



INSPECTION REPORT OF DENOMINATIONAL CHARACTER AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

(Under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005)

ST JOSEPH'S INFANT
Hazell Avenue, Aylesbury, HP21 7JF

URN: 110478

DfES School No: 825/3372

Head Teacher: Mrs Ann Taylor
Chair of Governors: Mrs Sonia Adamo-Ibbotson

Reporting Inspector: Mrs Rosemarie Jones
Associate Inspector: Mrs Pauline Cotton

Date of Inspection: 17 September 2021
Date Report Issued: 21 October 2021

Date of previous Inspection: 21 October 2014

The school is in the Trusteeship of the Diocese and
in partnership with Buckinghamshire Local Authority

Description of the School

St Joseph's Catholic Infant School is a two-form entry school for pupils aged 4-7. There are 177 pupils currently on role of whom 49% are Catholic. There is an on-site community pre-school under the governance of the school. There are seven teachers including the headteacher. 50% of teaching staff are Catholic and 50% of the teaching assistants are also Catholic. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs is 11% which is just below the national average. The number of EAL pupils continues to rise. The percentage of pupils entitled to pupil premium is 11%.

Overall Effectiveness of the School

Grade: 2

The overall effectiveness of the school is good. The headteacher demonstrates strong leadership and leads a happy, hardworking team. The school is welcoming with a nurturing purposeful environment. Relationships are very good; staff work well together; the staff show respect to the children and for each other; the children know they are safe and loved. At the time of inspection, the school was having to cope with significant long-term staff absences alongside the additional burden of COVID-related absences.

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

Grade: 2

Since the last inspection a new subject leader was appointed in May 2020. Unfortunately, she has had long-term absence. She and the headteacher know what needs to be done to improve the school but due to the subject leader's long-term absence and the COVID pandemic progress towards improvements has been limited. The governors and the headteacher are committed to ensure all children make excellent progress, working with diocesan support. The school has good capacity to move forward and improve standards in all areas of school life. There is now a need to ensure the school converts their plans into reality.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop RE teaching to a consistently high quality with particular attention to pace of lessons and deeper questioning for richer responses.
- Develop consistent and effective monitoring processes in the school.
- Offer pupils voluntary prayer groups and create a prayer space.

Catholic Life

Grade: 2

Pupils benefit from the Catholic life of St Joseph's; they enjoy being part of this caring school. Pupils usually participate in fundraising and outreach opportunities, but the current COVID situation put a temporary stop to pupils' engagement in the school's outreach programme. Generally, events that usually would happen during the year had not happened; this was explained as a result of COVID restrictions, and children not being in school. Pupils also show love, compassion and understanding for those less fortunate than themselves. When a group of pupils were asked a few questions about their school and its Catholic life, they were unable to give answers. Staff clearly care for the children and are attentive to their needs and family needs. Support for families is strong and this was evidenced during the pandemic. The chair of governors was not available on the day of inspection; however, there is evidence that governors are highly committed to the school. Parental support is good. An annual survey of parents is undertaken and analysed by the headteacher (the last survey being in July 2021). This showed that parents were happy that their child attends St Joseph's Infant School. A family and relationships policy based on the 'Journey in Love' programme has been developed and shared with parents.

Collective Worship**Grade: 2**

Prayer is an integral part of the school's daily life and is central to the children's spiritual and moral development. Pupils write their own prayers, share them with their class and they are displayed on their 'Jesus Table'. The staff started the inspection day with a beautiful prayer and reflection on scripture. Assemblies are well planned for the school year. Jesus Tables are attractive and visible in each classroom. The school mission statement is visible throughout the school. Chaplaincy is effective with an annual plan in place. There are opportunities for parents to join collective worship. Pupils respond with reverence to collective worship and sang joyfully during hymn practice. The parish priest was also not available on the day but is a regular visitor to the school and with the headteacher develops an annual chaplaincy plan. Liturgical events are planned by the headteacher.

Religious Education**Grade: 2**

Based on observations, work in books, class folders, and internal data, teaching over time is judged good. To improve RE teaching and learning, school leaders in collaboration with the RE subject leader need to resume the strategy for monitoring teaching and standards in RE which was in place before the pandemic. This included regular lesson observations, book looks, learning walks and feedback. The school also needs to ensure that they build in to their monitoring strategy measures to cope with any potential future disruptions of the sort experienced in this pandemic. Where lesson outcomes were judged limited, it was frequently because of lesson pace and the lack of focused questioning for deeper understanding. This sometimes meant that pupils' attention and behaviour were less than optimal. In the pupils' books there was some evidence of a range of activities. This combined with work in class folders afforded a fuller picture of attainment. Assessment is undertaken termly. The headteacher said, and internal data suggests, that the majority of pupils were working at age-related expectations prior to COVID and in line with other subjects. Teachers use the 'Come and See' programme to deliver the RE curriculum. There are at least 2 teaching assistants in each year group who offer effective support to EAL and SEN pupils (a governor is employed at the school as a teaching assistant). The school curriculum dedicates 10% of time to the teaching of RE and therefore fulfils the requirements of the Bishops' Conference. The RE Subject leader attends all diocesan training and keeps up with initiatives. The headteacher has identified key priorities for RE, one of which is always included in staff performance management.

The inspectors would like to express their thanks and appreciation to the school community for their warm welcome.