

Diocese of Brentwood



Inspection Report

Name of School: St. Joseph's Catholic Infants School, Leyton E10 7BL

Local Authority: Waltham Forest

Unique Reference Number: 103190

Inspection Date: 19th June 2013

Reporting Inspectors: Mr. Patrick Moloney and Mrs. Penny Rickard

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

Type of School: Infant

School Category: Voluntary Aided

Age range of pupils: 3 - 7

Gender of pupils: Mixed

Number on roll: 205

Appropriate Authority: The Governing Body

Date of previous inspection: 26/11/2008

School Address: Marsh Lane, Leyton,
London E10 7BL

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Chair of Governors: Mr. Greg Joseph

Headteacher: Mrs. Mary LeCount

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

Name of School: St. Joseph's Catholic Infant School.

Address of School: Marsh Lane, Leyton, London E10 7BL

Head Teacher: Mrs. Mary Le Count.

Date of Inspection: 19th June 2013.

Description of the School:

St. Joseph's Catholic Infant School is a voluntary aided Catholic school situated in the London Borough of Waltham Forest and under the trusteeship of the Diocese of Brentwood. The school was established in 1969 to serve the multi-cultural Parish community of Leyton. There has been a significant increase in the number of Eastern European families in recent years. There has also been an increase in the number of children with learning difficulties since the last inspection. These include speech and language problems and behaviour and emotional difficulties. This is a two-form entry school and includes a nursery. The majority of the families are in the Parish of St. Joseph.

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 7 lessons.
- Participation in an Assembly.
- Scrutiny of pupils' written work.
- Meetings with the Headteacher and Deputy who share the coordination of Religious Education (R.E.), the school chaplain, a Governor and the School Council.
- Observations of R.E. displays in the classrooms and around the school.

What the School does well:

This is a good Catholic school with many outstanding features. The school is highly valued by its pupils who thoroughly enjoy their time here. Parents have a high regard for the caring, spiritual ethos and the inclusive environment. The many strengths are the result of effective leadership and management; the headteacher and staff work well as a team and are firmly committed to developing the Catholic identity of the school. Some changes have taken place in the social dimensions/fabric of the school since the last inspection. These include increased unemployment in families, an increase in children with learning difficulties and increased mobility of the school population. The school has effectively addressed these changes and in the words of their Mission Statement they have continued to maintain "...a happy school celebrating God's love for everyone, through praying, learning, playing and growing together".

Religious Education (R.E.) is an area of high focus in the school and is underpinned by a strong Catholic ethos. The 'Here I Am' programme has been used effectively for some time to provide a high quality and stimulating curriculum. The school is now seeking to introduce the new 'Come and See' R.E. programme recommended by the Bishop of the Diocese. This will support teachers in implementing a more differentiated curriculum particularly for the more able.

The overall quality of teaching and learning is good or outstanding and good lessons demonstrate some outstanding features. Lessons are well planned and learning objectives are stated, explained and revisited. In all of the lessons observed, pupils were on task, engaged, challenged and enjoyed their R.E. Resources are used effectively to promote learning. Displays are colourful and reflect the many cultures which make up the school community. A good range of teaching strategies are used and lessons are lively. Talk partners and drama were used to good effect, as were picture prompts, and Information and Communication Technology. Teachers share their own experiences to make lessons interesting as exemplified during a lesson on "Treasures" when two teachers talked about treasures they possessed in order to stimulate discussion about treasures pupils had

received during their own lives.

The pupils' written work is regularly marked. The best examples contain both praise and guidance on the way to make further progress. The school could work to enhance its marking procedures for some pupils' so that they understand the next steps in their learning and can reach the highest level in RE as in other subjects.

There is a clear assessment focus for the end of each of the 'Here I Am' topics which gives useful evidence of the knowledge and understanding gained by pupils. In the lessons observed positive verbal feedback was given to the pupils and this enabled them to make progress. Further development of assessment procedures is needed especially with regard to tracking so that pupil progress can be better monitored over time.

The leadership and management of R.E. is very good and is coordinated by the headteacher and deputy. They have an effective team approach to delivering the 'Here I Am' programme and are aware of how it can be adapted to meet the ability range and backgrounds of the pupils. Their line of management ensures that there are good links between R.E., the liturgical life of the school and personal, social and health education. They monitor R.E. lessons and are very supportive of all staff, teachers and teaching assistants. Parents are kept informed about their child's progress in R.E.

Displays in R.E. and artifacts in the classroom support the pupils' learning and enhance opportunities for prayer and reflection. Each classroom has a focal point for prayer, arranged at pupil level, which is well used to support personal reflection. Books for the study of other World Faiths are available. A devout Muslim student worked in the school recently and was able to explain her Faith traditions to some of the pupils. Some pupils have been exploring Faith traditions in the Lebanon during a study of school life in the Lebanon. The school could consider forming links with another school in the area so that the children could meet pupils from other Faith traditions.

Collective Worship, liturgical celebrations including the Feast Days of the Saints are all strengths of St. Joseph's school. The liturgical seasons, especially those of Advent, Christmas, Lent and Easter are high points in the school's calendar. The Assembly attended on the day of the inspection was excellent. It was prayerful and reflective and there was full participation of pupils and staff. Prayer at Assemblies and during lessons is central to the life of the school. R.E. lessons often include a time for prayerful reflection; teachers create a calm atmosphere for pupils to reflect on their learning.

Relationships in the school are exceptionally positive and pupils are courteous, respectful and friendly towards adults and each other. The pupils are offered opportunities to become responsible citizens. They are involved in fundraising for charities such as CAFOD and support for children in Romania. They act as playground buddies by looking out for children who need someone to play with. The Year 2 children are members of the St. Joseph's church choir. The School Council take the lead in promoting support for Fairtrade. They take part in Fairtrade on an annual basis and run a café using food the children have made with Fairtrade ingredients. Parents are sent invitations to attend the

café and the children act as waiters and waitresses on the day when funds are raised to send to Fairtrade. Pupils have also been involved in the celebration of the 'Year of Faith' with their teachers and teaching assistants.

The school values the links they have with parents and carers who are involved with their children's learning. Every effort is made to improve and maintain communication with parents as their children progress through the school. The parents are given curriculum information to support their children in the teaching of R.E. The Governing Body is committed and supportive. They have a good awareness of admissions and curriculum and were involved in drawing up the Mission Statement and R.E. policy. They recognise the need to increase the challenge they offer to the school as well as the need to have regular training in order to interpret data and improve their understanding of strengths and weaknesses in the teaching and learning of R.E.

Good behaviour between pupils and adults is the norm in classes and throughout the school. There is an effective Merit Awards system in place that helps in this respect. The Merit Award system is also offered to pupils for showing kindness, helpfulness and being a good friend. Pastoral care is particularly good because it is based on knowledge of the individual needs of pupils.

The school has continued to maintain close links with the Parish of St. Joseph's despite recent changes in chaplains responsible for the school. Year 2 pupils attend Mass in the Church during each term. The Masses are planned by the pupils and their teachers. The main feeder school is St. Joseph's Catholic Junior and Governors are aware that links with this school need to improve for the benefit of the Year 2 pupils.

The school meets both the national and diocesan requirements for the allocation of curriculum time for Religious Education.

Overall, St Joseph's is a good Catholic School, with many outstanding features it is highly valued by parents, and the wider community.

What needs to be improved?

- To improve links with the feeder Junior school.
- To continue to develop rigorous assessment and next step marking for pupils.
- To continue to give governors opportunities for training to enable them to fully challenge the teaching and learning of Religious Education.