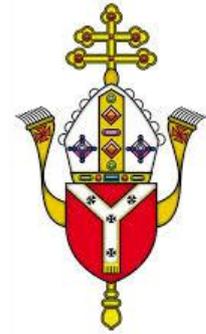


# Westminster Diocese Inspection Report



## St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Watford Way, Hendon, London NW4 4TY

Date of inspection: 26 March 2015

### A. Classroom Religious Education

**What is the overall effectiveness of classroom religious education in developing pupils' religious literacy?**

**Overall Grade 2**

Overall, the effectiveness of classroom religious education is good. The quality of teaching is good overall. The curriculum is well underpinned by the Curriculum Directory and extended by diocesan materials to support the most able pupils. It generally engages pupils well in their learning. As a result, their progress in acquiring religious literacy is good. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and try to do their best. Staff participate very regularly in worthwhile training events, including study for the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies, other opportunities within the diocese, and those within the school. These are much appreciated by staff and supported well by the good leadership and management of religious education. The subject leader, together with the head teacher, has successfully built an effective team following the recent amalgamation of the two schools. The quality of learning in lessons and the rates of pupils' progress in religious education are monitored rigorously, in line with procedures for other core areas. Pupils feel valued in lessons. The school is striving to ensure that able pupils can access tasks of sufficient challenge so that they can demonstrate work at the highest available levels. Governors are closely involved in the school and have a very clear grasp of its strengths and areas for improvement. Religious education contributes very well to the Catholic life of the school.

### B. The Catholic life of the school

## **What is the overall effectiveness of the Catholic life of the school in developing pupils' experience of the richness of a Catholic way of living and believing?**

**Overall Grade 1**

Pupils receive an excellent Catholic education and have very worthwhile experience of the Catholic faith, of Catholic traditions, and of the Church's mission across the globe. Staff, governors, parents and pupils know that religious education is at the heart of the curriculum and of school life. Worship and prayer are central to everyday activities, and the regular use of the school chapel highlights this. Links with the parishes and the local clergy are strong, and indeed have strengthened since the last inspection. Parish clergy are closely involved with the celebration of the liturgy in the school as well as on special occasions in the nearest parish church. Religious sisters, the Handmaids of Jesus, former Trustees, continue to support pupils in such as their preparation for First Holy Communion. Partnership with the diocese is excellent. Pupils flourish well at St Joseph's, not only in their personal development but also in their understanding of the Church's teaching on social justice. Charities and links with international institutions, involving reciprocal visits, means that children gain first-hand experience of helping others.

Excellent systems are in place to support the induction of staff new to the school and to facilitate the training of continuing staff. Parents and governors have a clear understanding of the school's Catholic life. Parents new to the country particularly value its Catholic ethos in making their families feel at home. Leaders and managers at all levels, including governors, are committed to excellence in developing the school's Catholic life. The staff team, skilfully interwoven following the amalgamation of the infant and junior schools, very well supports this drive. Self-evaluation, resulting from rigorous monitoring is presented modestly with respect to the Catholic life of the school and does not fully reflect its strengths.

### **Introduction**

The inspectors would like to thank the governors, headteacher, staff, pupils and parents for their co-operation over the conduct of the inspection. The inspectors spent one day in school, visited 12 lessons and prayer sessions, carried out two learning walks and three interviews with school staff, pupils and governors. Other evidence was gathered from contacts with parents through a questionnaire, the scrutiny of a sample of pupils' work in lessons, observation of pupils in and out of lessons and examination of school documents.

The Inspection of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Hendon was carried out under the requirements of the Canon 806 and Education Act 2005, and in accordance with the Framework for Section 48 Inspections approved by the Archbishop of Westminster. The inspectors are appointed by the Archbishop. The inspection reviews and evaluates how effective the school is in providing Catholic education. This process begins with the school's own self-evaluation.

### **Inspection Team**

Mrs Sheila Nolan

Lead Inspector

Catherine Bryan  
Daniel Keane

Associate Inspector  
Associate Inspector

## Description of School

St Joseph's is a two-form entry Catholic Primary School in the LA of Barnet and the locality of Hendon. Previously two schools, one infants and one junior, have joined to become one primary school since the last inspection. The school will become a three-form entry as of September 2015. The school serves families from the parishes of Our lady of Dolours, Hendon, St Patrick's, West Hendon, and St Edward the Confessor, Golders Green. The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholic is 100%. The percentage of Catholic teachers in the school is approximately 66%.

There are 485 pupils on roll with 8 pupils with statements of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)/ Education Health & Care Plans (EHC). The proportion of pupils from ethnic minority groups is well above average. The number of pupils speaking English as an Additional Language is also well above average. Thirty- four *pupils are eligible for the Pupil Premium*. A below average proportion of the school is eligible for free school meals.

Telephone:	020 8202 5229
e-mail address:	office@stjosephs.barnet.sch.uk
DFE Number:	302/3509
URN Number:	101337

Headteacher: Mrs Irene Ciapryna  
Chair of Governors: William O'Hara

Date of previous inspection: 2009

Previous Inspection grades: Infants/Outstanding  
Juniors /Good

**Key for inspection grades:**

<i>Grade 1</i>	<i>Outstanding</i>
<i>Grade 2</i>	<i>Good</i>
<i>Grade 3</i>	<i>Requires improvement</i>
<i>Grade 4</i>	<i>Causing Concern</i>

## **A. Classroom Religious Education**

*How religiously literate are pupils in the teachings and traditions of the Catholic faith and how well do they know, understand and appreciate the importance of religious faith and practice in everyday life?*

### **What has improved in classroom religious education since the last inspection?**

Since the last inspection, the school has made a very smooth transition to amalgamating the junior and infant sections. At the last inspection, the infant school was asked to improve systems for tracking pupils' progress and attainment. In the junior school, there was not enough challenge for the most able. The Junior school was also asked to develop marking practice to help pupils improve their work. Within the new school, much training has gone into developing the practice of the significant numbers of new staff. Professional development is a high priority. Already six teachers have a Catholic qualification and four more are in the final stages of studying for the qualification. A new scheme of work is in place and there is regular moderation of attainment both at diocesan and deanery level. Assessment has improved and teachers are much more confident than previously in making accurate assessments of pupils' performance. Further work on assessment practice is on-going. St. Joseph's has done well to establish its identity as one primary school and to improve its regular classroom practice in all phases.

### **How well does the content of classroom religious education meet the requirements of the Curriculum Directory?**

#### **Grade 2**

The scheme of work is based on the published scheme, 'The Way, the Truth and the Life but aligned successfully with the requirements of the Curriculum Directory. The religious education leader and teaching staff are involved in training in cross-referencing work in lessons to the Curriculum Directory. Pupils' work and learning resources are carefully orchestrated to support their needs as they progress through the school. Learning resources are a particular strength with a strong international dimension. These are used very creatively to stimulate the pupils' imagination as, for example, in the displays on Holy Week in Spain. The school is developing further its scheme of work in order to empower able pupils to achieve more highly. Nevertheless, it recognises that there is more work to do to make sure staff clearly understand what is required.

Links with other faiths include Judaism, Hinduism and Islam, and are woven well into the schemes of work and supported through visits to places of worship, through exchanges with pupils in non-Catholic schools, and through visiting adults. For example, pupils take part in the Seder meal, joining with pupils at the local Jewish school. They also link with those from other Christian traditions.

## **Pupil achievement (as well as attainment and progress) in religious education**

### **Grade 2**

By the end of Year 6, pupils' achievement in religious education is comparable to that in other core subjects and is good. School checks on pupils' progress and moderation of work, both internal and external, also confirm that this is generally the case throughout the school. End of unit assessments are levelled in line with the agreed understanding of diocesan attainment levels. As with English and mathematics, these outcomes are entered into the whole-school tracking system for all year groups. Pupils benefit well from the discreet assessment books that go with them throughout the school and form a very helpful record of their progress and attainment. However, the work and assessment tasks for able pupils do not always allow them to demonstrate their performance to the best of their ability. Pupils mostly have a good grasp of the language associated with the liturgy. Year 3 were at ease, for example, in talking about the Offertory of the Mass and understood the terminology well. Year 2 had an excellent grasp of the religious language associated with the narrative of the passion.

## **The quality of teaching**

### **Grade 2**

The quality of teaching in the overwhelming majority of lessons is good. Over time, pupils make securely good progress in classes. Partly because of the higher than usual turnover of staff following the amalgamation, pupils' rates of progress are faster in Year 6 than in the middle years. Inexperienced staff have needed time to settle into the new school. The impact is evident in pupils' books and in their responses. Common strengths in teaching include a strong emphasis on the use of religious language, particularly that of narrative, morality and liturgy. Pupils have ready access to scriptural sources although sometimes able pupils are restricted in their access by the use of photocopies of scripture texts rather than access to the bible itself.

St Joseph's has high expectations of its staff with regard to their planning and assessment practice in religious education. Teachers are generally confident in the material and their delivery. Over half of the staff, either hold or are studying for, the Catholic Certificate of Religious Studies. This is strengthening their subject knowledge and helping them to create a very positive climate for learning. The positive response of pupils was highlighted in the Early Years where the puppets made by the children were placed with real care at the foot of the cross. Mostly, pupils are given helpful feedback on their work, both orally and in writing. This supports successfully their understanding of how well they are doing. Nevertheless, teachers' grasp of what will empower able students to reach the highest available diocesan attainment levels in the agreed understandings is still underdeveloped despite their genuine attempts to do so. Tasks set sometimes hinder able pupils from achieving as well as they could.

## **The effectiveness of the leadership and management of religious education**

### **Grade 2**

Leadership and management of religious education are good. Religious education is currently led by the deputy head teacher, who, together with the head teacher, strives for high standards and has a clear vision of how to develop this Catholic school. The appointment of a subject leader, with the impending retirement of the current deputy, is a high priority for the school. There is a deep commitment to the Church's educational mission. Systems and procedure are in place to monitor the quality of teaching and learning and to match training to the needs of the staff. This has been particularly stringent given the recent turnover of staff and the inexperience of some new staff. Much has been done to mould staff from both of the previous schools into an effective team with high expectations of what is expected of the pupils. The drive to encourage teachers to study for a Catholic qualification is very successful. Judgments on the success of curriculum religious education are broadly accurate but the self-evaluation document misses opportunities to tell fully the story of the school

### **What should the school do to develop further in classroom religious education?**

- Work even further with the diocesan team to develop teachers' understanding of how to empower able pupils to reach the highest available levels.
- Ensure that the tasks teachers set to assess pupils' work at the end of topics do not hinder them from showing how well they can do.

## **B. The Catholic life of the school**

*How well do pupils experience the richness of a Catholic way of living and believing through all areas of school life?*

### **What has improved since the last inspection?**

Since the last inspection, the school has continued to work assiduously to promote its Catholic life. It has developed very well its international links, its links with other faiths, its links with the parishes and its partnership with parents.

## **The place of religious education as the core of the curriculum – time, staffing, accommodation, resources, budget**

### **Grade 1**

Religious education is given high priority within the curriculum and is allocated at least 10% of the total available curriculum time. The budget is on a par with the core subjects. Professional development and the creation of a Catholic ethos around the site is exceptionally successful.

Six staff have gained the Catholic certificate in Religious Studies and four more have almost completed their studies. Those who are not Catholics willingly uphold the teachings of the Church and are very well supported by senior leaders, as is the subject leader. Governors know the school well, share in its work as, for example, on the day devoted to developing the Mission Statement. Members of the governing body work well and closely with the leadership team to develop and review the quality of pupils' religious experience and are keenly aware of areas for further development. They have contributed much to the recent successful amalgamation. Parents appreciate greatly the school's work as seen in the questionnaire reviewed during the inspection. Governors are readily accessible to parents and know their views well.

### **The experience of Catholic worship – prayer and liturgy – for the whole school community** **Grade 1**

Worship and prayer are central to the life of St Joseph's School. Children are given the maximum opportunities to develop their spiritual awareness and relationship with God. They engage in the planning, preparation and leading of worship. The high quality of preparation was evident at the Year 2 presentation of the events of Holy Week, for Year 1, Reception children and their parents. Children knew the scripture narrative exceptionally well and used drama and song to reinforce powerfully the message and meaning.

The strong links with all three of the local clergy from the parishes served by the school ensure a strong sacramental life and opportunities for liturgical formation. In addition, a retired priest who lives locally, is a regular visitor as is a member of the religious order, the original trustees, who support the pupils in preparation for First Holy Communion. Mass is celebrated in the school chapel fortnightly. Children prepare and lead the celebration and it is well attended by parents and parishioners. The liturgy is celebrated in the nearby parish church on major feasts and for significant events such as the Year 6 leaving Mass.

Opportunities for the sacrament of reconciliation are readily available during Lent and Advent. Throughout the school, children are given age-appropriate opportunities each day to reflect and be still in order to gather their own thoughts and pray in a variety of ways. Pupils also participate in an annual retreat day.

A dedicated music teacher ensures that there is a good repertoire of liturgical music to enhance prayer and worship. An exceptional display of Holy Week celebrations in Seville, together with a Spanish translation of the Stations of the Cross, have enabled the children to widen their awareness of these key celebrations within the Church in a culture other than their own. This exemplifies how the school is very successful in making sure its Catholic ethos permeates aspects of its academic work outside of religious education. Together with other local Catholic schools, children have been involved in putting together an animation of the Easter story, displayed in the entrance hall and on the website. There is a wide range of religious artefacts on display throughout the school, both in class prayer areas and in public areas. These elements make St Joseph's very visibly a Catholic school. Although there are no pupils from other faiths within the school, it works very hard to ensure there are well-considered links to allow children to experience other traditions.

## **The commitment and contribution to the Common Good – service and social justice**

### **Grade 1**

Ongoing projects funded through the British Council offer wide-ranging, excellent opportunities for the children to develop individually and socially as members of the school, the wider, and the international community. There is an active one-world approach. Links with schools in China and Germany involve children and staff in exchange visits and provide opportunities for the visiting pupils to take part in liturgical celebrations and the Catholic life of the school. There are further plans to establish links with a school in Spain. A school in Uganda continues to benefit from support as does a water aid project in Gambia. Children actively engage in understanding the needs of children in these countries and grow in awareness of the importance of direct but sustainable support and its impact on the lives of both givers and receivers. Children are proactive in raising funds to support other charities in one-off appeals and clearly understand the Gospel call to serve others. They are confident in explaining why they do what they do.

There is a strong and articulate pupil voice through the School Council and children support one another through a buddy system. Great emphasis is placed on mutual respect and the children value and celebrate the rich cultural diversity within the school. Discussions with school council representatives revealed how pleased the children are about the recent amalgamation of the infant and junior schools, especially for those with siblings. They now feel the two schools have come together as one family. The current head teacher and senior leaders have worked hard to address the inevitable concerns and anxieties among staff during the transition period, but all the while, keeping the good of the children as their priority. They have managed to bring together the two teams with minimal disruption while at the same time maintaining high staff morale. The North West Alliance in Hendon involves two Catholic, two Jewish and one C of E School and provides a wealth of opportunities for all of the schools involved to draw on their varied faith traditions as well expertise in other areas to support local communities..

## **Enabling the authentic partnership between parents, school and parish as an integral part of the Diocese, particularly through its relationship with the Diocesan Bishop and those acting on his behalf**

### **Grade 1**

Partnerships with the diocese, with the local parishes and with parents are a key part of the school's understanding of itself and of its immediate and wider community. Parents support the school fully and are keen for opportunities to strengthen the partnership. Ninety percent of the parent questionnaires strongly agreed that children make good progress in religious education "the teaching in the school has really helped me in bringing up my son in a Christian way." Parents are actively encouraged to participate in school events and respond with enthusiasm.

There are excellent links with all three local parishes and the recent expansion of the school has provided additional places for children from the parish of St Edward the Confessor. The school has a strong sense of its ecclesial identity through the links with local Catholic schools

and regular head teacher meetings. This also provides training opportunities and the chance to share expertise. The school has worked closely with the diocese, hosting the training on site for the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies. Staff attend regularly all diocesan events. The vibrant, active links with schools overseas, including exchange visits, give the children a keen sense of the wider community and outstanding opportunities to experience first-hand other cultures and education systems. Governors, through their involvement in parish life, have a very good measure of parents' needs and views of the school.

## **The effectiveness of the leadership and management in promoting the Catholic life of the school**

### **Grade 1**

Excellent leadership of this Catholic school is exemplified in the way the whole school community has contributed to the development of the school's mission statement for this recently amalgamated primary school. Leaders are committed fully to the Church's mission and demonstrate this in the outstanding Catholic ethos of the school. The development of teaching, the monitoring of children's learning, and the contribution to the development of the pupils' spiritual life are all given high priority. New staff are very well inducted into its Catholic ethos. Continuing staff have very good opportunities for professional development. Stimulating visits and activities encourage pupils' understanding of the faith and traditions of those other than their own. Governors are energetic in their drive to improve the school in all ways, including its Catholic identity. Parents, staff and pupils find them ready ears in expressing their views of this excellent catholic school.

## **What should the school do to develop further the Catholic life of the school?**

- Continue to explore ways in which the pupils can prepare, participate in, and celebrate even further, not only the liturgy but other traditional forms of Catholic worship.