



Archdiocese of Birmingham

INSPECTION REPORT

ST JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL MALVERN

Inspection dates	1 st – 2 nd December 2011
Reporting Inspector	Brenda Beale

Inspection carried out under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

Type of School	Primary
Age range of pupils	4 - 11 years
Number on roll	129
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governors	Rev Mgr Patrick Kilgarriff
School address	Newtown Rd Malvern Worcestershire WR14 1PF
Telephone number	01684 573016
E-mail address	head@stjoesmalvern.worcs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	June 2009
DFE School Number	885 3358
Unique Reference Number	116901

Headteacher	Mrs Ann Marie Wallbank
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one Diocesan Inspector. The inspector visited three full religious education (RE) lessons to observe teaching and learning and pupils' behaviour, and held meetings with governors, staff, and groups of pupils. She observed the school's work, including two assemblies and looked at a range of evidence, including key documentation such as the school's development plan, monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning in RE, and pupils' work.

Information about the school

St Joseph's is a smaller than average size primary school situated next to the church in the parish of St Joseph near the town centre of Malvern. Of the 129 pupils 44% are Catholic. There are a growing number of pupils from other faiths and denominations. Most of the Catholic pupils come from the parish of St Joseph but a few come from a nearby parish. Most pupils are white British with an increasing number of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, though the number is still below the national average. The proportion of pupils with special needs or disabilities is slightly above the national average.

Overall effectiveness of the school as a Catholic school

In respect of its Catholic life and religious education St Joseph's is a good school. It is going through a period of change; the deputy head has recently been promoted to headship in another school, three new teachers have been appointed, and there is an acting assistant head. Despite these changes the school maintains its strong Catholic ethos; this is upheld by the headteacher who is fully committed to the moral and spiritual development of the pupils and the promotion of the Catholic faith. Pupils behave well and fully participate in the worship and Catholic life of the school. They achieve well in RE because they receive consistently good teaching in this subject. Newly qualified and non-Catholic teachers are supported in their delivery of the curriculum and practice of the Faith by the headteacher who is also the subject leader. She is ably assisted in her work by a skilled parish priest who is deeply committed to the Church's mission in education.

This is a happy school where all children thrive, particularly those with emotional and behavioural problems. Their behaviour is extremely well managed and they feel secure and well cared for enabling all pupils to make good progress and achieve well in RE. A recent parent survey indicates a high level of approval and support for the school and its work.

Since the last inspection much work has been done on the area identified as needing development. The school was asked to enable the pupils to have a greater understanding of the differing faiths within the country. This now part of the curriculum and is also addressed through the worship life of the school. Good resources are provided and visits, speakers and events enhance this aspect of the curriculum. The school's capacity to improve further is good. The pupils are proud of the Catholic tradition of their school. Morale is high throughout the whole school community. Young and enthusiastic members of staff, striving for improvement, are aided in their endeavours by the experienced skilled headteacher and other longstanding members of staff. The parish priest, also acting chair of governors, is a great support to the headteacher and her staff both in the worship life of the school and RE. He takes an active role in the teaching of RE and his presence is greatly welcomed by both pupils and staff.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that all newly qualified and non-Catholic staff are fully trained on all aspects of the RE scheme, assessment procedures and the Catholic life of the school.
- Re-embed all systems of monitoring and evaluation following recent staff changes and ensure that key areas identified in current plan are fully implemented.

How good outcomes are for individuals and groups of pupils

Pupils' progress is good and they achieve well. Baseline assessment in the Reception Class indicates that many of children enter the school with limited or no knowledge and understanding of God, the scriptures, the Church and its teachings. Most groups of children make good or better progress. Behaviour management is good thus facilitating good opportunities for learning. The pupils are keen and willing to learn not only from their teachers and other adults but also from each other. They seek to produce their best work and are rewarded for doing so. They are enthusiastic and enjoy their lessons.

The quality of learning and progress for pupils with particular learning needs/disabilities is strength of the school. The school is particularly successful with pupils who have emotional and behavioural problems. It is very heartening to see a community fully living out Christ's commands and caring for the most vulnerable of its members so effectively. It is acknowledged in the school that these pupils are often more open and sensitive to the teachings of Jesus. All pupils are able to concentrate and become fully involved in their learning as a result of good behaviour management. Vulnerable pupils feel safe and are able to take risks and feel confident that they are cared for and respected. Hence progress in RE is enhanced for these pupils and matches that of their peers.

Standards of attainment in RE are generally in line with national expectations and in some case well above average. By the end of Year 6 pupils can talk with enthusiasm and a sound knowledge about the Bible, its structure and content. They have a good knowledge of Bible stories and their meaning, the Sacraments, signs and symbols, the liturgical year and its related colours and what it means to live a Christian life. Work in pupils' books is good both in quality and quantity. It is pleasing to see that pupils are attaining well not only in their knowledge and understanding of religion (AT1) but also their ability to reflect on meaning (AT2) in all key stages. By the end of Key Stage 1, Year 2 pupils are able to talk about the Bible and its structure and they know several stories from both Testaments and are able to relate them to their own lives. They can talk about Baptism and they have an appropriate knowledge of the liturgical year and are able to talk about prayer and recite several formal prayers they use frequently in their daily lives. They understand the symbolism of the Advent wreath and why we have candles, crucifixes and statues.

Pupils' contribution to and participation in the Catholic life of the school is outstanding. Pupils take on responsibilities and participate constructively in the Catholic life of the school beyond routine lessons and activities including self-evaluation of their Catholic education. Pupils research charitable causes and undertake fundraising activities to help those less fortunate than themselves. Older pupils take turns to serve the weekly Mass and show great enthusiasm to have their turn. They are reflective and enquiring; the parish priest is impressed by the questions asked by pupils during his visits to school. They generate their own questions in preparation for learning as seen in an informal observation by the headteacher of Year 4 pupils preparing to meet the parish priest to learn about his recent visit to Africa. They show interest in the religious life of others and they show care and respect for religious objects in the school. Artefacts around the school are treated with care and often prompt questions by pupils. They understand the importance of key celebrations in school throughout the liturgical year and in the parish community. They are secure and ready to express their own views and beliefs. They are considerate to others and caring to anyone in apparent need. They show an understanding of the need to forgive, be forgiven and have a good understanding of right and wrong.

Pupils' response and participation to collective worship is excellent. Involvement in activities for Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter, and Pentecost is high and enthusiastic. Children prepare the hall for school assembly and take responsibility for an appropriate colour cloth and suitable artefacts. They respond well in school assemblies and Masses: they are reverent and respectful, have a good knowledge and understanding of the scriptures and its meaning. During assemblies and classroom prayers they demonstrate that they are skilled at quiet reflection and prayer. They are enthusiastic singers and know a wide variety of hymns. They take responsibility within school assemblies through readings, drama and managing rituals such as candles and altar preparation. They have a very good understanding of the religious seasons and feasts and are becoming skilled in the use of scripture, religious artefacts, hymns and other forms of prayer. They are at ease when praying with

their school community and appreciate what is taking place. They have a very good understanding of prayer. This can be seen in their diverse responses to bidding prayers at weekly Mass and the use of pupils' own prayers in services and opportunities for reflection. They make appropriate use of the chaplaincy and respond well to its activities; they fully appreciate the parish priest's contribution to the worship life of the school.

How effective leaders and managers are in developing the Catholic life of the school

Monitoring and evaluation of provision for and outcomes from the Catholic life of the school and planning and implementing improvements are good. The school improvement plan clearly identifies areas of focus and is founded on thorough monitoring and evaluation procedures. Whole staff shared training, implemented and delivered by the by the headteacher and parish priest, on Catholic ethos has impacted favourably on the day to day involvement of all staff in promoting and supporting the Catholic ethos. Staff meetings always begin with a prayer and an opportunity for quiet reflection. Children are encouraged to participate enthusiastically in collective worship, charity work and to enjoy their RE teaching. Non-Catholic staff participate fully in the parish based sacramental programme. Non-Catholic members of staff have been enabled to undertake and share the responsibility for both Catholic life and religious education. The way in which leaders and monitor and evaluate the provision for religious education and plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils is also good. This is accomplished by staff meeting together to moderate work. Books are scrutinised by the headteacher in her role as subject leader. She also closely scrutinises assessment information and carries out observations of RE lessons. Learning walks and audits are part of the monitoring process which leads to well focused plans.

The governing body has the expertise to meet the school's needs and is influential in determining the direction of the Catholic life of the school. Governors discharge their statutory and canonical duties effectively. Frequent visits to classrooms by the acting chair of governors provides good knowledge and awareness of how school is performing. His relationship with the headteacher is constructive and he and the other governors show determination in challenging and supporting the school in tackling weaknesses and so bringing about necessary improvements. Governors are fully aware of the views of the pupils and parents and seek to act upon them.

The way in which leaders promote community cohesion through the Catholic life and the Religious Education curriculum is good. There is a common sense of belonging. All pupils feel part of the community. There are strong partnerships between different classes over shared activities, for example Year 5/6 pupils act as reading buddies for the Reception class. ECO school activities demonstrate a great love and care for the created world. The school was awarded a Green Flag and a Heart of England in Bloom Award in 2010. Leaders respect difference, value diversity and ensure equal opportunities for all. This is evident in curriculum planning and the support provided for diverse needs. Pupils respond well to the school's teaching about and support for charities; for example, fundraising for CAFOD, the poppy appeal, and emergency appeals for Haiti and Pakistan. A *singathon* for parish debt raised good sums of money from activities entirely organised and run by the children. Pupils are equipped with skills, which enable them to take a full and active part in their neighbourhood and develop relationships with people from different backgrounds. Parents with different backgrounds are involved as fully as possible in the life of the school; for example some have organised celebrations for the Chinese New Year and have led Bollywood dancing sessions. Curriculum provision is made for teaching of major world religions and cultures including Islam, Judaism and Sikhism. The parents are informed by regular news letters and there is an active PTA

The quality of the school's work in providing Catholic education

The provision for religious education at Joseph's is good. Teaching observed during inspection was predominantly good with some outstanding aspects. Teaching is regularly monitored and any that is less than good is known to leadership and strategies put in place to ensure the best possible outcomes for pupils. Teachers' subject knowledge is secure and enhanced by the support offered

by both the subject leader and parish priest. Lessons are interesting and motivating. A variety of tasks and activities keep pupils engaged and ensure good progress is made in lessons. Writing matches the quality found in literacy books. The children's outstanding behaviour promotes good quality learning. Resources are good; some lovely historical paintings of the wise and foolish bridesmaids were being used in a Year 5/6 lesson. Resources have been enhanced by the recent purchase of sets of Bibles. Assessment is thorough and clear informative records are kept. During lessons teachers use a range of strategies to gauge pupil understanding and teachers adjust their plans accordingly to further develop learning

The time allocation for RE meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference and the curriculum fulfils the *Curriculum Directory for Religious Education*. The pupils follow the diocesan *Curriculum Strategy for Religious Education, Living and Growing as the People of God*. The scheme is tailored to meet the needs of mixed age groups. The curriculum is greatly enriched by the excellent quality of the school's worship. Assemblies and Masses based on the liturgical year do much to deepen children's knowledge. The parish based Sacramental programme further enriches the curriculum. The *Wednesday Word* is used as an effective teaching aid. The parish priest is a frequent visitor to the classroom and the children generate their own questions in order to extend their knowledge and understanding. The children learn about other faiths and cultures across the curriculum and in RE in particular. They are encouraged to recognise similarities and respect differences. The school has strong links with other Christian churches; a recent visit was made to Holly Mount Church helping the children to share an understanding of prayer and the Bible. Family life and sex education is delivered as a formal programme to Years 5 and 6; the diocesan *All that I am* scheme is used.

The provision of collective worship is very good. Weekly and special Masses, assemblies and liturgies are carefully planned around the seasons of the Church, saints' days and the curriculum. Frequent opportunities are provided for communal and private prayer for both children and staff. Reflection is a strong feature of the prayer life of the school. Music and candles are used to create a calm peaceful atmosphere which is particularly important to those children experiencing emotional challenge in their life. Each classroom has an attractive prayer focus and the displays relating to the Catholic life of the school are plentiful and of the highest quality. There are many good quality religious pictures and artefacts around the school which do much to enhance the worship and prayer life of the school. The children are familiar with a wide repertoire of hymns and range of prayers.