



# Archdiocese of Birmingham

## Inspection Report

### **ST JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL**

**Selly Oak Road, Kings Norton, Birmingham, B30 1HN**

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Inspection date 2<sup>nd</sup> - 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2014  
Reporting Inspector Teresa Quick

Inspection carried out under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

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Type of School	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4-11 years
Number on roll	208
Appropriate authority	Interim Executive Board
Chair of Interim Executive Board	Mrs Jackie Tomlinson
Telephone number	0121 4582458
E-mail address	enquiry@stjosb30.bham.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	October 2008
DFE School Number	330/3356
Unique Reference Number	103448
<b>Headteacher</b>	<b>Mrs Viv Randall (Executive Headteacher)</b>

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DIOCESAN EDUCATION SERVICE



## Evidence

The inspection was carried out by 1 Diocesan Inspector. The focus of the inspection was on the effectiveness and use of the school's self evaluation of religious education (RE) and Catholic life. To validate the effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation of teaching and learning, the inspector observed 4 full RE lessons with the deputy headteacher. In addition the inspector completed a work scrutiny and held a discussion with pupils to evaluate the impact of teaching on their learning over time. She held meetings with the members of the Interim Executive Board (IEB), an interim head of school, school staff, and parish priest and parish catechist. She observed a prayer service and undertook a learning walk to look at aspects of learning and teaching in RE, the presentation of the Catholic life of the school, and pupils' behaviour. She looked at a range of evidence related to the school's self evaluation, the development plan, teachers' planning, and learning journals.

## Information about the school

St Joseph's is an average size Catholic primary school serving the parish of St Joseph and St Helen in Kings Norton in Birmingham. The school serves a wide catchment area with 41% of the pupils living outside the parish boundaries. They represent a diverse social mix. The number of Catholic pupils is currently 91%. The proportion of ethnic minority pupils is 14% with 6% of the pupils having English as an additional language. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. The number with special needs and/or disabilities is 19%. Attainment on entry is broadly in line with the national average overall.

## Main Finding

In its self evaluation St Joseph's judges itself accurately to be a good Catholic school. It identifies clearly what needs to be done to improve further. It is a close faith community with the school working with the parish for the benefit of the pupils. Sacramental preparation is a real strength of the school. The Catholic life and RE have continued to be a priority of the school through recent difficulties and changes of staff. RE is now led by the recently appointed deputy headteacher. All teaching and learning is good with some outstanding teaching in Key Stage 2. There is a strong Catholic ethos. Despite the recent difficulties encountered by the school the traditions of a good Catholic school have been maintained. There is little formal evidence of self evaluation over time and efforts to re-establish processes are in their early stages. While the school's judgement of itself is accurate, self evaluation requires improvement to be good.

## School self evaluation

The school has not been able to produce evidence of effective self evaluation of Catholic life and religious education over since the last inspection. However, efforts are now being made to establish procedures to monitor and evaluate religious education, though the evaluation of Catholic life still depends on a range of informal evidence. It will take time for the new procedures to be secured and to have an impact on planning and change in RE and developing formal processes to monitor Catholic life will be a task for the new executive headteacher and the staff of the school. The Interim Executive Board will need to ensure that it holds the school accountable for the development of self evaluation.

As the school has lacked a substantive Catholic headteacher, self-evaluation has been updated mainly by the recently appointed deputy headteacher who has been charged with the task of leading RE and raising the profile of RE and Catholic life in the school. This is a role new to her. Evidence from the self evaluation shows the very good links the school has with local Catholic schools, in particular the other school in the parish and the schools

whose headteachers are on the Interim Board, with the Diocesan Education Service, and with the Birmingham Catholic Primary Partnership. Judgements by school leaders that teaching is good with some that is outstanding are accurate as are judgements that learning is good and that pupils make good progress. Assessment is in place but there is little evidence in the self evaluation document of detailed analysis and subsequent action plans. The school rightly sees the need to continue to track and act on findings from assessments both formal and informal to ensure the accelerated progress evident over time continues. On entry to the Reception Year assessments reveal that children have limited knowledge of the teachings of the Church, prayers and stories from the Gospels. The school considers that Key Stage 1 pupils' progress is improving and is above in comparison to the core subjects. The Key Stage 2 pupils are at least in line with their core subjects and make good progress. At the time of the last inspection the school was challenged to embed assessment for learning for each individual pupil, particularly through consistent and helpful marking of work, which shows pupils how to improve. On the whole pupils' work is now carefully presented. There are examples of good focused marking which is developing RE knowledge and understanding. This support through written feedback reflects their learning and gives further challenge.

The school understands that formal processes must be in place to monitor and evaluate the Catholic life. They should also seek more documented evidence of the children's responses to Catholic life from a religious perspective. The previous substantive RE subject leader ensured that monitoring and assessments of teaching and learning and attainment were updated. There have been lesson observations in RE during this academic year but the most recent ones arranged had to be deferred due to ongoing external monitoring. There has been a book trawl but too recently for it to have been fully analysed and shared with staff. At the time of the last inspection a recommendation was for the school to develop the role of the link governor for RE who could support and monitor the subject and report back regularly to the governing body. No evidence can be found of these reports prior to the formation of the IEB. A governor on the IEB has done a learning walk to look at the Catholic life in the school and another governor has observed prayer services. There is still no evidence of these reports to the governing body or a copy for the subject leader. Given that formal evaluation has been sparse, improvement planning has not been built on findings from it.

The formal monitoring of RE lessons has been limited because of present circumstances. So too have book trawls. The subject leader is aware of standards of teaching and learning, what is taught and the assessed results and correctly judges teaching to be good with some that is outstanding in Key Stage 2. In discussion with the school leadership it is agreed that teaching in RE matches that in the other core subjects. Governors do not regularly visit the school to monitor RE and Catholic life. Members of the IEB have visited the school to look at the Catholic life of the school and say they have reported back to the IEB but there are no formal reports of any governor visits to the school.

### **Overall effectiveness of the school**

St Joseph's has maintained its Catholic ethos through recent difficulties and is starting to again build on previous good practice. It is at present being led by the leaders of a community school and they have shown great respect for RE and the Catholic life of the school. A substantive experienced Catholic headteacher has been appointed who will take on the mantle of the leader of this Catholic school community. The school benefits from the large number of Catholic teachers.

Attainment in RE for all pupils shows that standards in RE are now higher than last year showing that the majority of pupils are working in the average and above average band.

Learning and progress are judged as good. The quality of the learning of the pupils with learning needs and or disabilities is good.

Teaching and learning in RE is good with some exceptional teaching in upper Key Stage 2. Baseline shows that most pupils enter school with limited knowledge of the faith, prayer or the life of Jesus. Pupils' knowledge improves as they journey through Key Stage 1. Their knowledge and understanding in RE is at a higher level than the other core subjects. It is generally in line with diocesan expectations. Work in books is well presented, generally marked to give developmental points in learning in RE with targets for improvement. By Year 6 pupils' knowledge and understanding is good with many working above expectations. The work matches the needs of the pupils preparing them for life away from the security of St Joseph's. They are encouraged to become independent thinkers. Some excellent very relevant work linked the use of ICT in the form of tweets from Pope Francis in Year 5. As recommended at the last RE inspection there are opportunities for extended writing which allows the pupils to make a more considered and personal response to what they are learning.

The staff support the mission of the school promoting Catholic life through many differing ways. Spiritual and moral themes are developed successfully in differing settings including Alton Castle. Responses in the Mass are very good and pupil involvement in class prayer is good. Prayer services are teacher planned and led but pupils do not have significant opportunities to plan, organise and lead assemblies. Preparation for the reception of the sacraments is good and rightfully considered a strength of the school. Teachers are well supported in this work by a parish catechist. The priest is a regular visitor saying Mass each week either for the whole school or for a class. No areas of Catholic life are monitored but governors have been involved in discussions on how to improve provision for the pupils evidenced by the retreat held this year for the first time with St Paul's School, the other school in the parish with whom they shared Confirmation. St Joseph's is a caring community and the school works closely with the charity Zacchaeus aiding pupils who need special support. The school wishes to promote the spiritual and prayerful development of pupils through more regular parent "Inspire workshops. Collective worship is good. Prayer times are considered to be an increasing strength of the school. In each classroom the prayer focus is prominent and well used.

The school uses the Diocesan Strategy for Religious Education as the basis for learning. *All that I am* for family life and sex education has a good structure for multi-cultural education with good resources and visits and speakers. Vocation teaching is limited though included with the older pupils. This is not a cohesive curriculum; all the elements are in place and require development. Pupils respect one another and the adults to whom they come into contact. Behaviour is very good with pupils interested and on task in their work.

### **Recommendations**

- Make detailed analyses of assessments and translate the findings into action.
- Develop informal and formal procedures to evidence the Catholic life of the school and then take appropriate action on the findings.
- Develop a cohesive curriculum for RE to include all the different facets of religious education and the Catholic traditions held by the school in order to meet the needs of the pupils.
- Develop the role of link governor for RE who can support and monitor the subject and report back regularly to the governing body.



July 2014

Diocesan Education Service,  
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Coleshill,  
B46 3EA

Dear Parents and Carers

**Section 48 (Diocesan) Inspection of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, 2<sup>nd</sup> - 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2014**

I am writing this letter to share with you the findings of the Diocesan inspection of your children's school. Diocesan inspection now explores in detail the school's own view of itself as expressed in its self-evaluation. For this reason, much of the report is more technical than used to be the case. You are still entitled to have a copy of the full report should you want one and it will be available on the school website or by request from the school office.

The school is a good Catholic school with good teaching and learning in RE and a good Catholic life. It is a welcoming school. Pupils are cared for and respected. Their behaviour during the inspection was never less than good. During the recent challenging times the school has remained true to its mission as a Catholic school. With the appointment of a substantive experienced Catholic headteacher to lead the school community standards in both Catholic life and RE should continue to rise. The recently appointed deputy headteacher is leading RE. Teaching is good with some outstanding teaching in upper Key Stage 2 where the pupils are being well prepared for the next phase of their education. Learning is good. Attainment is now higher than last year. Collective worship is good. Prayer times are an increasing strength of the school but the preparation for the sacraments is a real strength of the school. There are good parish-school links.

The school has assessments in RE but are lacking in their formal monitoring of Catholic life. These should be developed further. Governors visit the school and know what is being taught in RE and have looked at aspects of Catholic life. There are no written formal reports of these visits to the Interim Executive Board and the school.

I have recommended that the school should develop formal procedures for monitoring the Catholic life of the school; make fuller use of information from pupil assessments; and develop the role of link governor for RE.

I have thoroughly enjoyed my time being able to see your children at work, play and prayer. It was a privilege and pleasure to inspect your school. The children and staff made me feel most welcome. The children are happy in St Joseph's and a credit to their school, their families and to those who care for them.

Yours sincerely

Teresa Quick  
Diocesan Inspector