



DIOCESE OF BRENTWOOD

Inspection Report

Name of School: St Joseph's Infant School

LEA: Waltham Forest

Inspection Date: 27th June 2018

Reporting Inspector: Pamela Brannigan

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

Type of School: Infant
School Category: Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils: 3 - 7
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 198
Appropriate Authority: The Governing Body
Date of previous inspection: June 2013

School Address:
Marsh Lane
Leyton
London
E10 7BL

Tel. No. 020 8539 3000
Headteacher: Mrs R. Boon
Chair of Governors: Mrs N. Brunton

Information about the school

St Joseph's Catholic Infant School with Nursery is a two-form entry school in Leyton in the London borough of Waltham Forest and part of the diocese of Brentwood. The school serves the parish of St Joseph's from which the majority of pupils come. There are currently 198 pupils aged 3-7 on roll. The proportion of Catholic pupils is 83% with the remaining children coming from other Christian denominations, other faiths or none. Pupils come from a range of ethnic backgrounds, the largest being Eastern European or African heritage. A large number of pupils, 77% have English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs at 44% is well above the national average. The school is part of the Waltham Forest Catholic Schools Federation, which includes the Junior School to which many pupils transfer at the end of Key Stage 1. It is also a member of the Aquinas Learning Trust

Key grades for inspection

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

Overall effectiveness of this Catholic school

Grade 1

St Joseph's is an outstanding Catholic School. Strong and effective leadership gives a clear sense of purpose and direction to the Catholic life of the school. Pupils benefit from excellent opportunities for spiritual and moral development, which are part of the provision for religious education, prayer and collective worship. The Catholicity of the school is evident in all aspects of its work. There is a clear focus on reviewing provision as well as putting in place robust systems for teaching, learning, assessment and monitoring. Pastoral care is very good and shared by all members of the school community. Pupils enjoy school and appreciate opportunities given to be involved in all aspects of its life. Parents praise the good standard of education and way the school communicates with them. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils' standards of attainment meet diocesan expectations.

The school has a very good capacity for sustained improvement. The last inspection in 2013 identified the need to improve links with the feeder Junior School, continue to develop rigorous assessment and next step marking for pupils and continue to give governors opportunities for training to enable them to fulfil their role in connection with teaching and learning in Religious Education. These areas have been well addressed, although further refinement in assessment would help teachers' planning. The school's mission statement, 'Together we grow in God's love' has been reviewed by pupils, staff and governors and is well known by the whole community. Since the last inspection there have been many staff changes including a new headteacher. She is also subject leader for Religious Education, has an excellent understanding of her role and is well placed to support colleagues. The school gives a high profile to Religious Education and has effective strategies to share good practice with new staff.

What the school should do to improve further

- Continue to implement the areas identified in the Religious Education action plan especially those in regard to strengthening teaching.
- Review the end of topic assessment process to enable staff to better plan for the next steps in pupils' learning.
- Continue to implement the rigorous induction programme for new staff.

Outcomes for pupils

Grade 1

Attainment and progress in Religious Education are good. Pupils work with interest and commitment and say they enjoy their Religious Education lessons and appreciate the wide range of tasks involved. Behaviour for learning is very good and pupils work well together whether in groups or pairs. Pupils are given an excellent start in the Nursery and Early Years, which is built upon as they progress through the school. Key Stage 1 pupils have been introduced to 'Philosophy for Children', which is having an impact on their reflectiveness and participation in discussions. The school has made an investment in teaching assistants, which is ensuring all groups of pupils are well supported and make good progress. As a result, pupils have a good knowledge of the Catholic faith appropriate to their ages. Workbooks are well presented, show coverage of the curriculum and indicate good progress made by all groups.

Pupils make an outstanding contribution to the Catholic life of the school. They respond very well to opportunities to understand the needs of others in school and the wider community. They are keen to take on responsibilities, which include as 'Litany Leaders' and school council members. Many national and international charities are supported throughout the year including Haven Hospice, NSPCC, CAFOD, WaterAid and United World Schools. Older pupils understand that the teachings of Jesus underpin their response to the needs of others. The school also enables pupils to reach out to the local community through taking part in events including carol singing and entertaining older parishioners. Links with the Catholic Junior School to which most pupils transfer are good with joint Masses for pupils and joint governor training as well as working together on community projects. Pupils are thoughtful, courteous, care for their school and each other. They are able to apply aspects of Jesus' life and teaching to their own lives and understand that a sense of service is part of being a member of a Catholic community. They also value the sense of friendship and belonging created within the school.

Pupils make an excellent response to the school's provision for collective worship. They are eager to take part in whole school and year group Masses held in school to which parents are invited. These include adapted readings, bidding prayers written and read by pupils and suitable hymns. Pupils also have a range of collective worship opportunities, which includes whole school and class assemblies as well as prayer services linked to the liturgical year. During the inspection the headteacher assisted by a group of Litany Leaders explored discipleship and the current topics of friendship and being sorry. Pupils were familiar with bible references and able to link them to their own lives and behaviour. They were attentive and eager to contribute. Pupils are able to pray in different ways and at different times. They use scripture, the traditional prayers of the church, reflection and their own prayers, examples of which were seen during the inspection. They experience traditional Catholic devotions including attendance at a 'Rosary Club', Stations of the Cross, and the Crowning of Mary.

Pastoral care is very good and given a high priority by staff and governors who work closely together to promote the spiritual development of pupils and the Catholic life of the community. The school uses Brentwood Catholic Children's Society and the 'Rainbows' programme for support when required. Pupils spoken to said they feel safe, well cared for and know where to go when they need help. They value being in a friendly environment where they are listened to and encouraged to help each other. Parents say they value the care given to their children, good communication with staff and the quality of education. One parent wrote, 'It is a joy to see the children grow spiritually. It is evident from conversations at home that the school supports the embedding of our faith.'

Leaders and managers

Grade 1

School leaders and governors are deeply committed to the Church's mission in education. The headteacher supported by senior staff demonstrates excellent leadership of the school through the way she promotes the provision for its Catholic life. She has a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development, which she shares with the whole community. She is available in the playground every morning to talk to parents and address any concerns. Governors support her in this and are committed to providing the best possible environment for the pupils. The development of Catholic life is seen as central to all that happens and there is a strong commitment both to improve in all aspects of education and to provide high quality care for pupils. New staff are given opportunities to extend their knowledge and improve their skills through staff meetings, coaching and attendance at diocesan led training.

As subject leader, the headteacher monitors Religious Education by means of lesson observations, work scrutiny and joint planning which is followed by feedback to individual teachers. She is supported in this by the parish priest who is link governor for Religious Education. She also works closely with other deanery schools to share good practice. She produces an annual Religious Education action plan, which is reviewed by staff and governors leading to a clear understanding of current developments. There are regular sessions for staff training to ensure teachers are secure and confident in their delivery of the 'Come and See' Religious Education programme. Planning includes teaching assistants who play a key role in the school.

The experienced Chair of Governors works closely with senior leadership. She has a very good understanding of strengths and areas for development. She ensures all governors are well informed about the life of the school through the headteacher's report and frequent visits. The parish priest also plays a key role in the life of the school, visits frequently and is familiar with all aspects of its religious life. Governors have an excellent understanding of their role and are well placed to challenge and support. They have a very good knowledge of the day-to-day life of the school and are able to use data to assess performance and plan for the future. They are present and available for parents at Open Evenings and sometimes have lunch with the pupils.

Leaders ensure that the school is a welcoming community where everyone is respected and valued. Diversity is celebrated and pupils are taught to respect other faiths. Leaders ensure pupils have a good understanding of the diversity of belief in modern life linked to British values. Visitors from other faiths including a local rabbi, help pupils to respect different beliefs. Pupils are given very good opportunities to develop a sense of service and show compassion for others through charitable fund raising and involvement in the local community. Opportunities for spiritual development ensure that pupils are able to reflect on their own lives and experiences and link them to the life and teachings of Jesus. Parents are invited to many school events and are kept well informed about their children's welfare and progress through regular meetings and reports. Curriculum information letters include religious education, which enables parents to support their children's faith journey along with school produced prayer books for use at home.

Provision

Grade 1

The quality of teaching and learning in Religious Education is good. During the inspection, lessons began with a period of quiet reflection where pupils use holy water to make the sign of the cross and reflect on their learning. Lessons are planned with clear learning intentions and a range of activities. High quality resources including sets of bibles are used effectively to ensure pupils are familiar with scripture. Pupils spoken to had a good knowledge of bible stories from both the Old and the New Testament. In all classes, pupils were observed working with interest and making good progress. Teachers respond well to pupils' comments and take opportunities to develop understanding. The good use of teaching assistants is a strength of the school. Marking is positive, interactive and includes suggested ways to improve. Assessment, planning and tracking support the learning and progress of all groups of pupils. The school has identified the need for further development of end of topic assessment, which it is currently addressing.

The quality of the Religious Education curriculum is excellent. At least 10% of curriculum time is devoted to the subject. This is demonstrated by the budget devoted to it and the current level of resources. The four house saints are enabling pupils to increase their knowledge of qualities valued by the Church. Religious Education displays around the school emphasise the centrality of faith to the work of the community. The 'Come and See' programme is enhanced by 'Journey in Love,' and cross-curricular links. Visits from the Sion community and the 'Ten Ten' theatre company also support the Religious Education curriculum; which enables pupils to become aware of their responsibility for each other and their environment. These visits contribute very well to their spiritual and moral development. Music also contributes very well to the Catholic life of the school. Singing is very good and the school choir occasionally participates in Sunday Mass in the parish. The support given to families through a breakfast club and a range of other extra-curricular activities gives a strong sense of community to the school. There is every indication that current good standards are likely to be maintained or improved.

Collective worship at St Joseph's is outstanding and central to the life of the school. Assemblies and liturgies contribute greatly to the spiritual development of pupils. They often include visual presentations, bible readings, drama, singing and music. Pupils are involved in collective worship in their classrooms and are given opportunities for personal reflection. Each classroom has a prayer focus with religious artefacts and display boards, which include key religious vocabulary and children's work. There is a 'Bible Alive' club, which is very popular with pupils. Masses and age appropriate liturgies are celebrated in school and church throughout the year. Parents, families and parishioners are invited to many celebrations and value the way the school involves them in its Catholic life. The parish priest visits frequently and supports the school through Masses and liturgies as well as offering pastoral care on an informal basis. There are also very strong parish links through a staff member acting as a catechist for

the Children's liturgy and there is a proposal to have a school representative on the parish pastoral council.

The inspector would like to express her thanks and appreciation to all members of the school community for their welcome and openness during the inspection.