



# Archdiocese of Birmingham

## INSPECTION REPORT

### ST JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL DARLASTON

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Inspection dates 28<sup>th</sup> - 29<sup>th</sup> November 2012  
Reporting Inspector Teresa Quick

Inspection carried out under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

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Type of School	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3-11 years
Number on roll	204
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governors	Mr Richard Dalton
School address	Rough Hay Road, Darlaston West Midlands, WS10 8HN
Telephone number	0121568 6496
E-mail address	knee@st-josephs.walsall.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	October 2007
DFE School number	335/3310
Unique Reference Number	104235

**Headteacher** Mr Kevin Mee

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DIOCESAN EDUCATION SERVICE



## Evidence

The inspection was carried out by 1 Diocesan Inspector. The focus of the inspection was on the effectiveness and use of the school's self evaluation of religious education (RE) and Catholic life. To validate the effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation of teaching and learning, the inspector observed 3 full RE lessons with the headteacher. In addition the inspector completed a work scrutiny and held discussions with pupils to evaluate the impact of teaching on their learning over time. She held meetings with the chair of governors, staff, and parish priest. She observed prayer services and undertook a learning walk to look at aspects of the presentation of the Catholic life of the school, and pupils' behaviour. She looked at a range of evidence related to the school's self evaluation such as RAISEonline, the development plan, teachers' planning, and learning journals. Alongside the validation of school self evaluation, the inspector gathered evidence about the leadership of religious education, evidence which will be shared with other diocesan schools.

## Information about the school

St Joseph's is an average sized Catholic primary school with its own nursery serving the parishes of St Joseph, Darlaston, and St Mary's, Willenhall, in a mixed area of council and private housing and a significant number of pupils from areas of social deprivation. The number of Catholic pupils is currently 29% which is lower than at the time of the last inspection reflecting the trend of the area. The proportion of ethnic minority pupils is 32%. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average and increasing. The numbers of pupils supported by school action is above average. The number of pupils supported at school action plus and those with a statement of special educational needs is average. Attainment on entry is lower than normally expected.

## Main Finding

In its self evaluation the school rightly judges itself to be a good Catholic school providing pupils with a well embedded Catholic life and good religious education. The senior leadership and governors have a shared vision for the school. The school continues the tradition of being a good Catholic school where all staff and governors contribute to the religious character and mission of the school. The Catholic ethos is strong. The school's evaluation of its Catholic life and spiritual, moral and vocational development as good is accurate. Teaching is good. Since the last inspection monitoring and assessment procedures have continued to develop. So too has the focus on aspects of other cultures and their faith celebrations. These were both recommended as needing attention for school improvement at the time of the last inspection. Children's knowledge and understanding of the faith is good for their age and abilities. The subject leadership is good. With their knowledge and understanding of the mission of a Catholic school and their strong commitment to the faith the leadership team gives the school good capacity to continue to raise attainment in RE. Pupils have a very positive attitude to their learning in RE. The school maintains very good links with the parish and as a member of the Darlaston collaboration of schools with the local community.

## School self evaluation

Self evaluation at St Joseph's is an accurate and realistic picture of where the school is in its Catholic life and religious education. Staff are aware of the school's present position and also the next steps towards further improvement. The school has a thorough understanding and pride in the mission of the school as part of the worldwide Church and the local church community. There is a strong commitment to raise within the children positive attitudes

towards themselves and others through a strong ethos of care and respect for all. The school has worked to achieve the recommendations made at the time of the last inspection. The school acknowledges the need to continue developing the assessment and monitoring in RE in order to impact fully upon the quality of curriculum provision. Work has been done to extend the programme of focusing on aspects of other cultures and their faith celebrations. Evidence from the teaching in RE and the Catholic life of the school is reported to governors each term. While there are no formal methods used for evaluating the Catholic life of the school, the staff have many years of service in the school and there is confidence in the capabilities of their work and the Catholic ethos they impart to the pupils. The informal monitoring and assessment of the Catholic life ensures that pupils have the skills to articulate the school's distinctive mission and can relate this to how they live out Gospel values. Through staff meetings and training all staff have an awareness and understanding of the Catholic life of the school and how other subjects contribute to it.

Collective worship is judged to be good. The subject leader works closely with the parish priest. There is Mass in school each week, teacher led assemblies and well established prayer services in which from a young age pupils are encouraged to express their own prayers of supplication and thanks as well as opportunities for their own silent prayer. There are a number of Sunday Masses attended by both staff and pupils each term. There are a variety of different Masses and liturgical services for pupils and their parents. There were excellent relationships between the teachers and the pupils in all prayer services with pupils' behaviour being outstanding.

Findings from the self evaluation are given attention. In-service provision for staff is provided by the subject leader. The whole process towards improvement comes naturally to the senior leadership team. There is a lack of formal recording of evidence and actions taken and success criteria. There is a good level of support and challenge from the governing body. The school aims to improve the Catholic life for the pupils. They want nothing but the best for the children.

The school judges the leadership of RE to be good. The subject leader encourages teachers to provide the calm, thoughtful environment for learning that is evident in the RE lessons. She leads by example. She supports teachers when necessary especially teachers new to the school. Assessments are done as end of unit and on a termly basis and monitored by both the subject leader and the headteacher. Lesson observations are part of the monitoring process of the subject. Judgements are realistic showing that there is good teaching and good teaching assistant support in RE throughout the school. Observations of teaching made during the inspection supported this evidence. There is excellent behaviour in lessons with pupils showing real interest in their learning. Pupils work well individually and collaboratively. All pupils achieve well. Tasks are varied to meet the pupils' needs. Books are monitored. There are clear links between the quantity and quality of work in English books and RE books. Differing styles of recording are evident. The curriculum covers all aspects expected of an RE curriculum in a Catholic school. It is good, broad and balanced but lacks integration. The time allocation each week for religious education meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference evidence showed that often more time will be allocated.

The school has produced a thoughtful self evaluation. The outcomes of the monitoring of lessons, the assessment of learning and the knowledge of the general Catholic life have provided the information necessary to plan future developments. The RE curriculum contributes to the pupils' spiritual, moral and vocational development which they judge to be good. Pupils are inspired to great generosity to provide for those less fortunate than themselves, in particular for the CAFOD collection.

## Overall effectiveness of the school<sup>1</sup>

This is a Catholic school where the good leadership of the headteacher and the deputy head who is also the subject leader ensures that outcomes for the pupils are above diocesan expectations. Pupils enter school with little knowledge of prayer and the life of Jesus. In Year 2 pupils are working in line with a number above diocesan expectations. Year 6 pupils are generally working at or above diocesan expectations. There is little pupil mobility in the school and pupils make consistent progress. Pupils are given the opportunity to develop mature ideas of the faith throughout their time in the school. Differing traditional prayers of the Church are taught as the pupils move through the school. Teaching provides a range of different activities that encourage enthusiasm in the pupils and help their learning. All pupils achieve well. Pupils with SEND receive very good support from the classroom assistants and their teachers so make progress in line with their peers. The response of pupils in lessons observed was generally excellent. They enjoyed what they were doing. The ethos of the school and the teaching in RE supports the good spiritual, moral and vocational development.

Overall, relationships throughout the school between teachers and pupils and amongst the pupils themselves are excellent. Pupils show respect for the other pupils, and the adults with whom they come into contact. Pupils are polite and welcoming. The approach to prayer life provided by the school is very good. All pupils prayed devoutly in the prayer services observed. A variety of liturgies take place at different times of year. In Lent pupils will visit the church for the Stations of the Cross. The school takes part in shared liturgies with the other Catholic schools in their cluster.

Provision is good. The quality of teaching is good with pupils making consistent progress as they journey through the school. Teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of the curriculum for RE. Generally the work pupils are given matches their ability and good support is provided by the teaching assistants to support the learning. There are opportunities for differing types of written work. Pupils' books are generally monitored each year in the summer term. This is too late for action to be taken to have an impact. Marking is positive but there is insufficient advice given towards further learning in RE. There is clear planning for RE and it is included in the weekly plans. Assessment data is effective but the school has as a priority the need for further development. The school uses the diocesan *Curriculum Strategy for Religious Education* as the basis for learning. The family life programme, *All that I am*, is used in Year 6. The school is becoming more culturally diverse. Pupils have an understanding of peace, tolerance and understanding. Work has been done on other faiths and the school has recently subscribed to the Wolverhampton Multi-faith Network to help it to organise trips to other places of worship. There are many informal links between RE and with other subjects. Art, music and ICT are used to support learning in RE.

## Recommendations

- Develop processes to formally evaluate the Catholic life of the school
- Ensure that all marking continues to be positive but includes areas for development in pupils' religious knowledge.
- To develop the curriculum for RE so that it becomes more cohesive and includes all elements of RE including links with other areas of the curriculum.

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<sup>1</sup> As the quality of the school self evaluation has been affirmed, the judgements in this section of the report conform to those of the school.



Diocesan Education Service,  
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November 2012

Dear Parents and Carers

**Section 48 (Diocesan) Inspection of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Darlaston  
November 2012**

I am writing this letter to share with you the findings of the diocesan inspection of your children's school. Diocesan inspection now explores in detail the school's own view of itself as expressed in its self-evaluation. For this reason, much of the report is more technical than used to be the case. You are still entitled to have a copy of the full report should you want one and it will be available on the school website or by request from the school office.

The school continues to be a good Catholic school. There is a strong Catholic ethos where every member of the school community is cared for, valued and respected. This a Catholic school where they are able to welcome children of other faiths. The pupils benefit from the good Catholic leadership of the headteacher and the deputy head and a stable staff which have ensured that all pupils and families are known. The Catholic mission underpins all the school does. There are many opportunities for them to develop their Catholic life. There has been consistently good teaching of RE over time and teachers work to provide your children with the best possible religious education. The children make good progress in their religious education. This is a harmonious community where pupils work and play well together. The teachers encourage the children to behave well both in class and around the school. The children are polite and welcoming. The governors have a good understanding of the needs of the school and are active in the support of its mission.

This is a good Catholic school and to make it even better I have recommended that the teachers develop processes to formally evaluate the Catholic life of the school and ensure that all marking continues to be positive and includes areas for development in pupils' religious knowledge. The content of the teaching is good and the curriculum is broad. I have asked the teachers to develop the curriculum for RE so that it becomes more cohesive and includes all elements of RE and links with other areas of the curriculum.

I thoroughly enjoyed my time in the school, being able to see your children at work, play and prayer. It was a privilege and pleasure to inspect your school. The children and staff made me feel most welcome. The children are a credit to the school, to their families and those who care for them.

Yours sincerely

Teresa Quick  
Diocesan Inspector



Archdiocese of Birmingham

**Diocesan Education Service**