



## SECTION 48 INSPECTION REPORT

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

URN 100854

St Joseph's Catholic Infants' School  
Pitman Street  
Camberwell  
London SE5 0TS

Inspection date: 11 March 2015

Chair of Governors:	Ms Patsy Winters
Executive Headteacher:	Ms Anita Gallagher
Head of School:	Ms Sheila Kirrane
Inspectors:	Mr Stephen Beck Dr Janet Croggon

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# SECTION 48

# Introduction

## Description of the school

St Joseph's Catholic Infant School is voluntary aided. It is in a hard federation with St Joseph's Catholic Junior School. It is situated in the Camberwell Deanery of the Archdiocese of Southwark. It is maintained by Southwark Local Authority. The principal parish the school serves is Sacred Heart, Camberwell with a small number of pupils also from St Wilfrid's, Kennington Park. The proportion of baptised Catholic pupils is 92%. The average weekly proportion of curriculum time given to Religious Education is 10% in Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1.

The school takes pupils from 4 to 7 years. The number of pupils currently on roll is 165. The attainment of pupils on entering the school is largely below average. Following the introduction of universal free school meal entitlement it is more difficult to establish numbers of those who would have qualified under the previous system, however data indicates an about average level at 17%. Around 21% of the pupils receive extra support in class. The proportion of pupils from ethnic minority heritages is high at 95.7% when compared nationally, with the largest group at 46.2% being Black African. Nearly 74.1% of pupils have English as an additional language, but few pupils are at the early stages of learning English.

Date of previous inspection:

02/02/2010

Overall Grade:

1

## Key for inspection grades

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

St Joseph's Infant school was recognised as outstanding at the time of its last inspection and to its credit through a period of significant change and staff turnover it continues to be so. The school retains a strong sense of purpose and desire for ongoing improvement. The strength of St Joseph's Infant School is based on the school communities shared ethos and commitment to its stated mission, *'Saint Joseph's Catholic Infants' School together with its faith community will endeavour to inspire the Gospel values of faith, hope, love, peace, justice and truth'* which are evident in all it does. Since the last inspection the school has entered into a hard federation with the Junior School. There is a strong sense of purpose and clarity about meeting its aims to, *'Ensure that each child will develop their full potential, spiritually, intellectually, morally, emotionally, physically and socially in a caring, loving and supportive environment'*. It is focussed on, *'Building strong relationships between school, pupils, parents and the parish community and neighbourhood to help prepare our children to live harmoniously and with equality of opportunity.'* This marks St Joseph's as an excellent Catholic Infant School with a strongly inclusive ethos. It is noteworthy that from the point of first contact this welcoming community is responsive to visitors with all in the community endeavouring to impress through attention to detail. Main areas are enhanced with excellent displays that mark the school's Catholicity and are a strength.

The school's clear-sighted leadership led by the Head of School in partnership with the Executive Headteacher, has a real sense of its mission to ensure that children have the very best opportunities for future success within a caring, Christ-centred community. A major strength is the way the school strives to integrate its day-to-day work with the Church's mission. Pupils enter the school at well below average levels. By the end of Key Stage 1, standards have risen significantly with a majority of pupils entering the Junior School at an average level overall with attainment in Religious Education being slightly better than attainment in English. Pupils achieve well because of very good early years teaching. Checks on children's performance and progress are carried out conscientiously by classroom staff. Religious Education is well planned and the curriculum is utilised to provide for all pupils. Prayer and worship underpin the Catholic life of the school so that children's spiritual, moral and social development is outstanding. Not only do children behave well, but they demonstrate a genuine sense of belonging to their community. Children are helped to understand the Church's global mission through their support for a number of charities. The school is very well led by the Executive Headteacher who has built a very strong cohesive team who work tirelessly with governors to nurture and develop this flourishing Catholic community under the excellent stewardship of the Head of School. The school's capacity for sustained improvement is very strong. The infant school uses 'Come and See' as its core Religious Education scheme and has in its Head of School an outstanding Religious Education coordinator. The Federation could consider reviewing current arrangements with a view to securing greater continuity across both schools. Clear and accurate self-evaluation has led to governors, the leadership team, teachers and support staff working together to ensure all have a clear understanding of areas for development. The Religious Education Co-ordinator monitors standards well and with the support of the leadership team, is driving forward good practice and the best outcomes for pupils. The Co-ordinator's knowledge and understanding and exceptionally well presented documentation marks a strong capacity for sustainable and ongoing improvement. The steps for improvement from the last inspection have been fully addressed with documentation for collective worship in place and explicit links between the

'Come and See' scheme and Personal, Health and Social Education (PHSE) established.

There was a good response to parental questionnaires which were overwhelmingly positive with a parent summing up the school, writing, "My children feel safe and secure in school and enjoy attending. The school has close links with Sacred Heart Church. The Parish Priest celebrates good child friendly Masses for the children, talking to them at their level. Parents are always welcome at the infant school and class Masses. Pupils are well equipped to know the difference from right and wrong, knowing what is expected of them and how this applies in the wider society."

### **What steps need to be taken to improve further?**

Governors, Headteacher and staff should:

- Work with the Junior School to secure even stronger subject leadership across the Federation with a view to securing more consistent curriculum approaches with particular reference to planning.
- Take the opportunity to review the school's excellent self-evaluation form in-line with the revised inspection framework.
- Building on parental keenness to develop a more formalised Parents Association.

## **The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life of the school**

The extent to which the pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life of the school is outstanding. Pupils at St Joseph's Infants know and understand their school's Mission Statement. They understand the part they play within it and are involved in its evaluation.

Pupils have an outstanding sense of belonging to the school community and value and respect others. They praise and acknowledge the contribution of others and they show a readiness to embrace and celebrate each other's lived experiences.

Pupil behaviour is outstanding. They have a good sense of right and wrong and apply this in their personal relationships. They show responsibility for themselves and their actions. Pupils show wider responsibilities through a variety of fundraising events, regularly raising money for charities at home and abroad including CAFOD. This helps pupils deepen their knowledge and understanding of cultural and moral issues.

Education for pastoral care and personal relationships has fostered positive attitudes in pupils. There is outstanding support and care for pupils and their families. Pupils show respect and understanding of other faiths and religions and are given time to share and celebrate their own beliefs.

## **How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education**

Pupils are happy, enthusiastic and proud of their school. They are very positive in their attitudes to Religious Education, with the school having introduced Philosophy and Drama, to enhance the provision to develop children's speaking and listening. Pupils are able to talk about their beliefs and show a developing understanding to how these relate to their daily lives. They willingly accept class responsibilities and learn at a very early age the importance of working together and following the example of Jesus.

Pupils enter Reception well below average but they make outstanding progress In Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. Staff work hard building on low entry levels by setting high expectations, focusing on strong cross curricular links, building religious vocabulary at a very good rate and developing pupils' confidence that they can succeed. Staff know the pupils and their families well successfully utilising the school's strong community links.

Religious Education books are clearly held in high regard by pupils, show good coverage and are well marked to provide developmental guidance for pupils in regard to their next steps.

## **How well pupils respond to and participate in Collective Worship**

Pupils' response to and participation in Collective Worship is outstanding. Acts of Collective Worship engage the interest of all pupils and inspire them to reflect deeply and express heartfelt responses. Pupils' knowledge of prayer and liturgy is exceptionally well developed. They are increasingly more confident in preparing and leading worship from their earliest years without too much direction from adults. Pupils are becoming familiar with a variety of prayer styles and appreciate and are open to the, 'Word of God' in the

scriptures. Developing gradual steps in preparing and leading worship across the school will continue to support the outstanding practice demonstrated by older pupils. Pupils know the importance of stillness and silence during times of reflection and prayer.

## **How well leaders, governors and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life of the school and plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils**

Leaders and managers are outstanding in promoting monitoring and evaluating the provision for the Catholic life of the school and in the way they plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils with governors becoming increasingly proactive in this regard. The Executive Headteacher and Head of School provide excellent leadership and support all areas of the Catholic life of the school. Performance management focuses on the Catholic life of the school with an overarching target being to *'Demonstrate and articulate high expectations of pupils that are rooted in respect for the individual as uniquely created by God and called to Him to grow into the fullness of Christian life.'*

The school has established a clear, close, functional and reciprocal relationship with the Parish Priest and link Religious Education governor. The pupils know and respect them and they revel in their enthusiasm. There is an 'open door' policy for parents and visitors who are made to feel welcome at any time. Ofsted 2013 said, "Parents and carers are very positive about the school and praise highly the work of teachers in helping their children succeed in their learning." The school should consider building on the level of parental keenness to develop a more formalised Parents Association.

The Federation is proving to be successful because of the governors and leadership team's commitment to promoting the Catholic life of the school. Ofsted 2013 stated that, *"Members of the governing body are keen to develop their skills so that they can continue to provide a high level of support and challenge to the school."* The new governing body shows a commitment to developing their skills and building knowledge of the school, already acting as a 'critical friend' to the school, ensuring the Mission Statement is lived out. The Religious Education coordinator works closely with the Parish Priest when planning liturgical events and the Sacramental Programme for parents, which currently takes place in Year 2. Whilst the community is happy with current arrangements the possibility of moving this to Year 3 should be kept under review.

Spiritual and moral development underpin the curriculum. Leaders at all levels ensure that there are opportunities for spiritual development in lessons, in liturgies and in assemblies.

Pupils' views and opinions are heard at the highest level. They are involved in developing the school through participation as school councillors. Parental communication is good. Leaders at all levels are visible each morning and evening in the playground and are always available to speak to parents.

## **How well leaders, governors and managers monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education and plan and implement for improvement to outcomes for pupils**

Leaders and managers are outstanding in promoting, monitoring and evaluating the provision for the Religious Education of the school and in the way they plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils. Governors are rapidly developing their involvement at this level. The Head of School, who is also the subject leader is

outstanding in guiding Religious Education. She shows great commitment in her role and introduces new initiatives when appropriate. She is accurate in her review of strengths and areas for development for Religious Education and is aware that key members of staff can support the role of subject leader and share outstanding practice to drive the subject forward.

The school is very good at providing continuing professional development opportunities for staff. Communication with the Executive Headteacher, Head of School, staff, parents and governors is very effective. The school is well placed to review the self-evaluation form so it is more in line with the revised inspection framework.

Detailed documentation guides and direct all staff in the delivery of the subject. This is being updated as necessary. Monitoring data is used effectively to evaluate the school's performance and plan for future improvements.



### **The quality of teaching and how purposeful learning is in Religious Education**

The quality of teaching and purposeful learning in Religious Education is outstanding. It is consistently effective in ensuring that pupils are interested and engaged and make outstanding progress in their infant years. Teachers display good subject knowledge and deploy a range of teaching styles to motivate and inspire pupils. Teaching encourages pupils' enjoyment and enthusiasm of Religious Education.

In the Foundation Stage, themes are reinforced through appropriate, continuous provision. Reception pupils were involved and reflective throughout their lesson and able to apply this to their learning about God's earth. Year 1 pupils built very productively on previous learning which is well used across the school.

There is evidence of how Religious Education is promoting and developing many early skills. Teaching Assistants and support workers provide outstanding care for pupils. They are deployed effectively and show sensitivity to pupils needs. With increased opportunities to be involved with planning they could have an even greater impact. Good quality resources are used within lessons and teachers use Information Communication Technology at times to maximise learning, particularly through use of the interactive whiteboards. Teachers take into account pupils' prior learning and plan differentiation so that the work consolidates, builds and extends their knowledge and understanding. This could be further developed by task, to have even greater impact. The school tracks the achievement of all the pupils and teachers are able to identify how well pupils are working and tackle underachievement.

### **The extent to which the Religious Education curriculum promotes pupils' learning**

The extent to which the Religious Education curriculum promotes pupils' learning is good. At least 10% of teaching time is allocated to the teaching of Religious Education. The school uses 'Come and See' as its core programme, which meets the requirements of the Curriculum Directory for Catholic Schools, in addition to providing clear and concise statements of the key theological learning objectives, continuity and progression. Each teacher adjusts the overall programme taking into account the abilities of their class and groups. The school follows the requirements in regard to planning assessment and provisions of other faith teachings using and supplementing pupils' prior knowledge and experience as a starting point at the beginning of a new topic. Their accurate assessment focuses additional support to tackle underachievement and the needs of vulnerable groups. The Religious Education curriculum is crucial to the pupils' spiritual moral and cultural development giving them models of positive behaviour and relationships as well as specific moral guidance. Resources are adapted as appropriate to cater for a culturally diverse infant school, a diversity that is celebrated and utilised to develop a very harmonious school community. Pupils' enjoyment of Religious Education lessons is evident across the school. They are very responsive and take faith seriously. Planned opportunities are given to develop pupils' religious literacy skills.

### **The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school**

The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school is very good and strongly reflects the Catholic character of the school. It is given a high profile and is central to the life of

the school, playing a key part in meeting the spiritual needs of the pupils. The school provides opportunities for staff to develop the skills in planning, leading and evaluating collective worship. Pupils are enabled to pray formally and informally using a variety of prayer methods and styles in addition to learning and understanding many traditional prayers of the Church. Opportunities are provided to enable full, active and conscious participation of the whole school community. For example, they participate in assemblies willingly and love to sing, they have a developing knowledge of the church year and they like their prayer areas relating them to the liturgical calendar. Pupils are reverent, commensurate with their age and are happy to participate. Class led Masses are held in school and whole school Masses take place both in school and in the parish church according to the form of celebration.

In an assembly attended, music was extremely well used both to set a prayerful mood and as a means of student participation. The use of religious icons and vocabulary was a significant strength. True awe and wonder was generated by visual examples of new life linked to the season and Easter resurrection. Incorporating parts of the Mass in assemblies provides useful learning opportunities as does the pupils greeting each other using sign language.