

Report of the Denominational (Section 48) Inspection of
Inspection was carried out under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005.

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

DFES No: 935/3310
URN: 124763

For Catholic Diocese of East Anglia



Chair of Governors: Mr Simon Millyard

Headteacher: Mrs Maria Kemble

Denominational Inspector:
Mrs Marion Betts

Associate Inspector:
Mrs Wendy Lashmar

Dates of Inspection: 9th July 2013

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DESCRIPTION OF THE SCHOOL

St Joseph's Catholic School is a small primary school for pupils from 4 to 10 years. The school will be extended to include pupils up to 11 years old in September this year. The school is within the parish of Our Lady and St John the Evangelist, Sudbury. There are 131 pupils on roll, 47% of whom are Catholic, 36% who are from other Christian faiths and 0.8% of pupils come from another world faith background. There is a wide social and economic mix of pupils within the school.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL AS A CATHOLIC SCHOOL.

Grade: 3

St Joseph's School has steadily improved over the last two years. Pupils benefit well from the richness of the Catholic life of the school and from the ethos of care and respect to all. A parent described the school as "a close family community" and a pupil explained "everyone cares for each other here". The mission statement of encouragement and support underpins the life of the school. Prayer and worship have a central role and Catholic traditions throughout the liturgical year are celebrated. The school promotes pupils' spiritual and moral development well and this is reflected in their good behaviour and positive attitudes towards learning. Classroom religious education (RE) has been identified as requiring improvement. Strategies are now in place and are beginning to have an impact on raising pupils' achievement. All staff are committed to improving their skills. The leadership of the school has a clear vision for the future and is dedicated to maintaining and developing further the school's Catholic identity; the pupils' spiritual awareness; and religious education teaching and learning. The school's capacity to go on improving is extremely good

What the school needs to do to improve further?

- Develop RE assessment procedures using the National Attainment levels to track, analyse and promote pupils' higher attainment.
- Ensure a consistency of RE marking so that pupils know what they should do to improve their work and extend their learning, and provide opportunities to make these improvements.
- Develop RE learning, relating it more closely to the ability and needs of the pupils and so ensure that the more able pupils are given appropriate challenge.
- Develop monitoring and evaluation procedures of RE and Catholic life to involve pupils' views and the more formal input of governors.

PUPILS. How good are outcomes for pupils, taking account of variations between different groups.

Grade 3

Pupils benefit well from the school's Catholic ethos. They fully understand the school's mission statement and can explain how it is seen in action in the school. Pupils can articulate how the values that they are taught impact on their lives. One example described by a pupil was that after arguments we should forgive others, and she said "because God forgives us". An Old Testament prophet is used to name each class and through researching the prophet's particular qualities pupils are encouraged to imitate these. The 5R's for learning – resilience, remembering, resourcefulness, readiness and reflectiveness also give the pupils values to emulate. Pupils willingly undertake responsibilities supporting others in

ways such as being playleaders or by raising money for charities. They understand this as their duty as Catholics. Pupils praise the friendly, caring attitude of the teachers who listen to them and encourage their learning. Their ideas are sought and acted upon. Through the School Council, they were involved in decision-making concerning the design of the new hall and playground. Their views relating to RE and Catholic life activities are not yet used as part of the school's monitoring. Pupils' achievements are recognised, praised and valued. Relationships throughout school are good and pupils appreciate the opportunities they are given to work with other children from different classes. A parent described the school as "a happy place".

All pupils respond well to worship and the prayer life of the school. They participate respectfully and with ease, and enjoy their involvement in leading Mass and class assemblies. Pupils contribute and participate in all liturgies but do not as yet have opportunities to independently plan and prepare their own class act of worship. Pupils create their own prayers as part of their RE learning. They enjoy worship especially when stories, drama and challenging questions are used to promote the theme. The presentation of "Open the Book" bible stories is particularly enjoyed. Pupils' singing and instrument playing significantly enhances worship. Worship contributes well to pupils' spiritual and moral development. The recent meditations have promoted thoughtful spiritual reflections and the follow-up painting activity has demonstrated this.

Pupils' knowledge and understanding of religious literacy and the work they produce evidence that most pupils are making satisfactory progress in religious education and achieving standards in line with national expectations. There was no evidence through observations and book scrutiny that lesson planning took into account the different RE knowledge and skills of the pupils and consequently, while some pupils struggled to achieve the tasks, others were not sufficiently challenged to promote maximum learning. Pupils' behaviour in lessons is good and they are eager to do their best. They mostly enjoy their religious education lessons especially when they work together in groups and when they are given practical tasks to consolidate learning such as drama, designing posters and singing action songs. RE helps pupils become aware of how faith affects their daily living. One pupil said "we know the right thing to do". Another example was in a lesson that linked the unjust practices of gold mine owners with ideas of what the pupils, as stewards of God's world, could do to bring about change.

LEADERS AND MANAGERS. How effective are leaders and managers in developing the Catholic life of the school?

Grade 2

The school is a welcoming and inclusive Catholic community. The headteachers and governors are deeply committed to promoting the Catholic life of the school. They have a clear vision for the Catholic ethos which inspires staff and pupils. Governors fulfil their statutory and canonical responsibilities. They are supportive, visit the school, attend services and are at an early stage of establishing plans for more formal monitoring of the school's Catholic life and religious education. Attractive displays around school and within classrooms confirm the Catholic identity. There are good links with other Catholic schools and Year 4 pupils have been part of the joint pilgrimage to Walsingham. The school is active within the local community and joins inter-denominational activities such as the celebration of "Simon of Sudbury". The school has worked in an extremely sensitive and supportive manner to help parents resolve issues connected with the Bury area school reorganisation and its implications for changes within St Joseph's. Parents appreciate their growing partnership with the school and the clear and useful regular information they receive. The school has a steady relationship with the parish with pupils welcomed each week to their

weekday Mass. Parishioners are invited to school celebrations and to special teas served by pupils.

Through lesson observation and book scrutiny the headteacher and head of school understand the school's RE strengths and areas for development. They have a clear plan for future improvements which is being put into action. Last September four out of the five class teachers were new to the school, and the majority new to teaching. They have received a thorough induction and guidance into Catholic education practices. The school's very good link with its partnership school ensures the sharing of good practice, resources and expertise, and has helped to provide rigorous training to support and encourage staff with their RE planning and teaching. Assessing RE outcomes and linking these to national expectations is at an early stage and in future data will be tracked, analysed and used in teachers' planning. The introduction of the new RE programme has enhanced teachers' subject knowledge and their confidence in its delivery.

PROVISION. How effective is the provision for Catholic education: Grade 3

Prayer and worship have a high profile within the school. The older pupils attend Mass with the parish regularly. The new hall has enriched worship by providing a sacred and adequately sized space for services and class assemblies, which can now be celebrated along with parents and parishioners. The hall space also provides opportunities to express worship in different ways, for example the Reception children danced with coloured ribbons at the Pentecost celebration. During class prayer pupils have the opportunity to pray their own intentions. Pupils are provided with a rich variety of liturgy and worship which reflects well the Church's year. There are attractive prayer tables in each classroom.

All teaching observed was sound and many features observed were good. In the most effective lessons open questioning challenged and extended pupils' thinking; motivating tasks were chosen that inspired the pupils' enthusiasm; time was given to reflect on their learning and to apply it to their own futures lives and experiences; and pupils of different abilities made progress. Visual presentation was used well especially in one class when the teaching assistant took the role of Zacchaeus during the Bible story telling. Some good marking affirming achievement and extending or questioning the learning was evidenced, but this practice was not consistent across the school. Only rarely were pupils given the opportunity to improve their work. Pupils' RE books are generally well presented with a good variety of written work evidenced.

The quality of the curriculum is sound, and suitable for the age and abilities of the learners. It fulfils the requirements of the Bishops' Conference. 10% of curriculum time is used for religious education. The RE curriculum is enhanced by Cafod projects and resources. There are plans to further enrich the pupils' RE learning opportunities and so develop their enthusiasm and interest in this subject. Scripture and liturgy are incorporated into lesson planning as exemplified by the words of the Gloria being used to illustrate praise and thanks to God. The curriculum contributes well to pupils' spiritual and moral development. For example, care of the environment in school, home and the wider world was used as a basis for poetry writing. Attractive religious education displays, often with the theme's key words, give added value to this core subject.

The inspectors wish to thank the headteacher, head of school, staff and children for their very warm welcome and for contributing to their very enjoyable and interesting visit.

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Letter to pupils explaining the findings from the Diocesan Inspection

12th July 2013

Dear Pupils

Diocesan Inspection of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Thank you for making us so welcome at your school. Thank you to all those pupils who spoke to us especially the groups from Year 3/4 and Year 5. We were very interested in your views of your school. We enjoyed being present at all your Religious Education lessons. Well done to everyone involved.

Here are some of the things we especially liked:

- The strong Catholic ethos of your school.
- You are friendly and support each other and are well cared for by your teachers.
- Your school provides very good opportunities for you to develop personally, spiritually and morally.

When marking your RE work we have asked your teachers to check that you know what you can do to extend your work and give you time to make these improvements. We have asked the teachers to ensure that the RE tasks match your different abilities. We have also asked the teachers to seek your ideas how RE lessons, assemblies and the life at your school could be made even better.

Thank you again for your help. We wish you the very best for the future,

Yours sincerely

Mrs M. Betts and Mrs W. Lashmar
Diocesan Inspectors