



Archdiocese of Birmingham

INSPECTION REPORT

ST JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL BIRMINGHAM

Inspection dates	14 th -15 th November 2012
Reporting Inspector	Teresa Quick

Inspection carried out under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

Type of School	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4-11 years
Number on roll	205
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governors	Dr Dirk Hermans
School address	Rocky Lane Nechells Birmingham B7 5HA
Telephone number	0121 464 8140
E-mail address	enquiry@stjosb7.bham.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	April 2009
DFE School number	330 3339
Unique Reference Number	103436

Headteacher	Mrs Alison Treadwell
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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 2 full RE lessons with the 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 chair of governors, staff, and parish priest. She observed an assembly and prayer services 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 such as RAISEonline, the development plan, teachers' planning, and learning journals. Alongside the validation of school self evaluation, the inspector gathered evidence about the leadership of RE, which will be shared with other diocesan schools.

Information about the school

St Joseph's is slightly smaller than the average Catholic primary school with 205 on roll serving the parish of St Joseph in Nechells. It is an urban area where there is a very high level of socio-economic deprivation. The number of Catholic pupils is currently 34%. This is higher than at the time of the last inspection. The proportion of ethnic minority pupils is 82% with 41% of the pupils with English as an additional language. Over half of the pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is well above the national average. The numbers with special needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is above average. Attainment on entry is below or well below the national average overall.

Main Finding

In its self evaluation St Joseph's rightly judges itself to be an outstanding Catholic school. The senior leadership and governors have a shared vision for the school. The school has a clear view of the rapid improvement that has been made since the last inspection and the direction it wishes to proceed. This is based on thorough review and rigorous monitoring of the Catholic life and the effective provision for RE. The leadership and management of the Catholic life and religious education are outstanding. Since the last inspection with the appointment of a Catholic headteacher both have been placed firmly at the heart of all that is done in the school. The provision for Catholic education has improved out of all recognition and beyond the expectations of the community of St Joseph's. The pupils, staff and governors are a worshipping, faith filled community. There is now excellent capacity for further improvement as a newly appointed headteacher has recently taken up post, a Catholic deputy headteacher will start next term and there is unerring governor support with the expertise the school needs. The school has excellent links with the parish and Catholic community and the local community.

School self evaluation

The self evaluation at St Joseph's presents an accurate and realistic picture of where the school is in its Catholic life and religious education. The school understands that there are still areas where improvement can be made but they must maintain the progress that they have already made. They now correctly consider that outcomes for the pupils are outstanding. After a period of uncertainty there has been a

substantive head for 2 years with a permanent headteacher recently appointed. Over the last 2 years the headteacher with the support of her deputy brought about many staff changes to ensure that there was no overall poor performance in particular with regard to the teaching of religion. Instead of one class with a Catholic teacher there is now only one class without a Catholic teacher. Through staff meetings and training the senior management ensure that all staff have an awareness and understanding of the Catholic life of the school and how other subjects contribute to it. This massive shift for the school has made a huge impact on the teaching of RE and the practice of the faith. The Catholic life of the school is now judged by the school as excellent. This is correct. Jesus has been put firmly at the centre of all they do at St Joseph's. The whole school staff and governors share a spiritual day at the beginning of each academic year. Each school day starts with staff prayers and reflection. There is daily prayer and collective worship in class and assemblies with the children. The mission statement of the school has been revised by stakeholders and is known to all. The Inspire workshops are regular features which bring parents, teachers and children together on a faith based focus. Weekly Mass continues to be a highlight of the school's liturgical life. The school now shares liturgies with cluster schools. There was a staff pilgrimage to Lourdes at Easter. A prayer garden has been developed to commemorate deceased pupils, staff and benefactors. There has been a rigorous review of the RE curriculum. It is now judged as outstanding as it is now a faith filled broad, balanced and interesting curriculum which ensures the highest of possible outcomes for the pupils' learning.

At the time of the last inspection there were a number of recommendations. All have been successfully acted upon. The strong Catholic presence on the teaching staff being a prerequisite for significant improvement in the Catholic life and RE has been addressed to the full. Prayer experience is monitored and pupils are familiar with the prayers listed in the diocesan document *Teach us to pray*. Assessment has been formalised so that each child's progress can be tracked through the school with individual targets. Pupil tracking is now robust and secure with half termly meetings. Assessment is now judged as good by the school and supports the learning which they also grade as good. All groups of pupils achieve well including those with Special Educational Needs/Disabilities. There are many opportunities for differing types of written work and some extended writing was seen. Written work in RE now shows a clearer correlation with literacy. As teaching has improved so that it is now judged as good overall with some outstanding teaching there is now an appropriate level of challenge in lessons for individual pupils. Governors have excellent leadership from the chair of governors and the link governor for RE. In line with all aspects of school management the governors now have clear and effective systems in place in order to monitor the RE curriculum, evaluate the findings and inform future planning. The sacramental programme as a whole has been reviewed as requested.

Collective worship is judged by the school to be outstanding. This is an accurate assessment. The quality and variety of worship is exceptional for both staff and pupils. There are a large number of servers in the schools' Guild of St Stephen. There is a delightful prayer garden and a quiet grotto in honour of Our Lady of Lourdes for group or individual prayer.

The new headteacher had previously been the deputy headteacher. She carries forward the vision and strategies that have been set in place. The school benefits from the support of the chair of governors and the experienced link governor for RE who was the previous headteacher who led the exceptional change towards making this an outstanding Catholic school.

The school has produced a thoughtful self evaluation. The outcomes of the monitoring of lessons, learning walks, pupils' work and the assessments of learning, questionnaires, parent and pupils' voice and the general Catholic life of the school provide the necessary information to plan future developments and the next steps to improvements in pupils' learning. The RE curriculum is broad, balanced and interesting. All teaching staff have the good knowledge to deliver the RE curriculum well. There is an awareness of the high degree to which the school curriculum contributes to pupils' spiritual, moral, and vocational development which they judge to be excellent.

Overall effectiveness of the school¹

Outcomes for pupils are above diocesan expectations. Pupils enter school with little knowledge of prayer and the life of Jesus Christ. By Year 2 many pupils are working above the diocesan expectations and by Year 6 generally pupils are also above. The school is now working to develop pupils' higher order thinking skills. Pupils are generally better orally than in their written work which does not always truly reflect their spiritual understanding and responses. For many of the pupils English is their second language. These pupils receive well targeted support.

The contribution of the pupils to the Catholic life and collective worship of the school is outstanding. They respond very well to the many opportunities the school offers them for their spiritual, moral and vocational development. They take an active part in preparing and leading acts of worship including Mass, assemblies, shared liturgies, the Rosary, Stations of the Cross and class prayers. Pupils are beginning to prepare PowerPoint presentations for Mass and assemblies. Pupils sing joyfully, use sign language and are uninhibited in their worship. Pupils are able to translate faith of the school into action on behalf of those in need. Generosity can come from their prior experiences. The outstanding provision for collective worship provides the opportunity for differing types of prayer. Although pupils are of many faiths and none they are respectful to everyone when praying together and are dignified when praying alone.

The senior leadership is totally committed to the Catholicity of the school. Jesus is at the centre of all they do. There is a strong sense of purpose and direction. They want the best for the pupils. Governors are active in their support for the Catholic character of the school. They never lose sight of the mission of the school. With the headteacher and staff they are prominent in promoting it. The leadership of RE within the school is exemplary. The subject leader leads by example supporting where necessary to achieve the high standards expected within the school. She leads the staff towards improvement in teaching and learning with the aim for better learning for the pupils through a higher percentage of outstanding lessons. Monitoring and evaluation are detailed with individual targets for each child. This is supporting the raising of pupils' standards and general improvement in RE. The school aims to continue to make further improvements with their monitoring and assessment.

Teaching in religious education is good overall with much outstanding practice. Planning is good and assessment data used effectively. RE is at the centre of the curriculum maps so that everything emanates from the faith. The school has further developed the diocesan *All that I am*, family life and sex education course of study. It is a culturally diverse school and much work has been done to promote peace, justice, tolerance and understanding. As yet there have been no visits to places of worship of other faiths. The curriculum as a whole

¹ As the quality of the school self evaluation has been affirmed, the judgements in this section of the report conform to those of the school.

including religious education makes an excellent contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, and vocational development. There are clear cross-curricular links between RE and art, history, literacy and IT.

Recommendations

As the pupils develop in their knowledge and understanding of the faith the school should work to develop their higher order thinking skills.



Diocesan Education Service,
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November 2012

Dear Parents and Carers

Section 48 (Diocesan) Inspection of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, November 2012

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 has rapidly improved and is now an outstanding Catholic school. It is a Catholic school that has welcomed children who have come from many different countries. There is a strong Catholic ethos where every member of the school community is cared for, valued and respected. The Catholic mission underpins all the school does. The children make good progress in their religious education and take an active part in the Masses and other liturgies. This is a harmonious community where children work and play happily together. The teachers encourage children to behave well both in class and around the school. The children are polite and welcoming. The teachers regularly review the teaching and what is learned in RE together with the Catholic life of the school to ensure that your children receive the best possible religious education. Governors have a very good understanding of the needs of the school and are active in their support of its mission.

The teachers have a comprehensive development plan for religious education which embraces all aspects of the religious curriculum. Now your children are gaining a good basic knowledge of the faith. I am encouraging the teachers to help your children develop in their higher order thinking skills thus enabling them to do even better in their religious education.

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

Yours sincerely

Teresa Quick
Diocesan Inspector