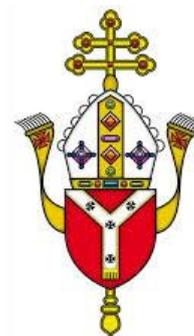


# St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Ainsdale Road, South Oxhey, Watford, WD19 7DW

Date of inspection by Westminster Diocese: 28 June 2017



## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### A. Classroom religious education is outstanding

- There are extremely well planned learning opportunities, which reflect the liturgical cycle and all aspects of the Religious Education Curriculum Directory.
- The curriculum is well planned and highly effective in developing skills, knowledge and understanding of the pupils in their religious literacy.
- From their low starting points on entry, pupils make progress which exceeds expectations and is at a rapidly increasing rate. As a result of this they achieve well above the expected attainment when compared to the national levels of attainment in religious education.
- A rich variety of resources, including ICT, and creative cross-curricular activities help pupils deepen their understanding, underpinning the theological links.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is excellent, which is instrumental in ensuring pupils make rapid and sustained progress across the phases, across all ability groups.
- The work in the books clearly demonstrates the in-depth knowledge and religious literacy that pupils are developing throughout the key phases.
- There is rigorous and robust assessment and monitoring, clearly informing actions for ongoing improvement.
- Deanery and diocesan moderation affirms the school's judgements.
- There is passionate, determined leadership which empowers all colleagues.
- All staff have high expectations and aspirations to excellence.

### B. The Catholic life of the school is outstanding

- The school fully meets the 10% of curriculum time required by the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales.
- The headteacher and her staff know, respect and exude Christ's love for all pupils and each other.
- The school provides dynamic and vibrant witness to the faith, its traditions, rituals and practice for all pupils across the phases.
- Pupils provide an outstanding contribution to the planning and delivery of an exciting range of liturgical events and collective worship.
- From the youngest age in Nursery, pupils show awe, wonder and reverence in their prayer and reflection.
- All pupils demonstrate compassion for all those in need locally, nationally and internationally.
- Empathy of other faiths is clearly evident in the respect which pupils show through their values and beliefs.
- The school community regularly celebrates the gifts and talents of the pupils in living the mission of 'loving and learning in the footsteps of Christ'.
- The governing body and the leadership regularly evaluate with rigour and challenge.
- The dynamic leadership of the headteacher, in partnership with the governing body and her leadership team, ensures that the church's mission is central in all their decision making.
- Parents relish and appreciate how the school influences the growing faith of their children.

## A. Classroom Religious Education

### What has improved since the last inspection?

The leader for religious education has developed a programme of continued professional development for all staff, including assessment training, with an emphasis on improving the quality of teaching to outstanding overall. Staff now have an improved understanding of the levels of attainment, in particular deepening their knowledge and understanding of the pupils through both AT1 (Learning about Religion) and AT 2 (Learning through Religion). This is evident in the improved levels of attainment over the past three years. This applies particularly to the most vulnerable and more able. The headteacher has also ensured through succession planning, including a religious education team, that key skills and strategies are being embedded and sustained.

### The content of classroom religious education is outstanding

The school has continued to work in close collaboration with the diocesan advisors to develop the content taught in religious education. The school ensures that the breadth from the Religious Education Curriculum Directory is succinctly mapped for all year groups. This is effectively supported through the rich range of resources, especially those for the teaching of other faiths. Religious education (RE) is resourced and funded as for other core areas. Other adults in the teaching and learning process are effectively deployed. The classroom and wider environment reflects the intrinsic value of the subject for example, the theme of the week, 'Do not be afraid' and the individual class saints, which are researched by the pupils.

### Pupil achievement in religious education is outstanding

The attainment of the pupils across the phases is similar to that of the other core areas. From their low starting points on entry, pupils make progress which exceeds expectations and is at a rapidly increasing rate. As a result of this they achieve well above the expected attainment when compared to the national levels of attainment in religious education. The cycle of monitoring checks that pupils are making very effective progress through high quality teaching and in particular through carefully planned tasks which meet the needs of the varying ability groups. Through their high expectations, the school has recognised the improvement in numbers of pupils attaining at the higher levels and have identified this as an ongoing action point; it is their challenge to sustain these high standards. The increasing number of pupils achieving the higher levels is testimony to the rigorous monitoring, evaluation and review, for example the current upper Key Stage 2 cohort from low prior attainment have rapidly progressed to 87% of pupils at the expected level in religious education by the end of Key Stage 2. The increase in the percentage of pupils exceeding expected attainment has been identified as a key priority. This attainment in religious education is on a par with and in some cases surpasses that achieved for other core subjects. The work in the books clearly demonstrates the in-depth knowledge and religious literacy that pupils are developing throughout the key phases. They are developing their religious language and vocabulary to respond to the teacher challenges and feedback, which is consolidating their learning and progress in religious education.

### The quality of teaching is outstanding

The excellent teacher subject knowledge, complemented by the very positive climate for learning and the depth of knowledge and understanding in the work in their books, indicates how the teaching influences the pupils' understanding of the centrality of their religious education in the mission of the Church. Rigorous schedules of monitoring the quality and impact of teaching and learning in RE bear testimony to the high expectations and aspirations of the staff. The other adults effectively support and empower the learning and skills in the religious literacy of the pupils, especially those with additional and some with significant additional needs. In the early years, the

children were exploring the concept of Church as a building in the community which led to a discussion on the disciples. One child asked how the '12 disciples of Jesus, could become the 28 disciples' in his class. Children are very proud of their work in early years and are eager to share how, through their own experiences, they live out the school's mission statement and have very high expectations. They appreciate how the school values their efforts through display and rewards. The work in the books and learning journals indicates the high expectations for presentation, response to the feedback from the teacher and in particular how the theological knowledge underpinning the learning is being challenged. Detailed, creative, cross-curricular and innovative lesson planning and consolidation of previous learning, contributes significantly to deepening pupils' spirituality and religious literacy. An example of this was in a Key Stage 1 class where children had to demonstrate their trust in a partner by negotiating a series of obstacles whilst being blind-folded. This active engagement is a hallmark of the creative planning which empowers pupils to move on in their learning and make the effective theological links, for example in the story of Bartimaeus.

**The effectiveness of leadership and management in promoting religious education is outstanding**

The school vision of 'love and learn in the footsteps of Christ' underpins the total dedication of the RE leader. Her enthusiasm and passion are infectious, as she inspires all in the community to excellence. She leaves no stone unturned in order to raise the status of religious education across the phases. Her relentless focus on consolidating high levels of teaching skills in religious education is reflected in the diocese identifying the school as a pilot to support their review of the assessment of religious education. Regular continuing professional development for all staff includes how the governing body is kept fully up to date on changes and reviews in the teaching, learning and assessment of religious education. The rigorous challenge set by the governing body is the focus for ongoing school improvement. The regular self-evaluation with the robust monitoring cycle ensures that the leaders are well informed in order to continually challenge any areas identified for further improvement. Regular, effective and accurate moderation, within the deanery and across the diocese, supports the professional development and subject knowledge of the staff. The leader of religious education is empowering colleagues as part of her succession planning to create effective teams to lead religious education across the phases and into the future.

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

- Continue to support the diocese as a lead school in formulating assessment without levels in religious education
- Further the opportunities for cross-curricular creativity, through planned topics within the liturgical cycle

## B. The Catholic life of the school

### What has improved since the last inspection?

There were no action points for the Catholic life of the school from the last inspection.

### The place of religious education as the core of the curriculum

**is outstanding**

The place of religious education and its related activities are central and at the heart of all aspects of school life. The school fully meets the 10% of curriculum time required by the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales. Religious education is resourced and funded as for other core areas. Religious education is not taught in isolation in this school but threads through all of the curriculum.

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

**is outstanding**

Assemblies and other acts of worships are prayerful, linked to scripture and are reflective. This was seen during the inspection when the recently appointed 'Apostles' from Year 5, supported by the headteacher, planned and led the junior assembly on the thought of the week, 'do not be afraid, the Holy Spirit will give you courage'. They were confident and inspired a real sense of awe and wonder for all present, ensuring an atmosphere of deep reverence in promoting Jesus's words, 'love one another as I have loved you'. Each class researches the lives of the saints and chooses their own patron saint and all classrooms have focused prayer tables. There is a dedicated school prayer room and also outdoor spaces for collective worship, encouraging pupils both to be reflective and to pray. There are strong links with the parish. The parish priest is a frequent and welcome visitor, supporting the pupils and the staff in preparing liturgies. He appreciates the dedication of the headteacher and staff in providing a safe haven for the pupils and through their experience and witness families are being drawn back to the parish. The pupils are offered regular opportunities to receive the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist. The school is sensitive to, and proactive in supporting and providing prayer opportunities for pupils from other traditions and beliefs. As one Year 6 pupil articulated, 'we welcome, care for and love everyone in our school.'

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

**is outstanding**

The pupils know, understand and can articulate the Gospel call to justice and service. The school is fully committed to supporting local, national and global charities including, Cafod, Rwandan Appeal, Catholic Children's Society, breast cancer charities and the local hospice. Pupils have established a School Food Bank to help local families in need. Most recently pupils responded compassionately to support the victims of the Grenfell Tower disaster. Pupils benefit from and enthusiastically engage in the numerous opportunities open to them to serve their school community and parish; these include Apostleship, School Councils, Buddy Patrol, altar serving and reading at Mass. The headteacher and staff know, respect and exude Christ's love for the pupils of all ages. This is evident in all relationships within the school community. The pupils describe their school as unique, friendly and an exciting place to learn about their Christian responsibilities. The school community regularly celebrate the gifts and talents of the pupils in living the mission of 'loving and learning in the footsteps of Christ'. Their behaviour and movement around the school are excellent. They are courteous and mannerly, exemplary ambassadors for their school.

**The partnership with parents, school and parish, and collaboration as an integral part of the diocese through its relationship with the diocesan Bishop and those acting on his behalf**

**is outstanding**

The partnerships between home, school and parish and within the diocesan and deanery family, are integral to the school's identity. Parents are enthusiastic and willing to share their appreciation of the school and how it meets the needs of their children. They spoke warmly of the support from school with tailored homework activities. Parents recognise that religious education is 'intertwined' into everyday life for their children, as described by a parent, "both my children are happy being taught religious education and enjoy talking about Jesus not only at home but with other people too". There was an overwhelmingly positive response to the parental questionnaire. The school's guidance and support for the sacramental preparation for First Holy Communion in particular, is welcomed, especially as the school works so closely in partnership with the parish. The parish priest has a regular connection to the school, supporting assemblies and visiting classes to support teaching in some. Some of the non-teaching support staff act as catechists and further develop the learning for the pupils in school. They also present creative and high quality displays, which support the consolidation of these key concepts and celebrate the learning of the pupils. Throughout the public areas and in the classroom, the learning environment has been greatly enhanced through these displays, frescoes and banners. The school is currently involved in the diocesan review of the assessment process with the advisors, to create a programme of assessment without levels in religious education.

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

**is outstanding**

The mission statement of, 'love and learn in the footsteps of Christ' is the hallmark of all that is outstanding in this school. The governing body continually reflect, challenge and review the systems and structures in a most strategic way. The dynamic leadership of the headteacher, in partnership with the governing body and her leadership team, ensures that the church's mission is central in all their decision making. The vibrancy and stimulating displays around all the public areas are a clear indicator of the centrality of Christ for all members of the community and the extremely high quality evidence of how the school expresses its Catholic identity. New staff and those new to Catholic schools are provided with a range of highly effective continuing professional development. This includes coaching and mentoring by the leader of religious education. Staff are encouraged to participate in the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies (CCRS) programme to enhance their subject knowledge, skills and understanding of the theology under-pinning all that they teach in religious education. The headteacher is passionate and committed to excellence. This is evident by the high aspirations from all staff for the pupils and children and is the driving force in their vision for discipleship for life.

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

- Widen the experience for Apostle Leadership for younger pupils across the phases
- Further develop the parental engagement in their child's learning in religious education and the Catholic Life of the school

## Information about this school

- The school is a one form entry Catholic primary school in the locality of Hertfordshire.
- The school serves the parishes of St Joseph's, South Oxhey and Carpenters Park.
- The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholic is 95.7%.
- The proportion of pupils who are from other Christian denominations is 3.5% and from other faiths is 0.8 %. The remaining pupils are from families who have not declared a faith.
- The percentage of Catholic teachers in the school is 72%.
- The number of teachers with a Catholic qualification is 2.
- There are 28% of pupils in the school with special educational needs or disabilities of whom 0.8% have statements of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)/ Education Health and Care Plans (EHCP).
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is above average.
- The number of pupils speaking English as an Additional Language is well above average.
- There is an average rate of families claiming free school meals.
- 38 pupils receive the Pupil Premium (16.4%).

<b>Department for Education Number</b>	919 3383
<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	117465
<b>Local Authority</b>	Hertfordshire

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary Aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 -11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on roll</b>	235
<b>The appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Adrian Ramsden
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Linda Payne
<b>Telephone number</b>	0208 428 5371
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.stjosephs775.herts.sch.uk">www.stjosephs775.herts.sch.uk</a>
<b>Email address</b>	head@stjoseph775.herts.sch.uk
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	30 May 2012
<b>Grades from previous inspection:</b>	
<b>Classroom religious education</b>	Very Good
<b>The Catholic life of the school</b>	Very Good

## Information about this inspection

This inspection was carried out (i) under the requirements of the Canon 806 and (ii) in accordance with the Framework for Diocesan Inspections 2015 approved by the Archbishop of Westminster and (iii) under section 48 of the Education Act 2005.

- The inspectors would like to thank the governors, headteacher, staff, pupils and parents for their co-operation over the conduct of the inspection.
- During the inspection 7 lessons or part lessons were observed.
- The inspectors attended one assembly and three of acts of worship.
- Meetings were held with school staff, pupils and governors.
- Other evidence was gathered from contacts with parents through a questionnaire, scrutiny of a sample of pupils' work, observation of pupils in and out of lessons and examination of school documents.

## Inspection Grades

- Outstanding
- Good
- Requires improvement
- Causing concern

## Inspection Team

The inspectors are appointed by the Archbishop.

Mrs Tina Cleugh	Lead Inspector
Mrs Angela Podmore	Associate Inspector
Mr Chris Cleugh	Associate Inspector
Mrs Alison Bailiss	Associate Inspector

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Vaughan House  
46 Francis Street,  
London  
SW1P 1QN

T: 020 7798 9005  
E: [education@rcdow.org.uk](mailto:education@rcdow.org.uk)  
W: <http://rcdow.org.uk/education>