

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Dobbin Close, Harrow HA37LP

Date of inspection by Westminster Diocese: 5 October 2018



Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

A. Classroom religious education is good

- Religious education lessons are closely mapped to the Religious Education Curriculum Directory.
- Staff create a positive and nurturing climate for learning for all pupils.
- Pupils are keen and eager to learn.
- Pupil attainment is generally in line with other core subjects.
- Teaching is good with examples of outstanding practice throughout the school.
- Pupils in Early Years Foundation Stage receive a strong foundation for developing their religious literacy.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and or disabilities are well supported and make good progress.
- Pupil behaviour and attitudes to learning are outstanding.
- Displays around the school are of a high quality, linking class work and homework.
- The newly appointed headteacher, along with his very experienced deputy and religious education leader have the vision and drive to move the school to outstanding.
- The school's self-evaluation is accurate and used honestly to help improve all aspects of school life.

Classroom religious education is not yet outstanding because

- The curriculum lacks the creativity needed to ensure that all pupils make rapid and sustained progress.
- The standard of presentation in pupil books needs further development.

B. The Catholic life of the school is outstanding

- Religious education receives its full allocation of 10% taught time at each key stage as required by the Bishops of England and Wales.
- The school's motto 'At St Joseph's we love, learn and live by the example of Jesus Christ' permeates life at this school.
- The newly appointed headteacher is making a very positive impact and is a visible and energising presence for parents, staff and pupils.
- The very experienced religious education leader is a driving force in the school's commitment to educate its pupils.
- Religious education is at the heart of the school and its curriculum.
- The pupils are excellent ambassadors for their school and are proud to talk about it to visitors.
- Pupils' spiritual and moral development is carefully fostered in this school.
- The school provides excellent opportunities for pupils to develop their call to serve others, through their involvement in a wide range of activities and events.
- Worship and prayer are central to the life of the school and underpin its vision, ethos and commitment to its Catholic faith
- School leaders share a commitment to the provision of prayer and worship across the school.
- Governors are actively engaged in promoting the Catholic life of the school and are committed to continuous improvement.
- Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. One parent said, 'I feel lucky to be part of this school.'

A. Classroom Religious Education

What has improved since the last inspection?

Staff are now confident at levelling pupils work and moderating across phase groups. Planning ensures that higher order questioning is used in lessons to accelerate learning of all pupils, in particular the more able. Staff have taken full advantage of continuing professional development opportunities led by the religious education (RE) leader to improve their practice.

The content of classroom religious education is good

The content of curriculum fully meets all the requirements of the Religious Education Curriculum Directory (RECD). All four areas of the RECD are effectively mapped across the key stages. In addition to a published scheme, the school uses other resources to enhance the learning of the pupils and develop further aspects of Catholic Social Teaching. The use of Bibles in classes was a strength in both the pupils' familiarity with looking up passages and in their knowledge of a number of texts. There is good evidence of the transfer of literacy skills to writing in religious education. Pupils are provided with good feedback and use this opportunity to further improve their work. Pupils can make very good links from their previous and current in-class learning to their daily lives. In a Year 6 class pupils were able to make links about monotheism and other world faiths they had previously studied.

Pupil achievement in religious education is good

Pupils' attainment in RE is good. Pupils make good progress over the key stages and attainment in RE is in-line with that of other core subjects. Moderation both internally and with local deanery schools and at diocesan level helps to benchmark these judgements. Pupils show good religious literacy skills and are able to use language helped by the driver words in their own prayers and conversations. Pupils say that they enjoy their lessons. In the best lessons, pupils are given work well matched to their ability, taking their knowledge and extending it through careful higher order questioning. In a Year 5 class pupils were able to explain how they responded to feedback from their teachers. They could clearly demonstrate examples in their work where they had responded to feedback and edited their work. Pupils' attitude to learning is outstanding and this was evident in class discussions seen during the inspection.

The quality of teaching is good

Teaching is good, and in some cases outstanding, leading to pupils achieving well over their time at St Joseph's. Teachers displayed good subject knowledge and have very strong relationships with the children. A Year 6 pupil said, 'I love RE lessons because I learn more about my faith and how to follow Jesus. The teacher makes lessons interesting and fun.' There is a good level of challenge in most lessons and the pupils are supported or challenged appropriately. In the best lessons there was evidence of higher order questioning which extended pupils' understanding more fully and gave them more opportunities to make rapid progress. Classroom displays and vocabulary supports pupil learning in and around the classrooms. Teaching lacked creativity and excitement in some classes and the new headteacher has plans to make RE lessons more creative. Pupils told the inspectors that they enjoyed the recent homework task about what the school mission statement meant to them and that they could present this in any format. One pupil said, 'I drew a tree; God was the roots, the teachers were the trunk, the pupils were the branches and on each leaf I wrote about the Church.' In the best examples of marking in books, pupils were challenged to think more deeply and they responded positively to the next steps provided. Pupils who have special educational needs and or disabilities are well supported through the careful deployment of support staff across the school. The presentation of work in pupil books was noted as an area for development.

The effectiveness of leadership and management in promoting religious education is good

The very experienced RE leader, along with the newly appointed headteacher, provide strong leadership of religious education with a clear vision which is shared by all the staff and which places religious education at the very heart of the school curriculum. The vision and commitment of the RE leader to the school's role in the Church's mission is evident in all aspects of her role and in the influence religious education has in the school. There is a programme of monitoring in place, which supports staff in the delivery of classroom religious education, identifying those that need additional support or who are new to the school or Catholic education. It ensures that all staff are developed to deliver the curriculum, employing in-house continuing professional development along with that delivered by the diocese. There is a good relationship with other schools in the deanery, both primary and secondary and the school takes part in regular cross-school and cross-phase moderation in order to validate their own judgements.

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

- Introduce a more creative approach to the teaching of RE to ensure that all pupils make rapid and sustained progress.
- Review the expectations for written work and recording in RE books.

B. The Catholic life of the school

What has improved since the last inspection?

Pupils are now confident to plan and prepare acts of worship across the school at age appropriate levels.

The place of religious education as the core of the curriculum

is outstanding

Religious education receives its full allocation of 10% of taught time at each key stage, as required by the Bishops' Conference. The newly appointed headteacher, senior staff and governors ensure that religious education is at the heart of the school. The school community does its best to live out its mission statement of "At St Joseph's we love, learn and live by the example of Jesus Christ".

The budget allocated to religious education is similar to that of other core subjects. All classrooms have prayer tables of a very high quality. Displays and religious artefacts in corridors and around the school demonstrate children's experiences and enhance the Catholic ethos of the school. The very experienced subject leader is supported well by the headteacher and governors and highly regarded within the school community. Governors play an active part in the Catholic life of the school.

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

is outstanding

Catholic worship and prayer are outstanding in this school. The pupils get an excellent introduction to the prayer life of the Church in their time at this school. They are given many opportunities to compose their own liturgies, prayers and intentions and record them in a variety of formats. All pupils at the school have a 'St Joseph's Prayer Book'. Windows and boards around the school display many examples of pupil prayer. This is an area of strength in the school. Pupils are immediately introduced to the prayer life of the school in the Reception class. The assistant priest is a regular and welcome visitor at the school and supports the 'Pupil Chaplains' in teaching the younger pupils the rosary. The new headteacher has revised assemblies in the school and ensured that all pupils have weekly hymn practice. All classes have a prayer corner and display board set aside with liturgical colours and appropriate vocabulary. There is a peace garden in the playground where pupils are allowed to spend quiet time and it is often used for prayer services and liturgies. The school also has a prayer room dedicated to a previous headteacher. Mass is held in the school hall and there are plans to ensure that the school visit the church more regularly to celebrate Mass. Displays around the school are of a high standard and are often used to aid prayer and worship. The school works hard to ensure that non-Catholic pupils and staff feel included in all aspects of the prayer life of the school.

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

is outstanding

The overall commitment and contribution to the Common Good and social justice are outstanding. Pupils are extremely proud of their school and are articulate in their description of their responsibility to the wider community. The newly appointed Pupil Chaplains spoke with pride about their work supporting Cafod, Catholic Children's Society, St Luke's Hospice, Samaritan's Purse, Caritas and Ali's Dream. Pupils were able to share the theology that underpinned their actions by telling inspectors that, 'Jesus said that we are all equal and we should love one another.' Another pupil said, 'whatever you do to the least of my brothers, you do unto me.' On the day of the inspection pupils were all dressed in bright clothes, as it was Cafod's, 'Brighten up for Harvest day.' Behaviour in classes, across the school and in the playground is outstanding; pupils are well

mannered, articulate, confident and proud of their school. 'Pupil Chaplains', 'Mini Vinnies' and Caritas ambassadors all have varying roles in the school and thoroughly understand they are called to serve. Pupils are happy and flourish at St Joseph's. Their spiritual, moral and social development is supported very well so that they thrive in all aspects of their learning and development.

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 school works in close partnership with the Diocese of Westminster and the local parishes and community. The assistant priest is a regular visitor to the school and celebrates class and whole school Masses. There are plans for pupils to walk to the church on a more regular basis. Relationships within the school are outstanding and parents who were spoken to, and the very high number who returned the questionnaire, were overwhelmingly supportive of the school and its work. Children are prepared for their First Communion in the parish and the school celebrates this sacramental milestone in the school strengthening the link between parish, school and parents. The school participates fully in all diocesan activities and regularly attends both deanery and diocesan moderation of pupils' work. Senior leaders attend diocesan conferences and courses. The school website contains limited information about the RE curriculum and Catholic life of the school and this is an area for development to ensure that the outstanding work of this Catholic school is shared and celebrated with the wider community. It is to be noted that the newly appointed headteacher has already seen this as a priority.

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

is outstanding

The leadership and management are outstanding in promoting the Catholic life of the school. The RE leader is fully committed to ensuring that religious education is planned for, delivered and carefully monitored ensuring good teaching and learning producing religiously literate pupils. She provides support through coaching and mentoring, especially for non-Catholic colleagues and those new to teaching or new to working in a Catholic school. Opportunities for prayer and reflection are equal to opportunities for the call to serve. The governing body has a strong commitment to the Catholic life of the school. Governors are committed and conscientious in their role. They know their school well and play an active part in the school community. The school's mission statement is at the heart of all their work and influences decisions and policy making.

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

- Further develop links with parents by regularly seeking their views and fostering an even stronger partnership.
- Develop the school website to reflect the work of this outstanding Catholic school.

Information about this school

- The school is a two-form form entry Catholic primary school in the locality of Harrow.
- The school serves the parishes of St Joseph's, Wealdstone, St William of York, Stanmore and All Saints, Kenton.
- The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholic is 90%.
- The proportion of pupils who are from other Christian denominations is 8% and from other faiths is 1.2%. The remaining pupils are from families who have not declared a faith.
- The percentage of Catholic teachers in the school is 88%.
- The number of teachers with a Catholic qualification is 4.
- There are 8% of pupils in the school with special educational needs or disabilities of whom 9 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 a below average rate of families claiming free school meals.
- 42 pupils receive the Pupil Premium (10%).

Department for Education Number	310 3507
Unique Reference Number	102233
Local Authority	Harrow

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils	3 -11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on roll	420
The appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Brendan Byrne
Headteacher	Mr Christopher Briggs
Telephone number	020 8863 8531
Website	www.stjosephs.harrow.sch.uk
Email address	office@stjosephs.harrow.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	9 May 2014
Grades from previous inspection:	
Classroom religious education	Good
The Catholic life of the school	Outstanding

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 15 lessons or part lessons were observed.
- The inspectors attended 3 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 Ann Staunton

Lead Inspector

Mrs Margaret Hanley

Associate Inspector

Ms Angela Dodd

Associate Inspector

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Vaughan House
46 Francis Street,
London
SW1P 1QN

T: 020 7798 9005

E: education@rcdow.org.uk

W: <http://rcdow.org.uk/education>