



DIOCESE OF BRENTWOOD



Inspection Report

□

Name of School: St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Unique Reference Number: 8833512

Inspection Date: 26th March 2013

Reporting Inspectors: Mr Patrick Moloney and Mr Derek Kelly

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: 277
Appropriate Authority: The Governing Body
Date of previous inspection: 26th March 2013

School Address: Scratton Road
Stanford-le-Hope, SS17 OPA
Tel. No. 01375 672217
Fax No. 01375 640095
Chair of Governors: Mrs Jackie Bryan
Headteacher: Mrs Stephanie Lakin

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, Head teacher, 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

Head Teacher: Mrs Stephanie Lakin

Date of Inspection: 26th March 2013

Description of the School:

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School is a voluntary aided Catholic school situated in the county of Essex and in the trusteeship of the Diocese of Brentwood. It is a slightly larger than average sized primary school. The school was founded by the Sisters of Mercy and serves the parish of Our Lady and St Joseph with a small minority attending from surrounding parishes. Almost all pupils are of white British heritage. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is about the same as that seen nationally.

Record of Evidence Base:

Two 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 9 lessons
- Scrutiny of pupils' written work
- Participation in an assembly
- Meeting with the Head teacher, the Religious Education (RE) Coordinator, the Chair of Governors, a Foundation Governor, parents and the student council
- Observation of RE displays in the classrooms and around the school

What the School does well:

St Joseph's is a good Catholic primary school with some very good features. It is firmly committed to developing its Catholic identity under the committed and dedicated leadership of its Head teacher who is well supported by the governors, staff, pupils and parish priest. They take special pride in living out their mission statement with its close focus on respect for others, as shown in the words 'by showing concern for all members of society through understanding sharing, tolerance, self-esteem and respect'. The whole school community work together to create a safe, stimulating and cared for learning environment, which has a direct impact on the personal well being and educational success of the pupils. Parents, parishioners and the local Anglican Church leader, whom inspectors met, were unanimous in their praise for the school. Strong links are maintained with the Sisters of Mercy who founded the school and two Sisters attend the school on a regular basis supporting pupils, families and staff. The excellent partnership that has been developed with these people nourishes provision and makes the school a supportive and inclusive community.

Religious education is central to the mission of the school. The school uses the 'Come and See' programme, recommended by the Bishop of the Diocese. This is now fully implemented across all key stages and proposals to adapt the scheme, in order to meet the needs of mixed age groups, are being trialed. Other faiths, with a sharp focus on Islam and Judaism, are taught through the 'Come and See' programme. The school has good resources including books that are linked to the 'Come and See' topics, a range of Bibles which also support these topics, resources for teaching other faiths and materials for special needs children. The school supports a Catholic pupil from a local special needs setting, who attends the school for Religious Education lessons.

The overall quality of teaching and learning in religious education across the key stages ranges from good to very good. In most lessons planning was effective, learning objectives were clearly stated, explained and revisited. A good range of teaching

strategies are used so that lessons are lively and pupils are engaged. For example, talk partners and drama are used to good effect as were picture prompts and Information and Communication Technology (ICT). There is good evidence of opportunities offered for pupils to write in RE. There are high expectations of pupils both in the presentation of their work and in the volume of work. There is, however a need to ensure consistency in expectations relating to written responses across the key stages. Examples of effective marking were observed in some books but this was not the case in all year groups. In some cases marking does not show pupils the next step they need to take in their learning nor are targets set in all books. In some lessons, during discussions with the class, teachers need to get a more even balance between the information given by them to the pupils and the responses the pupils come up with themselves. Teaching assistants are valued members of staff at St Joseph's and some are involved in the parish as catechist. However, in some lessons they could be encouraged to become more actively involved in consolidating pupil learning, for example, by asking more challenging questions during their interaction with the more able pupils.

New plans for assessment in RE have been drawn up but are at an early stage of development. The assessment systems, which are in line with the Revised Curriculum Directory, are now beginning to allow staff to focus more effectively on individual, group and cohort needs. The central recording of overall levels is allowing the RE leader to keep an overview of progress made by pupils in RE across the key stages. She is now in a better position to help staff ensure the appropriate progression of all learners.

There is a planned schedule of Masses and Assemblies in place. There are excellent links between the school, parish priest and parish. The Head teacher, staff and pupils highly appreciate the support, availability and valued commitment of their current parish priest. The quality of worship is another developing feature of this school. Great attention is given to planning assemblies. There is a good use of music, a focus for worship and opportunities offered for pupils to participate. There are many opportunities offered for pupils to pray; formal, reflective, spontaneous and liturgical prayer. Each classroom has a focal point for prayer, placed at pupil level, which is well used to support personal reflection. The Chapel is also a lovely prayerful place that offers pupils and staff opportunities for prayer.

Relationships in the school are exceptionally positive and pupils are courteous, respectful and friendly towards adults and each other. The pupils are offered many opportunities to become responsible citizens. This was evident during our meeting with the school council and the pupils we spoke to during the school day. They are involved in numerous monitoring roles and generous fundraising for charities. The children are also involved in a cultural exchange project with French schools in Le Var. A day of Retreat for Year Six pupils takes place every year.

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School values links with parents and carers who are involved with their children's learning. The parents have regular contact with the school and are given curriculum information to support their children in the teaching of RE. Governors are committed and supportive and they recognize the need to continue to have

regular training in order to interpret data and improve their understanding of strengths and weaknesses in the teaching and learning of RE. There are strong links and partnerships with other Catholic schools in the Diocese such as Grays High School and De La Salle. The Head teacher and Deputy both work in partnership with leaders in other Catholic schools in the Diocese when information is shared about promoting good practice in the teaching and learning of RE.

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is a growing strength of the school. A system is now in place to develop the provision for sex and relationship education through the use of Diocesan guidelines and the resource 'A Journey in Love'.

The school meets the Diocesan requirements for the allocation of curriculum time for taught RE.

The RE coordinator is inspiring, dedicated and the excellent work she has carried out during her short time as subject leader has to be commended.

What needs to be improved:

- Provide pupils with further opportunities to advance their learning rapidly – in particular the more able.
- Teacher comments in books that encourage further the pupils' learning.
- To develop the role of teaching assistants so that they support pupils learning even more effectively.

Overall, St Joseph's is a good Catholic School with some outstanding features. The school prepares its pupils well for the transfer to their Secondary Schools as happy, well adjusted young people who are a credit to themselves, their parents and their school.

The Inspectors endorse the areas identified by the school for improvement in the Section 48 Self-Evaluation Form.