



# Archdiocese of Birmingham

## Section 48 Monitoring Visit

### ST JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

### DROITWICH, WORCESTERSHIRE

St Joseph's Close, Ombersley Way, Droitwich, WR9 0RY

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Inspection dates 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2015  
Reporting Inspector Joseph Skivington

Monitoring 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	201
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governors	Mr Duncan Kennedy
Telephone number	01905773572
E-mail address	office@st-josephs-droitwich.worcs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	November 2010
DFE School number	116876
Unique Reference Number	885/3317
<b>Headteacher</b>	<b>Mrs Miranda Gibbs</b>
Last Inspection	1
This Inspection	1

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DIOCESAN EDUCATION SERVICE





6th November 2015

Diocesan Education Service,  
Don Bosco House,  
Coventry Road,  
Coleshill,  
B46 3EA

St Joseph's RC Primary School  
St Joseph's Close  
Ombersley Way  
Droitwich  
WR9 0RY

Dear Mrs Gibbs

### **Section 48 Monitoring inspection: 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2015**

Thank you for the welcome you, your staff and pupils gave to me when I inspected your school on the 3<sup>rd</sup> November and for the information you provided both before and during the inspection. I am grateful for the time given by all including the parish priest in speaking with me.

The inspection was a "light touch" monitoring inspection because your school was judged at the last section 48 inspection to be an outstanding school and because it is now five years or more since you last received a diocesan inspection.

The purpose of the inspection was to assess the quality of the school's self-evaluation and improvement planning for Catholic life and religious education. In order to make this judgement I read school documents, including a very detailed and summative self-evaluation, interviewed senior leaders, two governor representatives, the parish priest, the subject leader for RE, and pupils, conducted a liturgy learning walk, observed four lessons jointly with senior staff, and looked at a sample of pupils' written work. In addition, I gathered evidence of some of the outstanding practice in the school as part of a diocesan wide survey of good practice in Catholic life and religious education.

### **Catholic Life**

In its self-evaluation, St Joseph's School judges its overall effectiveness as a Catholic school to be outstanding. This appraisal is fully justified based on the evidence gathered during this light touch inspection, which validated the school's own judgement as accurate and reliable. The pupils' contribution to the Catholic life of the school, and collective worship, is outstanding, evident in their engagement with the rich opportunities for prayer and worship. For example a group of pupils in Year 6 are prayer leaders, not only organising and leading whole school assemblies, but also actively going into the younger pupils' classes to help them to develop their own skills in planning and presenting their class prayers and assemblies. This excellent practice has been observed and shared by other Catholic schools in the area. The *floor* books in each class provide extensive photographic evidence of drama, assemblies, displays and discussions, as well as evaluative comments on how these could be improved even further. The result of all this is the increasing number of pupils becoming actively involved in Catholic life and worship, and the quality of presentations being truly excellent. Class liturgies are rich, significant moments in the school day. For instance, in a Year 5 liturgy all pupils were fully involved in a stillness exercise, but were also able afterwards to express what it had meant to them. In the Reception, children quickly come to recognise special, sacred time for prayer. The high proportion of children with EAL was helped enormously by a Polish speaking teacher assistant so that they understood immediately what was going on.

Pupils' engagement also takes the form of frequent pupil audits and feedback on liturgies and assemblies, both on their own assemblies, which are excellently planned and presented, but also on those taken by staff. The growth in confidence of pupils preparing their own liturgies, from scratch, are duly documented, as well as the journey of giving ownership to the older pupils so that they are now confident in sharing what they themselves have learned. Staff are also challenged in this process to judge what they expect children



to take forward from these experiences. New and less experienced staff are supported by cluster group training for NQTs and non Catholics, plus opportunities across key stages to experience best practice. Similarly pupils are invited through questionnaires to reflect on questions such as what makes the school specifically Catholic, and how do they might know this. The answers are remarkably mature and reflective, varied and striking in their conviction. Detailed records are kept on every event and provide leadership with a very clear grasp of the impact provision is having, and how it can be improved.

Governors and senior leadership play a very hands-on part in nourishing and enabling a vibrant Catholic ethos. The governors are critical, supportive friends of the school, and detailed minutes of their meetings are strewn with examples of challenging questions which are precise and relevant: for example, pointed questions about the statements in the section 48 self evaluation form. All the processes for feedback from pupils, parents, and staff are then fed into the school improvement plan, which is very much a live, working document constantly being re-shaped and updated. The link governor for RE, in particular, is a proactive and effective animator, in monitoring and nurturing the spiritual life of the school. For instance, she will sit in on the prayer leaders' activities and provide them with written feedback and encouragement. The governors have a clear, pre-agreed programme of learning walks and provide detailed feedback to the full governing body. Both staff and pupils have the school mission statement before them every day although there has not been a formal full school mission re-energising exercise for some time. The parish priest is a welcome visitor providing Mass not only in the school, but the opportunity for groups to walk to the parish church for their own Mass one day each week, so strengthening the school-parish links. Many pupils are involved in the Sunday Mass as readers or servers. The parents' questionnaires are overwhelmingly positive, and many are actively engaged with the school: for example, the parents who run the junior SVP involve a good number of children. The parents were also fully involved in the spiritual life and RE audits, an exercise which was immensely fruitful, one impact being the prayer boxes which encourage child and family to pray together. The school has seen a number of conversions over the recent years as a result. The self evaluation processes the school has put in place are robust and reliable, but most importantly, have real impact in sustaining the continuing high quality of Catholic education- the result of its exemplary provision, practice and outcomes.

## Religious Education

The school judges provision for religious education as outstanding, including the impact of teaching, assessment, and the curriculum. The reason it knows this is because of the embedded robust processes for monitoring the quality of the impact of teaching on learning, which crucially elicits feedback from the pupils. The area for improvement at the last inspection was to improve the strategic role of the subject leader and to provide better resources: both of these targets have been successfully met. Teaching over time is consistently good with much that is outstanding. Lesson observations and work scrutiny during the inspection confirmed this judgement. The use of art and drama is a particularly fruitful strategy, as seen in the progress over time documented in the class *floor books*. As a result, the achievement of all pupils, including those with special educational needs, across both key stages, consistently meets, and for a significant number of pupils, exceeds the diocesan expectation. The evidence from lesson observations and work scrutinies amply bear this out. Pupils very readily contribute to their own learning by their real enjoyment of the subject, regardless of their faith background, and can question their teachers to get clearer answers that are relevant to their lives. This feedback in turn enables teachers to re-shape the lesson learning objectives to meet the pupils' learning needs. What was especially impressive was the fluency with which many pupils could link what they were discussing to the Jesuit virtues. As in a Year 5 lesson on helping disabled children on pilgrimage to Lourdes, one pupil was able immediately to suggest the virtues of generosity, gratitude and faith-filled. This was not an isolated example - learning *from* religion is a real strength of the RE programme.

Monitoring and assessment enables staff to review their practice and its impact. The school plans to become involved in the Catholic schools cluster moderation of progress meetings, which will hone teachers' assessment skills. Pupils receive regular feedback on their written work, although the quality of formative comment and pupil response on occasion does not always have the maximum impact it could



have. The confirmation preparation booklets provide excellent examples of reflective, mature writing by thoughtful and fluent pupils who have internalised the values inherent in the Catholic ethos of the school. These extended, and frequent, writing opportunities could involve all classes across the school. The curriculum and schemes of work are constantly being reviewed and assessed for impact, as well as meeting statutory requirements regarding content and allotted time.

St Joseph's continues to be an inspiring exemplar of an outstanding Catholic school, which has the capacity to maintain and deepen its commitment to its mission and, beyond that, to extend its influence and share with the Catholic Teachers School Alliance in particular.

Yours sincerely

Joseph Skivington  
Diocesan Inspector