



## DIOCESE OF BRENTWOOD

### Denominational (S48) Inspection Report

**Name of School:** St Joseph the Worker Primary School

**Local Authority:** Essex

**Inspection Date:** 4 March 2022

**Reporting Inspector:** Mrs Angela Podmore

This Inspection was carried out under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005 and 2011.

<b>Type of School:</b>	Primary	<b>School Address:</b>	Highview Crescent
<b>School Category:</b>	VA		Hutton
<b>Age range of pupils:</b>	4 – 11 years		Brentwood
<b>Gender of pupils:</b>	Mixed		CM13 1BJ
<b>Number on roll:</b>	208		
<b>Appropriate Authority:</b>	The Governing Body	<b>Tel. No.</b>	01277 227282
<b>Date of previous inspection:</b>	June 2015	<b>Headteacher:</b>	Miss B Rossiter
		<b>Chair of Governors:</b>	Mrs S Facchini

## Information about the school

St Joseph the Worker Catholic Primary School is a one form entry primary school in Hutton, Brentwood and is part of the Diocese of Brentwood. It primarily serves the parish of St Joseph the Worker. There are currently 208 children on roll aged 4 – 11 and the proportion of Catholic pupils is 73%. A small number of pupils have English as an additional language. The number of children with special educational needs is below the national average. A number of the teachers at the school have gained the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies or another Catholic qualification.

## Key grades for inspection

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

## Overall effectiveness of this Catholic school

## Grade 1

St Joseph the Worker Primary School provides its pupils with an outstanding Catholic education. It is a warm, vibrant welcoming community with a team of dedicated staff who all commit themselves to serve both the pupils and each other. School leaders have been instrumental in maintaining and building upon the strengths from the previous inspection and ensuring that there is excellent capacity for sustained and continuous improvement. School leaders know their school very well, their self-evaluation document is accurate and shows their constant strive to make St Joseph the Worker School the best it can be. Leaders, under the expert guidance of the inspiring headteacher, share a clear vision for the school. They are passionate in their leadership and ambition for the school and are outstanding witnesses to the school Mission Statement. They share a determination to ensure that the school is fully committed to the church's mission in education and ensure that the Catholic identity of the school is widely celebrated. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school and comment on the 'excellent pastoral care' and support their children receive at the school.

## What the school should do to improve further:

- To fully embed the trial assessment symbols across the whole school.
- To further develop pupils' learning and understanding of other faiths by visits to places of worship and arranging for guest speakers to visit the school.

## CATHOLIC LIFE

## Grade 1

The Catholic life of the school is outstanding. The school Mission Statement 'With Jesus, we learn, we care, we listen, we share so that He may be seen in the people that we are and the things that we do.' permeates the daily lives of all members of the school community. It is visibly evident in the relationships of all, where every individual is valued and respected as being a unique gift from God. St Joseph the Worker is clearly a school which places a high value on its family atmosphere and the genuine care for its pupils and in the way it reaches out to the wider community. Parents speak very warmly of the support they have received during lockdowns commenting that they 'still felt a real connection with the school'. Pupils love being a member of the St Joseph the Worker school family.

Pupils' deep commitment to their faith is shown by the deep respect they show to others both in their school and in the wider community. Their behaviour in class and around school is exemplary. This makes the atmosphere highly conducive to learning and personal development. They collaborate exceptionally well during lesson times. They listen carefully to each other and enjoy celebrating others' achievements as enthusiastically as if they were their own. This was noticeable in the achievement assembly observed and in letters from past pupils who, when winning awards in their new school, reported that 'the achievement is as much yours as it is ours'. Pupils show a real acceptance of the opinions of others even when they do not agree with them. During a discussion on the betrayal of Jesus

by Judas, pupils were not afraid to express opposing ideas, they were fully confident that their views would be respected and listened to without fear of being ridiculed. Staff are active role models of mutual respect and forgiveness which is clearly seen when staff encourage pupils to ask questions and then go to great lengths to answer them.

Pupils are enthusiastic to take on responsibilities to support others. St Joseph the Worker ambassadors enjoy acting as excellent play leaders for their younger peers and ensuring the dining room is kept neat and tidy during lunch breaks. Year 6 pupils lead dance sessions for their peers during break times, whilst year 5 pupils hold beautiful and meaningful lunch time prayer sessions for the Infant class children in the very atmospheric prayer room. Their response to Pope Francis' Laudate Si and Fratelli Tutti initiatives is commendable. Pupils talk confidently about them, older pupils have an excellent understanding of Catholic Social teaching and how their behaviours can make an impact. Younger pupils speak with enthusiasm on the ways they raise funds for a wide variety of charities explaining that it is not only because people are less fortunate than themselves but because they are doing what Jesus wants them to do. Caring for others is deeply embedded in the charism of the school. Pupils raise funds, offer prayers and give of their time for a wide variety of charities and organisations including CAFOD, the local foodbanks and Leonards Lodge Care Home. The 'Walk and Talk' initiative introduced during Mental Health Week enabled pupils to talk to each other during their Daily Mile trek about anything they were concerned about.

During a tour of the school it was abundantly evident that pupils are very proud of their school, they know their school very well and are able to talk with confidence of the many beautiful displays and what had prompted them. They pointed out the inspiring iconography which enriches their learning environment and are very proud of their 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary Papal Blessing which takes a prominent place in the school. Each class has its own saint, even the very youngest pupils are very knowledgeable about their saint, chatting animatedly about them to the inspector. Year 6 pupils feel very privileged to be able to choose their own class saint. They are able to express their reasons in choosing St Ambrose and how he inspires them in their work and daily lives.

Religious Education (R.E.) at St Joseph the Worker is outstanding. The rich curriculum follows the diocesan 'Come and See' programme and so ensures pupils build up their skills, knowledge and understanding as they progress through the school.

Teachers plan lessons which are innovative and exciting, they use a variety of teaching styles and strategies which ensure that all pupils make very good and sustained progress whatever their starting points. During the inspection one class thoroughly enjoyed a 'Pass the Parcel' activity to enhance their enjoyment and learning about the Sacrament of the Eucharist. Pupils' engagement and enthusiasm was tangible. Throughout the school resources are used exceptionally well to promote learning and to ensure that pupils achieve well. Attainment in R.E. is very good and in many cases outstanding and in line with that in other core subjects. Teachers know their pupils very well and strategies are firmly embedded to either scaffold or challenge learning so that all achieve their very best. Additional adults are very well deployed to support pupils with special educational needs, they consistently check understanding and successfully move learning on.

Pupils are given an excellent start to their learning in R.E. in the Early Years and this is successfully built on year on year as they move through the school. Teaching continues to be highly effective as pupils move through the school and teachers have high expectations of the pupils in their care. Teachers demonstrate very strong subject knowledge and this, coupled with highly effective questioning, helps pupils to deepen their understanding and continually develop their knowledge and skills. Pupils are highly articulate and are able to think through issues and express their thoughts using age-appropriate religious vocabulary. They are developing into ethical and theological thinkers. This is clearly seen in workbooks with responses such as 'Jesus has opened a new door to me and I feel that this is what I was made for.' and again in a response saying that God has asked me to 'tender to every corner of the earth.' Excellent work on Social Justice clearly evidences pupils' desire to follow Pope Francis' Fratelli Tutti initiative. The lovely tradition of the 'Headteacher's Tea Party' is cherished by all. Pupils love being invited to celebrate their work with both her and peers from other classes. They are justifiably proud of their work they bring to this celebration.

Pupils' workbooks are well presented, clearly showing the love, respect and high regard they hold for the subject. There is clear evidence of sustained progress as pupils meet similar topics as they journey through the school. Regular monitoring and moderation of pupils' work with local schools and the diocese have ensured that teachers are more confident that their assessments are accurate. The newly introduced trial marking practice using hearts, clouds and links encourages pupils to think about how they can link what they learn in R.E. to their everyday lives, so that they learn from religion not just about religion. This also gives pupils detailed feedback on how to improve their work, and end of year attainment statements displayed in classrooms give pupils a clear indication of what they are working towards.

The R.E. subject leaders are highly committed, hard-working and forward thinking in how they see the continued development of the subject. They act as excellent role models supporting colleagues through team teaching, modelling of good practice and organising training opportunities to develop excellent practice. Highly effective systems are in place to support staff from other faiths so that they can fully enjoy and contribute to the rich catholic life of the school.

The highly driven headteacher and committed governors ensure that opportunities for continued professional development are plentiful and meaningful and that the time allocated to R.E. fully meets the requirements of the Bishops Conference. Governors know the school very well and are kept well informed by school leaders. They undertake regular visits to the school and are involved in monitoring pupils' workbooks and learning walks. They are highly supportive of the work undertaken in religious education. Parents receive regular updates and the termly R.E. newsletter provides detailed information on what the children will be learning over the course of the term.

Collective worship is intrinsic to the life of the school. Prayer is part of the daily experience for all pupils and staff. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are quickly introduced to the prayer life of the school in an age appropriate way. Pupils' response to and participation in collective worship and prayer is outstanding. Music is a strength of the school and greatly enhances the prayer and worshipping life of the school. Pupils sing joyfully and enthusiastically and speak knowledgeably about the music played during assemblies and Mass.

There are extensive opportunities within the school for collective worship and prayer. Pupils deepen their knowledge and understanding of the richness of catholic traditions and the various celebrations which occur throughout the course of the liturgical year. The school chaplains take an active role in planning and leading these celebrations. Year 5 pupils make excellent use of the beautiful prayer room to lead lunch time prayer sessions for their younger peers. These sessions are very well prepared and the very special atmosphere they create provides a rewarding and purposeful experience for all involved.

All classrooms have prayer areas which are beautifully maintained and pupils speak confidently about what it means to them. These areas are decorated with liturgical colours reflecting the seasons of the year, such as purple for Lent. Pupils enjoy writing their own prayers either for their class prayer books or individual prayer journals. Prayers motivated by the CAFOD prayer for the people of Ukraine were inspirational and demonstrated the pupils' deep empathy for the people.

School links with the local parish are strong and pupils are once again able to join in with members of the parish for morning Mass. The parish priest is a welcome visitor to the school and pupils speak very fondly of him. The school provides opportunities for prayer and worship for parents. Covid restrictions allowing, parents are invited to attend class Masses and assemblies. There is a strong parent prayer group who meet together weekly to pray for the school community.

The R.E subject leaders along with the headteacher plan and deliver a wide range of opportunities for collective worship and prayer reflecting the liturgical year. Leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for collective worship and prayer by giving a high priority to the planning and delivery of high quality liturgies and assemblies. Leaders are visible and committed role models for the whole school community.