



# Diocese of Westminster

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## St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

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DFE Number: 919 3383

URN Number: 117465

Headteacher: Mrs L. Payne

Chair of Governors: Mr A. Ramsden

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**Canonical Inspection under Canon 806 on behalf of the Archbishop of Westminster  
and inspection of Denominational Education under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005**

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Date of inspection: 30<sup>th</sup> May 2012

Date of previous inspection: 15th January 2008

Reporting Inspector: Mrs P. Brannigan

## Introduction

The inspector would like to thank the governors, headteacher, staff, pupils and parents for their co-operation over the period of the inspection. The inspector spent one day in school, visited three lessons, one assembly, four liturgies and meditations and carried out eight interviews with school staff, pupils, parents and governors. Other evidence was gathered from contacts with parents through a questionnaire, discussion with local clergy, scrutiny of a sample of pupils' work, observation of pupils in and out of lessons and examination of school documents,

The Inspection of St Joseph Catholic Primary School, South Oxhey was carried out under the requirements of the Education Act 2005, and in accordance with the Framework and Schedule for Section 48 Inspections approved by the Archbishop of Westminster. The inspector is 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.

## Description of School

The school is one form entry in the locality of South Oxhey, Watford in Hertfordshire. It serves the parishes of Carpenders Park and South Oxhey. The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholic is 91%. The proportion of pupils who are from other Christian denominations is 6% and from other Faiths 3%.

There are 236 pupils on roll, with 4 pupils who have statements of Special Educational Need. The proportion of pupils from ethnic minority groups is *above average*. However, the number of pupils speaking English as an Additional Language is in line with the national average. There is a *below average number* of families claiming free school meals. The school has achieved a number of awards including the Basic Skills award, Primary Geography Mark, Eco Schools award, Out of Hours Study Support award and Healthy Schools status.

### Key for inspection grades.

Grade 1\*: Outstanding;  
Grade 1: Very Good;  
Grade 2: Good;  
Grade 3: Satisfactory;  
Grade 4: Causing Concern

## **A. Curriculum 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?*

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

**Grade I**

The four strands of study in the Curriculum Directory are used to very good effect in the content of curriculum religious education. Programmes of Study show clear links to the content of the Curriculum Directory. Pupils display knowledge, confidence and are able to talk about the place and importance of faith in everyday life. Structures are in place to ensure rigorous monitoring of the curriculum and pupil learning. Recent developments have put in place planning which shows clearly where the appropriate content is taught and assessed. Lesson plans show which aspect of the Curriculum Directory is being taught and which resources are to be used.

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

**Grade I**

Pupil achievement, attainment and progress in religious education is very good. Although pupils enter the school well below average, excellent provision at Foundation Stage is built on and high standards are evident in all year groups. By the end of Key Stage 2 standards meet and sometimes exceed diocesan expectations. Lessons observed provided evidence of high teacher expectation and very well motivated pupils who are actively engaged in their own learning. Teaching is differentiated to support the range of needs in each class and pupils are given good feedback to enable them to improve their work.

### **The quality of teaching**

**Grade I**

The quality of teaching is very good. Lessons observed during the inspection were outstanding or good and demonstrated high teacher expectation for all groups. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and use creative strategies to engage the full range of ability. Pupils make good progress and are encouraged to become independent learners who are able to develop their understanding of scripture and religious concepts. In class, time is well used and pupils are given every opportunity to develop new skills and build on previous learning. They are given good feedback which enables them to understand how to improve their work. Marking is positive, interactive and targets are set for further improvement. Regular monitoring of teaching is in place followed by discussion and support if needed.

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

**Grade I\***

The leadership and management of religious education are excellent. The experienced subject leader is well supported by senior management and ensures that clear vision and direction for the subject is shared by all. She models good practice and ensures that excellent support is given to new teachers and teaching assistants. High expectations for staff and pupils ensure that religious education is taught with the same rigour as other core subjects. Staff are well supported in their teaching

through in-service training and frequent continued professional development. There is an excellent range of resources and the learning environment for religious education is outstanding. Members of the effective governing body carry out annual religious education pupil interviews and are aware of current developments in the assessment of the subject. There is much evidence that religious education is given high priority in the School Improvement Plan.

**What has improved in curriculum religious education since the last inspection and what should the school do to further improve in curriculum religious education?**

There were three areas for development in the last inspection report. These were linked to the development of assessment, marking and continued professional development. The school has responded well and there are now good assessment procedures which have led to the raising of teaching and learning standards; an improved marking system which enables pupils to identify ways to improve their work; a greater focus on continued professional development and six members of staff with the CCRS or other Catholic qualifications.

The school has identified two areas which will further improve curriculum religious education in the light of the new framework.

1. Develop the programme of continued professional development for staff to raise the overall quality of teaching to outstanding.
2. Continue to embed the assessment framework linked to scripture, tradition, experience and creation.

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

**Overall Grade: I**

The delivery of curriculum religious education meets all the requirements of the Curriculum Directory and its implementation is creative and dynamic. The quality of teaching and pupils' attainment and progress are very good and sometimes exceed diocesan expectations. Pupils communicate knowledgeably about their faith and can relate it to the way they live their own lives. Effective structures are in place to ensure quality teaching and monitoring. Self-evaluation is accurate and indicates an excellent knowledge of the school and development areas for religious education. The subject leader models excellent practice and works to ensure pupils continue to make good progress. The headteacher, supported by all staff gives the subject a high priority which permeates all aspects of the life of the school.

**B. The school as a Catholic Community**

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

**The place of religious education as the core of the curriculum - time, resources, budget**

**Grade I**

Religious education receives at least 10% of curriculum time and has an equivalent budget compared to other core subjects. Resources are very good and teaching assistants play a significant role in supporting pupils. Governors provide strong support in reviewing and developing the place of religious education in the life of the school. The priest from the local parish is a frequent visitor and provides an additional learning resource to support curriculum religious education.

**The experience of Catholic worship – prayer and liturgy – for the whole school community.**

**Grade 1**

Prayer and worship are central to the life of the school and a key part of every celebration. There are many opportunities for prayer, meditation and reflection including spontaneous prayer and a Rosary group in May and October. Sacramental preparation which is parish based is given very good support within the school. The subject leader is a catechist in the local parish and ensures pupils have the widest possible experience of Catholic traditions of prayer and worship. Pupils are engaged in the preparation of liturgies and the class masses which are an established part of the school's provision. Pupils' spiritual development is nurtured through curriculum education and permeates the wider life of the school. The celebration of the Eucharist and Reconciliation are offered at key times throughout the liturgical year. During the inspection the headteacher led a powerful Key Stage One assembly on the theme of 'Live the Light of Christ in our lives' This included a re-enactment by pupils of the parable of The Good Samaritan and enabled children to reflect on the need to make the right choices. Pupils participated with respect and reverence. There is a designated prayer room which is available for pupils throughout the day and there are plans for an outdoor prayer area. Conversations with parents indicated that regular celebrations are a part of school life to which families are invited. They value these opportunities to join their children on their faith journey.

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

**Grade 1\***

There is an excellent understanding of the importance of service and support for those in need. The programme for PSHE and Citizenship is based on Catholic teaching and the school encourages pupils to give time and energy to support local and national charities. Conversations with pupils indicate that they understand the theology underpinning their actions. Other faiths are taught well and pupils learn to respect and value those from other cultures. Relationships with other Catholic and community schools, including those to which pupils transfer at the end of Key Stage 2 are excellent. Pupils with learning difficulties from a local special school attend a range of classes on a regular basis. Pupils are given responsibilities through the School Council and other systems and are growing in their understanding that the call to justice and service is part of being a member of a Catholic community.

**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**

Partnership is a central part of the school's understanding of itself with its immediate and wider community. The school works closely with parents and carers who are almost all supportive of all that is done to enable their children to grow in faith and understanding. Many parents wrote praising the ethos of the school. One said, 'Pastoral care is excellent and pupils are encouraged to care for each other.' There is a family support worker attached to the school and there are parenting workshops and classes for adults as well as a very wide range of extra-curricular activities for pupils. Relationships with the local parish are good with some staff acting as catechists and leading children's liturgies at Sunday Mass. There are also very good links with the Diocese. The headteacher is part of a working party which is developing religious education assessments and the school participates in diocesan training, meetings and conferences.

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

**Grade I\***

The school is committed to the Church's mission in education and leadership is outstanding. There is evidence that the Catholic life of the school is central to all its work. Self-evaluation is rigorous and accurate with a comprehensive range of areas for support and development. Leaders share a vision of the nature of Catholic education and work as a team to move the school forward. All aspects of school life are underpinned by the Mission Statement, 'Love and Learn in the Footsteps of Christ.' Governors are knowledgeable with a wide range of expertise and make a significant contribution to the life of the school. They are well organised and have a clear understanding of their strategic role.

**What has improved since the last inspection and what should the school do to further develop the Catholic life of the school?**

Since the last inspection forms of prayer and worship are richer and more varied. New staff have been inducted into the Catholic life of the school. All staff have been supported in the implementation of the new diocesan framework and requirements of the Curriculum Directory. To further develop its Catholic life the school should maintain and build on current good practice in the light of new developments from the diocesan education service. It should continue to implement the new diocesan framework for the self-evaluation of curriculum religious education and 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: I**

The school is most effective in developing pupils' experience in the richness of a Catholic way of living and believing. The dedicated leadership and vision of the headteacher and religious education subject leader are instrumental in ensuring that worship and prayer are central to the life of the school and are well planned and resourced. Religious education is valued and recognised as the core of the curriculum. Links with parents, parish and diocese demonstrate the school's commitment to partnership and its clear identity as a Diocesan Catholic school.