



INSPECTION REPORT

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Holloway Hill, Malmesbury, Wiltshire SN16 9BB

Telephone: 01666 822331

Unique Reference Number: 126424

Headteacher: Mr Anthony McAteer

Chair of Governors: Mrs Janine Birkin-Hewitt

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: 6th-7th March 2008

Date of previous inspection: 6th-7th February 2002

Reporting Inspector: Mr Frank Toner

Description of the School

St Joseph's is a voluntary aided school serving the parish of St Aldhelm's, Malmesbury. There are 108 pupils on role of which 62% are Catholics. Pupils' attainment on entry is above the national average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is below average. The proportion of pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds is also below average. The school has excellent links with the local parish and community.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1: Outstanding

Grade 2: Good

Grade 3: Satisfactory

Grade 4: Unsatisfactory

Overall effectiveness of this Catholic school

The school is good with many outstanding features. It has a very strong Catholic ethos with the spiritual and moral development of pupils a particular strength. The head teacher has an unequivocal commitment to the Catholic foundation of the school and the initiatives he has introduced have had a positive impact. The curriculum in religious education is well planned and standards of achievement are good. The school is inclusive and welcoming. Pupils enjoy being members of the school community.

Grade: 2

Improvement since the last inspection

The school has made continued progress since the last inspection. The Improvement Plan is thorough and identifies appropriate areas for development. The mission statement has been subject to review by staff and governors. There are well planned monitoring and evaluation procedures for RE. End of unit assessments are in place and pupil attainment levels have been recently introduced. Further development of assessment procedures is a priority for the school. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported. Links with parents, parish and the wider community are excellent.

Grade: 2

Capacity of the school to improve and develop

The head teacher, who has been in post for two years, provides a strong sense of purpose to the school. Staff and governors share in promoting Christian values and continued development of the school's Catholic ethos. The school has undertaken a thorough evaluation of its strengths and areas for improvement. Pupils make good progress as a result of the policies and procedures introduced.

Grade: 2

What the school should do to improve further

- Identify one staff training day each year to focus on the Catholic life of the school
- To share with pupils information on the standards at which they are working and on how they can move to the next level.
- To provide more opportunities for pupils to extend and develop written work in religious education.
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The Catholic Life of the School

Leadership and Management

The leadership of the Catholic life of the school is outstanding. The educational mission of the church in the school is given clear direction by the head teacher. The governors make a significant contribution by providing both support and challenge to the head teacher. The parish priest of St Aldhelm's is the RE link governor and a regular visitor to the school. The Catholic nature of the school is central to policies and decisions made by the school leaders and contribute to the positive attitudes and excellent behaviour of the pupils. Induction of new teachers is undertaken by the head teacher.

Grade: 1

The Prayer Life of the School

Prayer is central to the life of the school. Class prayers are said twice a day and whole school assemblies three times a week linked to the "Here I Am" programme. Some assemblies are undertaken and delivered by the pupils themselves. These are lively, vibrant and of an outstanding quality, reflecting thoughtful planning and thorough preparation. Mass is celebrated weekly at the parish church. Pupils know formal prayers and respond reverently to all

act of worship in which they actively participate. The school mission statement has been set to music and is sung with gusto when the school meets for prayer. The liturgical calendar is well planned. The prayer life of the school makes an excellent contribution to the spiritual and moral development of pupils.

Grade: 1

Community Cohesion

Community cohesion is a strength of the school. The leadership has made considerable efforts in recent years in looking beyond the classroom in serving the common good and enhancing the quality of provision for pupils. In addition to involvement in charities, the school is committed to the Global Connect project which gives pupils awareness of the needs of other communities. Through the British Council, the school has links with schools in Uganda and Zimbabwe. During the inspection, a teacher was about to embark on a visit to one of the schools to teach there for a week as well as bringing resources from St Joseph's community. The school's wider commitment has been recognised by their recent Intermediate International Award. Nearer to home the school is fully involved in the local community. It participates in ecumenical services in the abbey, the town's annual carnival and the WOMAD festival. The school is embarking on the Family Learning Project to support parents in developing their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills. The school's Catholic ethos has nurtured positive attitudes of respect for other faiths and communities and a readiness to support each other. Inclusion is promoted in all aspects of school life to ensure physical access, curriculum access and access to information. Parents' views are sought on many areas of school life.

Grade: 1

Religious Education

Achievements and Standards

Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is above average. Achievement at the Foundation Stage is very high with pupils given a great deal of personal responsibility to which they respond well. Achievement at the end of Key Stage 2 is good. Pupils' high literacy levels contribute to the quality of work reached in RE. Pupils have a good understanding of their faith and prayer throughout both key stages. Pupils enjoy RE and the opportunity it gives for them to discuss contemporary issues and the way they affect their lives. Opportunities to develop ideas through sustained pieces of written work are

limited. Pupils are often unaware of the standards at which they are currently working which limits the opportunities to build on what is required to improve.

Grade: 2

Teaching and Learning

The quality of teaching and learning is good. All teachers have excellent rapport with the pupils. Pupils make good progress, have positive attitudes towards RE and are confident in sharing their ideas with others in class. Behaviour in lessons is exemplary, as it is throughout the school. Lessons are well prepared and teachers take opportunities to vary learning activities and pupils speak positively about their work in the subject. Occasionally work is left unfinished or lacking sufficient detail. In all classes teachers make helpful comments when marking though monitoring the impact of the advice given is limited. Pupils find oral feedback from the teacher useful. Opportunities for pupils to evaluate their own work are not developed fully. Interactive whiteboards are employed in all classrooms to good effect and enhance the quality of lessons.

Grade: 2

Quality of the Curriculum

The RE curriculum is well planned and based upon the diocesan recommended programme. It fulfils the requirements of the Bishops' Conference in the time allocated to the subject. RE has a high status in the school reflected in the naming of the governors' "RE and Curriculum Committee" and in the allocation of resources. Many opportunities are provided for pupils to take responsibility in the school community including the School Council and a "buddy" scheme to support reception pupils. All Year 6 pupils are allocated a specific responsibility in the school. Relationship education is undertaken through the "All That I Am" programme. Pupils' personal, social and spiritual development is well supported through RE.

Grade: 2

Leadership and Management

Religious education is led by the head teacher who has a very clear understanding of the way the subject contributes to the mission of the church. The subject is focussed particularly on promoting spiritual and moral development. The school recognises the need to place more emphasis achievement and the implementation of levelling in the subject will help address this. The head teacher supports staff and undertakes lesson

observations, monitoring and evaluation. The processes are well planned and co-ordinated but their impact on future teaching and learning is unclear. Links with the parish priest, who contributes to the subject, are excellent. The school's weekly newsletter keeps parents informed of events in the liturgical calendar and in proclaiming the school's values. Additionally, a termly newsletter provides information on what is to be covered in RE and gives advice on support parents can give to their children. The department, like the school, is highly inclusive in meeting the needs of all pupils.

Grade: 2