



DIOCESE OF BRENTWOOD



Inspection Report

Name of School: St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Unique Reference Number: 115132

Inspection Date: 29 June 2012

Reporting Inspectors: Dr Michael Sutherland-Harper and
Sr Jude Groden

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: 112
Appropriate Authority: The Governing Body
Date of previous inspection:

School Address:
The Drive
Dovercourt, Harwich, Essex
CO12 3SU
Tel. No. 01255 503493
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Chair of Governors: Richard Colley
Headteacher: Marie Kelly

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

**The Drive
Dovercourt,
Harwich,
Essex
CO12 3SU**

Head Teacher: Marie Kelly

Date of Inspection: 29 June 2012

Description of the School:

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School is a voluntary aided Catholic school situated in Dovercourt, close to Harwich in the county of Essex and in the diocese of Brentwood. The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school. The school serves the Catholic parish of Our Lady, Queen of Heaven in Dovercourt and rural villages nearby.

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 four lessons.
- Participation in an assembly and Mass for a Holy Day of obligation.
- Scrutiny of pupils' written work.
- Meetings with the Headteacher who is also the Head of Religious Education (R.E.), a member of the governing body, a representative pupil group and an informal discussion with the Parish Priest after Mass.
- 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. The dedicated staff of the school, ably led by the acting headteacher (who has been appointed to the substantive post from September 2012), provide pupils with a good Catholic education. The headteacher has worked closely with governors and the parish priest to establish the sense of community and to embed a team spirit. This sense of a single community is well summed up by the pupils who told the inspectors, 'We are all brothers and sisters here'. The headteacher has a clear vision of how she wants the school to be. She is ambitious for her school to continue the process of academic achievement, which is now rising, and to be a model for high standards in worship, as exemplified by pupil singing at Mass for the Holy Day of obligation. Pupils sang 'Taste and See' and other hymns with a pure intensity which held the congregation spellbound and developed their spirituality. The school's creative approach to learning about their world is also typified by the luscious, well-tended gardens which pupils have filled with vegetables and flowers. The small but intimate school chapel provides pupils with a place to reflect upon their successes and to take their worries. Engaging pupil-size statues of St. Joseph and the Holy Family remind pupils that the school family is linked to Our Lord's own family. A good celebration assembly, well attended by parents and younger siblings, reinforced this theme, as did the careful child-friendly explanations given at Mass by the local parish priest who works closely with the headteacher to promote learning and understanding.

The headteacher has identified strategies to take the school and Religious Education forward and is putting them in place in the attempt to ensure consistency of expectations and in assessment practices. The school's ethos is clear and valued by all stakeholders and the impact of Religious Education across the school is now beginning to be more clearly felt. The headteacher, who is also head of Religious Education (R.E.), is raising the profile of R.E. by more regular monitoring of progress and by placing it at the core of the school. The role of middle managers is developing to provide support for the

headteacher's efforts to ensure that the present rate of progress continues and that value is added to previous efforts. As a result, the school has a good capacity for further improvement.

Provision for prayer, collective worship and the liturgical life of the school is good because pupils have a reverent approach to their faith and a strong sense of being responsible for each other. Music is a liturgical strength of the school, as highlighted in assemblies and Masses, with good staff direction and has led to the school winning a number of competitions. The school has identified areas for further development such as the foyer and approach to the school to reinforce its religious character and ensuring a higher profile for the prayer corner in individual classrooms. Pupils are keen to be involved in developing the Catholic life of the school and proud of the links with another St Joseph's school in Ghana. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and a strength of the school, especially in art and music which add to the impact of R.E.; pupils' sense of awe and wonder is reinforced by colourful displays in all classrooms and around the school. They have a clear sense of right and wrong and of their obligations to each other. The school is working to raise the profile of R.E. across all subject areas and thereby raise spiritual, moral, social and cultural development to even higher levels.

The R.E. curriculum is good. It is based on the 'Here I Am' Religious Education programme of study, recommended by the Bishop of the Diocese, and which is fully implemented, together with adherence to the Journey in Love programme. The school meets both the national and diocesan requirements for the allocation of curriculum time for taught R.E. Work done in personal, social and health education (PSHE) complements the R.E. curriculum. Best practice is at an early stage of being shared across the school to improve the existing good provision in R.E.

Learners' achievement is good because teaching is good, expectations are clear and behaviour is uniformly good or better. The dedicated staff ensure that pupils are happy learners who progress both independently and in group work. Strong adult/child relationships are demonstrated by the readiness with which pupils raise any concerns they have about their understanding. Resources, including electronic technology, are well used. Most lessons have a good level of challenge. Challenge is now being further refined to ensure that the most able pupils achieve their full potential and is reflected in improved results this year. Teachers make good use of questioning to assess pupil understanding, encourage pupils and push learning on. In a good Year 1 and 2 lesson, pupils responded very positively to the teacher's questions about their special treasures and their importance as individuals was reinforced. However, pupils are not always clear about their targets in Religious Education because marking strategies do not regularly indicate the way forward and the quality of writing and presentation skills is sometimes inconsistent between classes.

Leadership and management are good. The school has good links with its local cluster of schools and ensures that transitions into, and out of, the school are good. The headteacher has had a substantial teaching commitment this year but this part of her work will reduce next year and allow for development of learner support in R.E. Governors have a clear

idea of the strengths of the school, are very supportive of its work and ready to offer challenge wherever needed to continue the present upward profile in achievement.

What needs to be improved?

- **Develop teaching by sharing of best practice between teachers and between teaching assistants.**
- **Raise the profile of R.E. further across all subjects in order to reinforce its position at the core of the school.**
- **Develop the use of marking and assessment to challenge more able pupils and ensure that all pupils are clear about how to take their work to the highest levels. Raise expectations of written presentation.**

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 with a good capacity for sustained improvement. Pupils and staff are proud of their school and are working together as a team with the headteacher, governors and the parish priest to make it even better.