



INSPECTION REPORT

SAINT JOSEPH'S ROMAN CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

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DfES Number:

Headteacher: Mr D Whyte

Chair of Governors: Mr Ian Crossland

Canonical Inspection under Canon 806 on behalf of the Diocese of Clifton
and inspection of Denominational Education under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

Date of inspection: 7 June 2007

Date of previous inspection:

Reporting Inspector: Mrs A Fowler

Description of School

Saint Joseph's is a smaller than average sized primary school serving the rural parish of Dursley. Approximately 51% of the pupils are baptised Catholics. Children's ability on intake is broadly in line with average and the proportion of children with special education needs is also broadly average. Although the main parish church in Dursley is a considerable distance from the school the church in Nympsfield itself, which is a Mass centre served from Dursley, is close by and there is a Marist convent next to the school. The school receives good support from both the convent and the parish.

The school runs a pre-school club from 8 am and an out of school club until 6 pm.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1: Outstanding; Grade 2: Good; Grade 3: Satisfactory; Grade 4: Unsatisfactory

Overall effectiveness of this Catholic school

Saint Joseph's is a good school with some excellent features. The leadership of the school promotes the Catholic ethos of the school and sees this as central to the school's identity. Parents value the school constantly citing its caring approach, safe environment and its commitment to bringing out the potential of each child. Pupils themselves appreciate this; one pupil saying "it helps you see who you are and make the most of your abilities". The school's web site is one of the best of its kind with a separate interface for pupils and the ability to be accessed in different languages. This enhances the school's communication with parents and reinforces the inclusive nature of the school. Provision for religious education is good with standards broadly in line with expectation; the quality of teaching and learning is good, as is the leadership of the subject. The quality of collective worship is a strength of the school and pupils are given a variety of opportunities to develop their prayer life.

The curriculum makes a good contribution to the spiritual and moral development of pupils and even the youngest of pupils is able to make a contribution to the life of the school through the school council. Older pupils demonstrate a sense of responsibility and concern for the welfare of young pupils.

Grade 2

Improvement since the last inspection

All issues have been addressed.

Grade 2

The capacity of the school community to improve and develop

The school has a good capacity to improve. Strategies are already in place to raise standards and the school is committed to this. The morale in the school is high and the school enjoys the support of both parents and governors.

Grade 2

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop techniques for raising the standard of written work in RE so that it accurately reflects the high standards pupils reach in their oral work.
- Develop a programme of assessment for learning to help pupils improve their own work.
- Continue to develop the good standard of collective worship by placing more responsibility for this in the hands of pupils.

The Catholic Life of the School

Leadership and Management

The quality of the leadership in developing the Catholic life of the school is good. All staff are fully committed to supporting, promoting and developing the Catholic ethos and give excellent witness to pupils. Governors visit the school regularly. Inset is provided to help develop the life of the school and policy documents are driven by the school's mission statement. The head evaluates the Catholic life of the school through observation, monitoring of books and through formal and informal discussions with staff, parents and pupils. Parents are kept fully informed about the life of the school and the school is to be commended for its website which is an extremely useful tool. There are close links between the school, the parish and the convent. The priest visits the school on a regular basis and the school makes use of both the convent buildings and the church in Nympsfield. The school has a number of Anglican pupils attending and has forged links in a variety of ways with the local Anglican community.

The school works to support a number of charities including CAFOD, Winston Wish and the Stroke Association. This aspect of school life is strongly encouraged by the leadership.

Recent developments have meant that assessment data on standards in RE is now being collected. This is beginning to be used in planning and should enable the school to make more effective judgements about their value added date.

Grade 2

Collective Worship

The quality of provision for prayer and collective worship is excellent. There are opportunities for both formal and informal prayers built into the school day. During the inspection Year 5 pupils took part in a meditation and demonstrated a very mature approach. Pupils themselves commented on how they valued their circle prayer time. All pupils from reception are

encouraged to behave respectfully and to learn basic prayers including a morning offering which the whole school says daily. In year 3 pupils are presented with a prayer book which is theirs to keep and this further enhances the quality of prayer.

The liturgical life is well planned with themes incorporated from both the 'Here I Am' syllabus and the church's liturgical year. Mass is celebrated on a regular basis and use is made of both the convent and the church. Parents are encouraged to attend specific events like the Easter assembly.

In class pupils share their own prayers and thoughts and the school makes use of dance, drama, music and art to enhance the quality of the prayer life. At the assembly observed pupils' took part in drama about the last supper; this was then used to make links between the life of Jesus and pupils about to make their First Holy Communion. A number of pupils supported the assembly by playing in the music group which was of a very high standard. Frequent visits by the parish priest mean the pupils have the opportunity to share in the sacramental life of the church and the local Anglican priests visit the school to take part in assembly. Parents are kept informed of what special events are taking place through a termly newsletter and through the website. All classrooms have a prayer area. Through the prayer life of the school pupils are reminded of the connection between faith and life, they are encouraged to follow the example of Jesus in respecting and caring for each other and the effects of this are seen in the generally good behaviour of the pupils and the concern they show for others.

Grade 1

Religious Education

Achievement and Standards in Religious Education

Pupils' oral standards exceed those demonstrated in their written work. Discussions with pupils show that in most cases they have a sound grasp of their work. Written tasks are not always sufficiently differentiated and in some cases fail to challenge the most able. In the lessons observed pupils behaved well and showed responsibility for other pupils in, for example, paired and group work. Older pupils were able to use Bible referencing skills, compose their own prayers and describe significant events in the life of Jesus.

Grade 3

Teaching and learning in Religious Education

Good teaching observed during the inspection was characterised by challenging questions, well planned lessons and high expectations. A lesson observed with years 1 and 2 pupils involved playing a game at the start of the lesson which was 'fixed' to allow the teacher to win. Even the youngest of the pupils was able to say why they thought rules were important and reflect on why we had rules and what would happen if we didn't.

Within the classroom pupils are encouraged to be reflective and to share their opinions. Behaviour management is good. Assessment techniques have recently been introduced which should help with the planning of lessons. Marking generally does not help pupils improve their work and there is a need to develop assessment for learning techniques.

Grade 2

Quality of the Curriculum

The curriculum follows the approved Diocesan scheme of work and receives the required amount of curriculum time. Relationship education is well established in the school. Staff are confident in its delivery and it follows the recommended Diocesan syllabus. The teaching of other faiths is delivered largely through topic work, with pupils able to talk confidently about their visit to a Hindu temple. ICT facilities are available and are being integrated into lesson planning. The curriculum is enriched by activities and projects to encourage community cohesion.

Grade 2

Leadership and management of Religious Education

The quality of leadership and management is good. The subject coordinator supports staff well. Evaluation and monitoring procedures are carried out including book trawls and lesson observations. Resources are adequate and well managed. Pupils are encouraged to be creative and produce resources for RE in the form of banners and displays. Assessment techniques in RE have been introduced but they need now to be more rigorous and assessment for learning introduced so that all pupils can reach their full potential.

The leadership of the school is committed to supporting the development of RE and has encouraged staff to attend various Diocesan courses.

Grade 2