



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 137295

**St Joseph's Catholic Primary School
Ackholt Road
Aylesham Kent
CT3 3AS**

Inspection date: March 2nd 2016

Chair of Governors:	Fr Jeff Cridland
Headteacher:	Bridie Dodson
Inspectors:	Damian Fox Jan Mann

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SECTION 48

Introduction

Description of the school

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School is an academy within the Kent Catholic Schools Partnership. It is situated in the Dover Deanery of the Archdiocese of Southwark. The school serves the Parish of St Finbarr's in Aylesham. The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholic is 22%. The average weekly proportion of curriculum time is given to Religious Education in Key Stage 1 and 2 is 10%.

The school takes pupils from Reception to 11 years. It is a much smaller than the average size school and serves the village community and immediate area. There are 78 pupils on roll. The attainment of pupils on entering the school is significantly below average. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average. 18% of pupils receive extra support. Almost all pupils are white British heritage. There are 37 pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium.

Date of previous inspection:

[date] 06th April 2011

Overall Grade:

2

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
1

St Joseph's school is outstanding at all levels. It has improved on the "Good" given in the last inspection. It is a model of inclusion. There is a culture of opportunity for every pupil to succeed. In the last three years, governors have developed a much deeper understanding of their role. They are deeply committed to the Church's mission to education. They are active and effective in their support for the Catholic life of the school and Religious Education.

The leadership of the Headteacher is outstanding. Her vision for progress in Religious Education and for embedding spirituality in the lives of staff, pupils and parents is understood and shared by the whole community.

The experience and enthusiasm of the Religious Education Leader complements the commitment of leaders to providing an outstanding Catholic school.

The links with the parish are one of the many strengths of the school. The Chair of Governors is the parish priest. He knows everybody in the school and they know him. The school and the Church are one.

The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. They are extremely well behaved and show a lot of mutual respect and care for each other. One pupil said that "nobody in this school gets ignored." Overwhelmingly, parents strongly agree that the school provides high quality education and care for their children. One parent said that "all the staff show great care and enthusiasm children know each other, forming good relationships between themselves and the teachers."

The school has addressed the issues raised at the last inspection. The capacity to develop even further is outstanding.

What steps need to be taken to improve further?

Governors, Headteacher and staff should:

- Continue to develop a high level of challenge for all pupils, particularly the higher ability.
- Develop the links between the school's *Mini-Vinnies* and the established St Vincent de Paul group in the parish.
- Use the existing links with the Catholic secondary school to work together on chaplaincy to develop a stronger Catholic identity within the wider community.

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

The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life of the school is outstanding. They understand the Gospel values of love and service. Pupils of all faith backgrounds know they are cared for by the teachers and they feel safe and happy in school. Pupils of all ages readily accept responsibility for contributing to the community, for example singing at a local church for a party for the elderly of the village. Each class takes its turn to produce a class assembly.

School and parish activities are an integral part of village life. The parish priest, who is Chair of Governors, comes in for all acts of worship and the school community regularly go to the church for Mass on major feast days.

Behaviour in school is exemplary. The local Member of Parliament described pupils as “good ambassadors for the school.”

Understanding the needs of others in the local and wider community is a central feature of the school. Pupils demonstrate the understanding that they should help people who have less than them. They are involved in raising money for organisations such as CAFOD and the local *Pilgrim's Hospice*. The Mini Vinnies group is well established in the school. The inspectors felt that as nearly all pupils go to the local Catholic secondary school, leaders could strengthen the links using the *Mini-Vinnies* and the other school's new youth St Vincent's de Paul. The school provides a “friendship stop” and act as buddies for all pupils. They are now working with the Parish SVP to identify people in the village who are in need, e.g. the elderly or people who rely on food banks.

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education

Pupils achieve high standards of attainment and levels of progress in Religious Education. They are in line with other core subjects which themselves are significantly above national average. By the end of Key Stage 2 most pupils secure high levels of attainment and progress.

Lesson observations show that pupils enjoy their lessons and respond positively to high expectations of learning and behaviour in the classroom. There is appropriate challenge and support for pupils in lessons. In a year 3/4 lesson, for example, pupils reverently lived out the events of the Last Supper by breaking bread and sharing it amongst themselves. They were reverent throughout and were able to meditate on its meaning.

The quality of written work in pupils' books consistently shows that pupils are proud of their learning and are making good progress overall.

How well pupils respond to and participate in Collective Worship

Acts of worship engage all pupils and inspire them to reflect and pray quietly. In the Mass, for example, pupils participated with prayers, singing and actions. They also had moments of stillness where they could talk to God.

The liturgy group has a real impact on pupil participation in Collective Worship. With the Religious Education Leader, pupils prepare assemblies and masses. In the Mass, the hymns were chosen by the pupils. At Mass, everybody in the class offered prayers, read or brought up gifts at the offertory. The pupils also plan and worship at St Finbarr's such as some Sunday feasts day Masses, the Rosary and the *Stations of the Cross*. The assembly was noted for its level of inclusion. Everybody, including adults, all had a part to play.

The priest confirmed that pupils are fully involved in the planning of prayer and worship and that their responses are faithful and sincere. Pupils are at ease praying and will be inspired to contribute their own intentions and prayers during acts of Collective Worship.

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 at all levels demonstrate a deep commitment to the Catholic life of the school. Governors are highly effective in their monitoring and evaluation and in both challenging and supporting school leaders. They have a clear vision for further improvements to the Catholic life of the school. The school improvement plan clearly highlights where the school is going and contains strategies to achieve progress.

The school benefits from having the parish priest as Chair of Governors. The school is small and takes pupils from the immediate village area. The parish priest is not only a fixed presence in the school, he also brings his reflective and spiritual thinking to identifying how to strengthen the Catholic impact in the school and in the village. In a recent Governors' audit, a new governor said that her first visit gave her "a better understanding of the Catholic life of the school".

The Headteacher is outstanding. Her faith and commitment to the pupils and parents has a significant impact on the community. Pupils make excellent progress and there is an obvious ethos of care and "Gospel in action" which permeates across all aspects of the school.

The Religious Education Leader is an experienced and highly effective leader. She is a parishioner and works closely with the parish priest in developing the Catholic life of the school and in deepening School-Home-Parish links. Her enthusiasm and her commitment to the faith is an inspiration to all members of the community through the liturgy group, pupils are actively involved in preparing and leading Collective Worship.

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 deeply committed to continuing the upward trend of improvement in standards in Religious Education. Governors are knowledgeable about attainment and progress in Religious Education. They are highly effective in monitoring standards and in asking challenging questions. Governors make sure that they are informed so that they can support the school plan for further improvements.

The Headteacher's leadership is outstanding. She meets the Chair of Governors and the Religious Education Leader regularly and ensures that tracking of standards is effective and that it leads to meaningful interventions to address the needs of all pupils.

The Religious Education Leader's experience ensures that the progress of each pupil is a priority for governors and teachers. There is rigorous tracking of pupils' progress and a detailed system of monitoring and evaluation. Regular formal assessments provide accurate information for each pupil. Interventions are therefore appropriate for the needs of each pupil. The school moderates internally and with other schools. This has given teachers greater confidence with accurate assessments, observations and work surveys. The two NQTs appreciate the support they are given. They describe the school as being "like a family." The Teaching Assistants feel "nurtured." They were supported in further studies at university which developed their classroom skills. This was apparent in lesson observations.

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

The quality of teaching is never less than good and is often outstanding. Lessons build on prior learning and are well structured. Teachers know their pupils and challenge appropriately. Questioning is differentiated which allows all pupils to contribute their own understanding. As a result, pupils demonstrated high levels of motivation and learning. The variety of tasks engage pupils of all abilities. For example, in the Year 5/6 lesson, in an activity called “Hot Pocket” children were encouraged to choose a challenge to enrich and extend their learning. Pupils in the Year 3/4 lesson were all engaged in a reflective presentation of the last supper. Pupils’ responses to the task were excellent. One pupil said that he enjoyed meditation because “you can share your mind with Jesus.” The Early Years’ lesson was particularly noted for what an Inspector called its “wow” moment. When asked why the candle is lit, one pupil said it is “because Jesus is the light of the world.”

Teaching Assistants were deployed very effectively in all lessons so that pupils with particular needs made progress. For example, in the Early Years’ lesson when pupils were engaged in both drama and reflective activities as they learned about sharing. They were supportive of pupils and used their initiative to address needs as they arose.

The marking and dialogue between teachers and pupils is excellent. There is clear guidance for pupils to help them progress further. Pupils’ responses show their understanding and that they are making progress. The quality of pupils’ written work is very high. They take great pride in their work.

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

The allocation for Religious Education across the school is 10%.

The extent to which the Religious Education curriculum promotes pupils’ learning is outstanding in meeting pupils’ needs. The school follows “*The Way, the Truth and the Life*” programme. They also use “*Come and See*” to, particularly to study other faiths. Planning ensures full coverage of the Religious Education programme with imaginative and well planned activities being deployed to enrich pupils’ learning. Pupil progress and lesson observations show that the curriculum stimulates their interest and engages them in learning. In the Year 6 lesson, the image of a knot was used to help pupils understand the consequences of broken relationships. They were challenged to reflect on healing relationships in this year of mercy and how God helps them to restore trust “when a knot is made between you and God.” The relevance was emphasised by reflecting on the parent-child bond.

The impact of the curriculum in its wider sense is excellent. Most pupils are not Catholic, yet the level of pupil engagement and high standards of learning, reflect the impact of the Gospel values which are evident throughout the school. There are many learning opportunities including trips to a synagogue, the *Ten Ten* production in Dover and Masses at Aylesford. The curriculum is enriched by the many opportunities for charity work throughout the year, such as the work of the *Mini- Vinnies* and the parish SVP.

Throughout the school, displays reflect the deep commitment of the school to its Catholic identity and pupils' learning. Prayer tables and prayers are prominent in all classrooms.

The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school

The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school is outstanding. It is an integral part of everyday life and enhances and strengthens the spiritual and caring ethos of the school. It is notable, particularly, for the high level of inclusion of all pupils regardless of faith or ability.

There are extensive opportunities for the school to come together for daily prayer and worship. The Key Stage 2 assembly effectively used visual aids to highlight the message. It was rooted in scripture. Behaviour in all forms of collective worship is outstanding.

The Religious Education Leader and the Parish Priest work effectively together to provide regular and meaningful spiritual experiences for pupils. Masses and assemblies are enriched by the engagement of pupils. They are inspired to sing enthusiastically and pray sincerely. Mass for Year 1/2 pupils, for example, was active and engaging but there were also periods of silent reflection for pupils to talk to God.

Parents are warmly invited to acts of Collective Worship. In the Year 1 /2 Mass, there were more adults than children.