of the school is stated through its mission statement and aims. There is a range of religious education related displays in classes and around the school which are linked to topic themes, the liturgical year, particular events or specific prayers.

The subject leader for religious education is highly motivated and keeps abreast of current developments in the subject. She introduced the diocesan recommended 'Come and See' religious education programme and attends diocesan conferences as well as courses which she disseminates to staff during training sessions. Together with the headteacher she ensures religious education is regarded as a core subject throughout the school and acts as mentor for new teachers. She gives demonstration lessons to enable all teachers to see good practice. In-service sessions are used effectively to support and develop staff skills and subject knowledge. Regular monitoring of planning and assessments enables school leaders to have a good knowledge of where extra support is required. Moderation of levels of attainment is in place although evidence for the higher levels is not always sufficient.

The school governors are committed to the Catholic life of the school. They are experienced, aware of their responsibilities and knowledgeable about the school and its day-to-day activities. They review and revise the School Development Plan annually and there are regular monitoring visits from individual governors who prepare reports for the full governing body. The parish priest from the local parish is link governor for religious education and is a frequent visitor to the school to plan masses and liturgies as well as to visit classrooms and talk to members of staff. As part of the new Federation of Catholic schools in Waltham Forest the school will be hosting a joint training session for foundation governors in January. The Chair of governors has put in place a programme of visits and support for new governors. She is a frequent visitor to the school and is kept well informed about new initiatives in religious education and how these are being monitored.

The school is well regarded by its parent body with good representation on the governing body. Communication is good with curriculum information sent home every term as well as a weekly newsletter which includes aspects of the religious life of the school. A recent questionnaire indicated that parents were overwhelmingly happy with the provision for religious education and Catholic life. They appreciate the high standard of education, the care shown to pupils and the wide range of extra-curricular activities available. Parents and families are invited to many school celebrations including masses and concerts.

Provision

Grade 1

During the inspection all teaching observed was good or outstanding. This is the result of good planning and an excellent level of support from the subject leader. Cross curricular links are evident and during the inspection lessons involving Art, Design and Technology, Computer skills, Literacy and Music were seen. In an outstanding lesson in Year 6 about John the Baptist careful planning, lively pace and open and challenging questioning enabled all pupils to achieve well and make rapid progress. Pupils compared two gospels and demonstrated a familiarity with Old Testament prophets. Differentiation included a range of tasks as well as very good support which enabled all pupils to engage with the learning objective. Excellent support is given by teaching assistants who are involved in planning. Workbooks are well presented and reflect pupils' pride in their work. Some pieces of work indicate the level at which pupils are working. Marking is positive with the best including 'next steps' for pupils. All groups make very good progress.

The school devotes 10% of teaching time to religious education and uses the scheme, 'Come and See,' supported by 'Journey in Love.' The curriculum is enhanced through good links with local clergy and an annual International Week. Drama, music and art are also incorporated into the curriculum. Other faiths are well taught through visits to a range of places of worship and the shared experiences of members of staff. There are plans for a link with an Islamic girls' school in Forest Gate

Pupils are given many opportunities to experience worship and prayer which are central to the school's life. Leadership ensures collective worship is well planned and there is a variety of formal and informal opportunities for daily prayer. Masses are celebrated in school and parish and special assemblies are held which reflect the Church's liturgical year. The school hosts the parish First Communion Retreat each year which is for pupils and parents and led by the Sion Community. This is in addition to the Year 5 residential and Year 6 one-day retreat at Buckden. The school offers a variety of clubs and enrichment activities which provide opportunities for the development of skills and interests. The school encourages pupils to develop a sense of service and supports their faith journey.

The inspector would like to thank all members of the school community for the warm welcome and the hospitality extended during her visit.