



SECTION 48 INSPECTION REPORT

Canonical Inspection under Canon 806 on behalf of the
Archbishop of Southwark and Inspection of
Denominational Education under Section 48
of the Education Act 2005

URN 100169

**St Joseph's Catholic Primary School
Commerell Street
Greenwich
SE10 9AN**

Inspection date: 28th February 2017

Chair of Governors:	Mr Michael Vallely
Acting Chair of Governors	Mrs Susan Bush
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Introduction

Description of the school

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School is a voluntary aided situated in the Greenwich Deanery of the Archdiocese of Southwark. It is maintained by Greenwich Local Authority. The principal parishes served by the school are St Joseph's and Our Lady Star of the Sea, Greenwich. Increasing numbers of pupils are attending the school from the neighbouring parishes of St Peter's, Woolwich and St Patrick's, Woolwich. The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholics is rising and currently stands at 50%. This is a rise from 28% in 2014. The average weekly proportion of curriculum time given to Religious Education is 10% in all Key Stages.

The school takes pupils from 4 to 11 years old. The number of pupils currently on roll is 206. The attainment of pupils on entering the school is slightly below average. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above national average at 42%. Around 16% of pupils receive extra support in class. The proportion of pupils from homes where English is an additional language is above national average at 48%. The school serves an ethnically diverse community, with representation from a wide range of minority ethnic groups totalling 82%. The largest ethnic group are those pupils of Black African heritage and the school has for over 15 years been the school of choice of the Greenwich Traveller community.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school in providing Catholic Education

GRADE
2

The overall effectiveness of St Joseph's school in providing Catholic education is good. This is a happy, vibrant community in which the pursuit of excellence and improvement is a driving force for all parts of the school community. Leaders and managers work effectively to maintain and develop the Catholic life of the school. The school community offers a strong Catholic ethos inclusive of all pupils. The school is a source of spirituality, providing a positive, nurturing environment where pupils flourish, achieve well and make good progress. An ethos of caring and forgiveness promote good relationships throughout the school. Outcomes for pupils, the provision of Catholic education, the effectiveness of leaders and managers in developing the Catholic life of the school, and the school's capacity to improve, are focussed on ensuring pupils are given every opportunity to realise their potential. Pupils are polite, well-mannered and well-behaved.

St. Joseph's is a school where staff and governors do all they can to ensure the school's distinctive Catholic ethos is upheld and where the pupils are very aware that they attend a Catholic school. The school's values are clearly set out and reflect Gospel values with Christ's teaching underpinning all the school does. At the centre of all school activities lies the aim to help pupils deepen their faith and grow in the love of God. The ethos of the school is Christ-centred, where a sense of a welcoming community is encouraged and Christian values are promoted. The school's stated mission to: 'Learn together and grow in God's Love' is explicitly lived out in the day to day life of the school.

Relationships are a strength of the school. Many opportunities are provided to support the pupils' spiritual development so that they make a link between how scripture tells us Jesus lived his life on earth and how he wishes us to carry on as "His hands, and eyes and ears." Reflecting on how Jesus would wish us to behave is fundamental to how the school wishes the pupils to behave. All adults at the school are expected to be Christian role models in how they treat each other, parents and pupils. The Governors work closely with the Headteacher, supporting the school's on-going development. Staff share the Headteacher's vision and work extremely well together to ensure that the pupils are given every opportunity to develop as confident and caring individuals. They say that they are proud of their school. Prayer and worship are an integral part of school life. Daily prayer opportunities in the classroom, assemblies, special liturgies and celebrating Mass all contribute to the pupils' understanding of how to communicate with, and learn more about, the person of Christ. Many opportunities are provided to support the pupil's spiritual development so that they make a link between the caring nature of Christ and curriculum provision. The use of "Come and See" as the school's core Religious Education scheme contributes to this.

The new Headteacher has done a good job in developing the school community's understanding of its strengths and areas for development. She has already engendered a shared vision and developed a staff team that sees the school at the beginning of a journey that is focussed on being outstanding.

What steps need to be taken to improve further?

Governors, Headteacher and staff should:

- Provide opportunities through a variety of strategies, particularly for more able pupils, to engage in higher level skills and independent research.
- Revisit the school's current self-evaluation form, to move it from a summative statement to a more useful working developmental document that can be regularly updated.
- Provide further opportunities for pupils to plan and prepare worship in whole school and class based contexts and ensure there is a systematic progression of skills in planning worship across the school.

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The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life of the school

Pupils understand, value and respect the Catholic tradition of the school and its links with the parish communities. Pupils involve themselves in a range of activities which support others less fortunate than themselves.

Charitable works in this year include a food collection at Harvest and hampers for the needy at Christmas. The staff and pupils are alert to the needs of others and seek justice for others both within and beyond the school community. Fundraising occurs throughout the year, especially during Lent and Advent and charity representatives give frequent presentations. Charities supported include: CAFOD, a school in Ghana, the Poppy Appeal and Cancer charities. The School Council is actively involved in choosing some of the charities. School raffles and cake sales are important events which the pupils help to organise. Pupils take advantage of the opportunities provided for involvement in activities with a religious character. These include a range of seasonal and themed Collective Worship activities, making use of imaginative and creative resources which have recently been purchased to enhance provision.

As well as the wider community, pupils consistently contribute to the Common Good in their own school. They are encouraged to express their views. The School Council is becoming more active and members have discussed issues with their peers from whom they have collected ideas and made many suggestions for the refurbishment of the playgrounds. Their input has resulted in changes. Pupils take on many responsibilities and this has developed their self-discipline and respect for others and their environment. The school has monitors who help the younger pupils during lunch and break times. Pupils support each other during play and this is proving invaluable for pupils who need support. Pupils are proud to help run the 'Quiet Club.'

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education

The 'Come and See' programme is established in all year groups. Pupils enjoy Religious Education lessons, one pupil commented that "Teachers make lessons interesting and fun." Lessons would benefit from a wider range of opportunities for learning through, for example, dance, drama or hot seating.

Taking account of the pupils' starting points on entry to the school which shows many of them having a limited knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith, it is commendable that pupils' progress in Religious Education is generally good. Outcomes for pupils with additional or special needs and other vulnerable groups are good and there is no significant difference in performance between pupils of different gender. Analysis of assessments undertaken provide evidence of pupils generally attaining an appropriate level for their age and stage of development in each Key Stage. The assessment data shows that the percentage of pupils achieving the higher levels of attainment in Year 2 and Year 6 is increasing and this is an area on which the school should continue to focus. Pupils are becoming increasingly more religiously literate.

Their knowledge, understanding and skills are developing at a level that is appropriate to their age or capacity and pupils are being enabled to reflect spiritually, think ethically and theologically and to become more aware of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life. Pupils' engagement in, and enjoyment of, their learning is good as shown by their interest, enthusiasm and behaviour. They are encouraged to work independently and collaboratively, and are anxious to learn and improve their knowledge, understanding and skills as they progress in becoming independent learners. The positive relationships evidenced between pupils and staff are a strength of the school.

How well pupils respond to and participate in Collective Worship

St Joseph's is a prayerful community where pupils' response to and participation in Collective Worship is good. They are at ease when praying with their school and parish community and are developing a good awareness of a variety of styles and forms of prayer. They participate with a good level of interest and engagement and their response in both small and large prayer gatherings is respectful, reverent, and reflective. Pupils are given an active role to play, as readers, preparing and presenting gifts, preparing bidding prayers, singing and playing musical instruments. At the Good Shepherd liturgy in May 2016 pupils from Year 6 performed a Liturgical dance.

Pupils speak of feeling calm and peaceful following Collective Worship. They eagerly lead prayers in class, school liturgies and Eucharistic celebrations in Church. They understand that there are different forms of liturgy and have a good understanding of the Church's liturgical year. They know traditional prayers appropriate to their age. Pupils are acquiring skills in preparing and leading prayer and Collective Worship. With support, they are becoming skilled in the use of scripture, religious artefacts, hymns and other forms of prayer. However, the school recognises that pupils are not yet competent in planning and preparing worship independently. Collective Worship contributes positively to the spiritual and moral development of the pupils.

The Parish Priest is a regular visitor to the school and is well known by pupils and the wider school community. Despite his many commitments he is generous with his time and is very supportive of the school. His support to the whole school community is appreciated and highly valued. The school makes good use of the parish church as a learning resource. It is also fortunate to have the support of the Parish Sister who organises the parish First Communion Programme in the school whilst also working with pupils on specific Religious Education topics. Her input further strengthens the increasingly strong home, school and parish links.

Virtually 100% positive questionnaire responses were received, with a parent commenting on their questionnaire, "I think it is really good that children take part in the Mass. St Joseph's School is a very good Catholic School. Thank you."

How well leaders, governors and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life of the school and plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils

Leaders, governors and managers are developing good skills in promoting, monitoring and evaluating the provision for the Catholic life of the school and in the way, they plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils. The self-evaluation document provides accurate evidence of the school's analysis of its Catholic life. This would benefit from moving from a summative statement to a more useful working developmental document that can be regularly updated. The analysis provides a basis to celebrate the school's strengths and outlines areas for development. The school is good at providing induction and in-service training to enable staff to further understand the Church's mission in Education and play their unique part in it. The new Headteacher has made an excellent start in securing clarity of the school's Catholic vision for the school and its staff.

The quality of Collective Worship is a priority for the school. It is being effectively monitored and evaluated by leaders, governors and managers. Leadership at all levels respects difference, values diversity and ensures equal opportunities for all. Prayer, worship and the liturgical life of the school reflect and respect the religious diversity within the school. There are positive relationships within the school with parents being consulted and involved in a variety of ways in the life of the school. This is appreciated by parents who praised the willingness of staff to meet with them and deal promptly with any issues that may arise.

Governors are good in fulfilling their responsibilities. They have effectively helped to shape the direction of the school using their own gifts and skills. It is creditable how the Vice Chair of Governors has stepped in, during the absence of the Chair. She is to be commended on securing a smooth transition in governance, maintaining a supportive but challenging approach to the school.

How well leaders, governors and managers monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education and plan and implement for improvement to outcomes for pupils

Leaders, governors and managers are good in promoting, monitoring and evaluating the provision for the Religious Education of the school and in the way, they plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils. The new Headteacher and the Religious Education leader are working together with a Religious Education team that includes a Senior Teacher with responsibility for Religious Education at Key Stage 1. The school benefits greatly from having an experienced Religious Education lead who manages her subject extremely well. She is generous with the giving of her time to non-Catholic staff and those new to teaching. The team are focussed on taking Religious Education provision in the school to outstanding. The Religious Education lead has developed good links with local cluster schools and attends meetings, courses and conferences related to her curriculum responsibility. This has had a significant impact on her leadership of the subject with her providing INSET over the years.

Opportunities for liturgy, prayer and worship are planned by staff together and the strong culture of teamwork among the staff enhances and contributes to the Catholic ethos of the school. The subject leader is good in guiding Religious Education. She shows commitment, introduces new initiatives when appropriate and ensures all staff are provided with guidance on teaching Religious Education and planning Worship. Subject leader meetings provided by the Education Commission are attended regularly and continuing professional development opportunities are provided for staff with communication between the new Headteacher, staff, parents and governors becoming a strength of the school.

Governors are informed of new initiatives and developments and benefit from the work of a nominated governor with responsibility for Religious Education. The governors recognise the need to build on work previously started to establish more formal monitoring protocols, including visit reports and the school's self-evaluation documentation.

Formal assessment tasks are undertaken three times a year at the end of each term. Data is then logged on to the school's electronic system using levels. The Religious Education team monitor these assessments and engage with staff through pupil progress review meetings. Support from the school's assessment lead, linked to cross school and cluster school moderation, is securing accurate assessment data that is confirming success in closing the performance gap between pupils.

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The quality of teaching and how purposeful learning is in Religious Education

The quality of teaching and purposeful learning in Religious Education is generally good. It is effective in ensuring that pupils are interested and engaged and make good progress. Teachers display good subject knowledge and could now look to using a wider range of strategies to deliver a rich Religious Education curriculum. Teaching encourages pupils' enjoyment of, and enthusiasm for, Religious Education and considers pupils' prior learning. Some differentiated tasks are provided in planning and teaching so that the work consolidates, builds on, and extends their knowledge and understanding. The planning and teaching needs to make wider use of key words and driver words and could be usefully applied utilising more cross curricular opportunities. Teachers provide opportunities for pupils to work independently and collaboratively, making good use of time and resources, including Information and Communication Technology (ICT) to maximise learning. Effort and achievement are celebrated and pupils are informed of their progress and how to improve their work both orally and through marking. There are positive and constructive comments in the work books. Developmental marking needs to be more consistently applied. The assessment of pupils' work in Religious Education is developing well. The school's monitoring indicates that teaching is mainly good, with some outstanding features. This is in line with the findings of this inspection. In the best lessons observed, probing questioning and a range of teaching strategies were used effectively to extend pupils' thinking and to assess their learning. In all lessons observed as part of this inspection, teachers showed good subject knowledge and built on previous learning.

An infant lesson on the topic of 'Special Meals' made good use of talk partners. Strong links were made with Mass and the teacher skilfully explained the meaning of the words of the 'Our Father' and how this linked to the lives of the pupils. Good classroom management secured the attention of a lively group of pupils. Care needs to be taken to ensure an appropriate balance between teacher input and the time allocated for tasks. The lesson was particularly strong in developing moral values and the concept of 'doing right' against pressures from others. In another infant lesson aspects of 'Lent' were skilfully explored at an age appropriate level. Pupils experienced new learning linked to the morning assembly and Lenten promises. A pupil posed the question of "*Why did Jesus die for us?*" which the teacher managed well, eliciting thoughtful responses from young pupils.

A junior lesson on the topic of 'Eucharist and Thanksgiving' saw the use of role play to enact the distribution and receiving of Communion, which was reverently carried out. Care needs to be taken to ensure all tasks are appropriately matched to the learning intention and pupils are clear regarding intended outcomes with written resources being age appropriate. Another junior lesson was impressive and marked by the teachers calm, affirming approach that created a learning environment that saw pupils fully engaged and comfortable to contribute. The teaching was built into an act of Collective Worship that utilised music, singing and signing, which was further enhanced by a focal point of two large crosses and candle on the floor around which pupils gathered. Scripture was used to develop vocabulary and an understanding of kindness linked to Lenten promises.

Another junior lesson was likewise marked by the calm and supportive manner of the teacher. This engendered a very good atmosphere for learning. The focus was on the understanding of the Communion Rite. The teacher used the pupils' thought-provoking questions, for example, "Why do people of other faiths receive a blessing?" which in turn provoked reflective pupil responses. Another junior lesson explored memories and how they are kept alive. Good use was made of previous learning experiences which the class had shared together. One pupil reflected on the fact that if we did not have memories we would not remember why Jesus sacrificed himself for us. The pupils were planning the construction of a scrapbook of memories and would have benefitted from shorter pre-task input.

The extent to which the Religious Education curriculum promotes pupils' learning

Staff and governors see Religious Education as the core subject and at the very heart of the curriculum. At St Joseph's there is an emphasis on each pupil as a unique individual with different learning needs and styles, which are planned for and included in lessons.

The school allocates 10% of curriculum time to Religious Education and uses the 'Come and See' programme. This ensures complete Religious Education entitlement for each child and meets the Bishops' Conference requirements. The curriculum is customised to meet the needs of groups and individuals with English as an additional language. The provision for pupils with additional and special needs is outstanding. The Religious Education curriculum provides moral development and vocation. This was particularly evident in discussion with Year 6 pupils who talked about who inspired them and what aspirational qualities they had which were linked to work they had undertaken. Pupils have explored the beliefs and values of other faiths and religions, which impact strongly on the promotion of tolerance and respect for those who think differently.

Teaching Assistants are a great asset to the school and support children with their learning through discussion, further explanation and support to include high-quality resources. They have positive relationships with the pupils and contribute to their Spiritual Moral Social Cultural development. Progress is evident within lessons and throughout the school year as reflected in pupil workbooks and assessment data, with pupil behaviour both in and outside of the classroom being of a high standard.

The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school

Collective Worship is central to the life of the school and a key part of daily life. Every day begins with prayer and there are regular assemblies and Masses. There is a rota which enables all classes over time, to attend a weekly parish Mass. Older pupils are paired with younger pupils to provide support. Holy days and Feast Days are observed on the actual day to ensure the children know and celebrate these feasts. Pupils from all ages are involved in the readings, offertory, Prayers of the Faithful and singing. All Religious Education lessons begin with lighting the candle and praying. Pupils said that there are many opportunities to pray as a school and a class and that often their own prayers and intentions are used. The school aims to give the pupils a rich and positive liturgical experience so that they can deepen their relationship with God.

During the inspection, an assembly on 'Lenten Promises' made excellent use of projected pictures to focus pupil reflection and made strong pictorial links with the liturgical year. The level of pupil input was good including aspects of their own work such as, a pupil's acrostic

poem. The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school is good and ensures that the spiritual needs of the pupils are well met. It is central to the life of the school and well resourced. A regular rhythm of prayer is built into the daily life of the school and an established pattern of opportunities are offered for the school community to gather for prayer, reflection and liturgy. Parents and parishioners are welcomed and take advantage of the opportunities offered to be involved in worship. Staff are skilled in planning and leading worship and actively encourage pupils to participate and write prayers. Pupils' planning, preparing and leading acts of worship has yet to become established and the school recognises the need to increase further opportunities for the pupils to develop their skills in preparing materials for acts of worship and in leading them. Acts of worship are appropriate to the age and needs of the pupils with themes based upon the scheme of work and the liturgical calendar.

Leaders have a clear vision for the development of Collective Worship, which is understood and supported by the entire school community. They have a good understanding of the Church's liturgical year, its seasons, rites and symbols and use a range of artefacts, symbols and ICT effectively to deepen the pupils' appreciation, knowledge and understanding.

Leaders model good practice in Collective Worship in the school. This is due to good quality staff training and a focused drive to enhance the prayer and liturgical life of the school. Improvements have been made over time so that staff and pupils now have a developing liturgical sense and know what constitutes a variety of worship. The monitoring and evaluation of Collective Worship is part of a regular review of school performance and is informed by feedback from pupils, staff, parents and governors.

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