



SECTION 48 INSPECTION REPORT

Canonical Inspection under Canon 806 on behalf of the
Archbishop of Southwark and Inspection of
Denominational Education under Section 48
of the Education Act 2005

URN 101048

**St Mary's Catholic Primary School
Lockington Road
Battersea
SW8 4BE**

Inspection date: 24 September 2015

Chair of Governors: Mr Andrew Cooper
Mr John Hallmark
Headteacher: Mr Jared Brading
Inspectors: Mrs Joan Lenahan
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EDUCATION COMMISSION

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SECTION 48

Introduction

Description of the school

St Mary's School is voluntary aided. It is situated in the Balham Deanery of the Archdiocese of Southwark. It is maintained by Wandsworth LA. Hard Federation status with Sacred Heart School, Battersea was established in July 2015. A new school building on an adjoining site is being built and is scheduled for opening in September 2016. The principal parish the school serves is Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Battersea Park, but pupils also come from Sacred Heart, Battersea and St Anne's, Vauxhall. The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholics is 55%. Overall, the average weekly proportion of curriculum time given to religious education is under 10% in Key Stage 1 and under 10% in Key Stage 2.

The school takes pupils from 3 to 11 years. The school is smaller than average. Currently there are 214 pupils on roll. The attainment of pupils on entering the school is generally below average. The number of pupils on the special educational needs register is approximately 13% with 3 pupils having statements of special needs. The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium is higher than the national average. The number of pupils who are from mixed ethnic backgrounds is above the national average. The proportion of pupils from homes where English is an additional language is 85%, which is significantly higher than the national average and a high percent of these pupils are at the early stages of acquisition.

The school holds awards in the following areas:

Evening Standard Reading campaign flagship school
Key Stage 2 Pupil Premium award 2015
DFE Top 10% most improved national results 2013

Date of previous inspection:

07/11/2011

Overall Grade:

3

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding	Grade 3	Requires improvement
Grade 2	Good	Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school in providing Catholic Education

GRADE
3

The Catholic Life, leadership and management, and provision for Religious Education are all secure. The pupils' personal well-being together with their moral, social and cultural development lies at the heart of provision.

St Mary's is an all-inclusive school where the dignity of each individual is nurtured in line with their mission to 'value and respect one another as a child of God'.

Community cohesion is outstanding due to the range of opportunities that are offered to the pupils to actively participate in local events.

The behaviour of pupils is excellent. They exude a pride in their environment and state that their school is a "happy and friendly place where teachers listen to you."

Opportunities for pupils to engage in acts of Collective Worship and learn about the purpose of prayer are good.

Recently established links with the Deacon to support the pupils' spiritual development and to guide staff in their teaching of Religious Education is of great benefit to provision.

Leadership and Governors deserve credit for the manner in which they are managing the establishment of the Federation with Sacred Heart, as well as coping with disruption caused by major building works. However, this has had an impact on overall provision due to lack of focus by managers on monitoring policies and procedures. The school is now at a crossroad and poised to improve because of stability of staffing and the formation of Federation status where the expertise and resources of St Mary's and Sacred Heart will be used for the benefit of all.

Improvement in Religious Education since the previous inspection (November 2011) are marginal as the issues identified for development have only been addressed in part. Further work remains to be done with regard to monitoring and assessment procedures, world faiths programme, marking and school parish links.

What steps need to be taken to improve further?

Governors, Headteacher and staff should:

- Ensure that the established policies and procedures for Religious Education are rigorously implemented and their impact monitored
- Review time-tabling of Religious Education to meet the regulations of the Bishops' Conference
- Review curriculum provision to include world faiths in line with Diocesan guidelines
- Extend provision for Collective Worship in line with statutory guidelines.

Outcomes for pupils

**Grade
2**

The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life of the school

The pupils at St. Mary's exude an appreciation of all that the school has to offer in terms of its Catholic life.

The active School Council is very effective as it gives pupils a voice. Those interviewed cited how "fairness, respect and consideration for others" are their guiding principles. It was a joy to observe their engagement with the prayer they use to open each meeting and they take their role seriously, believing that their mandate is "to let good ideas spill from their mouths" when helping to improve their school.

Pupils appreciate the opportunities they are given to engage with, and learn from, people in the local community and beyond. An example being how the school arranged for Year 6 girls to listen to a renowned leader speak about the role of women and diversity in today's global world. The fact that the PSHE curriculum is taught through Gospel story enables pupils to live their lives in accordance with Christian teaching on diversity, forgiveness, tolerance and respect. Pupils take great pride in their involvement in the local area with initiatives such as growing and selling food at Borough Market and 'Wholefood' and this serves to enhance their understanding of community cohesion.

Parents appreciate the high level of pastoral care their children receive although a small number of Catholic parents stated that they would like the "ethos to shine through more."

Pupils interviewed talked about how much they appreciate the range of clubs and facilities that they are offered.

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education?

Overall, pupils are making good progress this academic year. They enjoy their lessons and their attitude to learning and behaviour in class is excellent. Pupils work well with one another and respond well to question and challenge. The pupils' use of Religious Education vocabulary is good and they use it with confidence when responding to the teacher.

Standards of attainment are lower in Religious Education than in literacy according to 2014/2015 data. If this is to be addressed, the quality of pupils' work needs to be regularly monitored and sufficient time allocated to teaching the subject so that pupils achieve the expected levels.

Aspects of the Catholic Life of the school relating to teaching the pupils about the Mass, devotion to Our Lady, lives of the saints and the 'Wednesday Word' gospel message all serve to make a seamless link with the curriculum. This enables pupils to make the connection between class-based learning and the practice of their faith.

How well pupils respond to and participate in Collective Worship?

Pupils are respectful during acts of Collective Worship. They view prayer as an integral aspect of school life. Knowledge of the formal prayers of the church is given due prominence. From the earliest age, pupils are at ease when praying and can relate to the power of prayer and its purpose. This was encapsulated when pupils in the reception class explored 'what prayer is in our own relationship with God'.

The Year 6 assembly, which explored the theme of 'Family', was an uplifting experience for the whole school and pupils were sent away with the message "to bring the gift of love into the playground."

Prayer focal areas in classrooms are child-friendly, thoughtfully planned, reflect the liturgical calendar and are used effectively to encourage prayer and reflection.

Class prayer books are used very effectively to unite school and homes in acts of prayer as pupils are invited to write personal intercessions at home and subsequently share them with their classmates.

How well leaders, governors and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life of the school and plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils?

Leaders, governors and managers demonstrate a commitment to the Church's mission in education.

Governors are visible by their presence in the school, attending acts of Collective Worship, Masses and school celebrations. They are impressively conversant with their role of supporting and challenging the newly formed Federation. Their vision and dedication is evident in the recently established committees who plan to share joint ownership of expertise and resources. The leadership team is focused on developing the two schools so that there is parity in the quality of standards and achievements in both.

Planning for improvement is now a shared goal so the school is very well placed to improve further.

Leaders are successful in determining that inclusion and community cohesion are at the heart of provision. Gospel values inspire the school's ethos. The cultural heritage of all its pupils is respected and celebrated. The level of pastoral care for pupils and their families is outstanding.

Staff form a supportive team and are actively involved in promoting the school's Catholic mission.

The school conveys a distinctively Catholic identity. Displays are of high quality as they reflect the pupils' engagement with their Religious Education programme and aspects of the liturgical year. The statue of Our Lady, which is positioned at the school entrance, conveys the pride with which their patron is honoured.

Leaders support pupils who receive their first Holy Communion by their presence in church at the celebration.

Pupils' understanding of the school's mission is good as they live out its tenets in their relationships with one another. However, leaders and governors have identified the need to review the mission statement in the light of the school's new status.

The recent appointment of the Deacon, who is also a governor, to support the parish priest is an enhancement in provision for the pupils' ongoing spiritual development as he is instrumental in leading weekly prayers and liturgies with classes.

Recently updated self-evaluation is soul searching and reflects that leaders and governors are committed to drive continuous improvement.

How well leaders, governors and managers monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education and plan and implement for improvement to outcomes for pupils?

Outcomes in Religious Education fall short of age-related expectations, indicating that provision is in need of monitoring, in order to maximise the achievements of all pupils, regardless of ability.

Leaders concur that disruption caused by recent staff turn-over, which included absence of the Religious Education leader, has had an impact on provision and standards. The leadership of the subject is currently being undertaken by the Headteacher in this interim period. He has led in-house staff training recently on the 'Come and See' syllabus.

The policy to augment the Relationship and Sex Education (SRE) programme is now in place (September 2015). This is an improvement as it was an outstanding issue for development in the previous inspection.

The school development plan (2015/2016) includes targets for action following the subject's omission in the plan (2014/2015).

Strategies are in place to conduct a range of monitoring procedures and include: learning walks, book scrutiny, staff induction, and support for staff members who are new to teaching the curriculum. However, effective monitoring of provision has been curtailed over the past year because of the change in subject leadership and as a result, pupils' performance and attainment fell short of expectations. Plans are now in place to redress this with joint monitoring scheduled across the Federation to ensure consistency of progress and attainment.

Governors and Leaders need to refocus on monitoring provision in order to raise standards further.

The quality of teaching and how purposeful learning is in Religious Education

Teaching is effective as it enables pupils to make progress. During the lessons observed pupils were interested in their learning. Plans incorporated opportunities for pupils' spiritual development and teachers displayed confidence in their subject knowledge. The level of pupils' engagement in a Year 3 lesson was exemplified by the manner in which they explored 'the ingredients required' to live out the teachings of Jesus to 'love one another as I have loved you'. Lessons are planned methodically and are effective in challenging and supporting the varied ability groups. The pace of the lesson in the Reception Class was excellent as it offered great variety of well-thought-out activities. From the earliest age, pupils can focus on learning when questioning skills challenge their thinking and explicit reference is made to development of Religious Education vocabulary.

Pupils' behaviour in lessons is outstanding as they are eager to learn, settle down to tasks purposefully, showing respect and co-operation.

Achievement and effort are praised. Marking is positive and often developmental. Through this, a dialogue with pupils is beginning to be established. This good practice needs to be more consistent throughout and focused on the Religious Education objective.

Overall, support provided by other adults is effectively deployed.

The quality of teaching is monitored and developmental feedback is given to teachers but this now needs to be undertaken more frequently as scrutiny of books from the past year showed low levels of quality and depth of topics studied. If the improvements in teaching and learning as seen during the inspection are to be sustained, more regular monitoring procedures, together with target setting, need to be established.

The extent to which the Religious Education curriculum promotes pupils' learning

There is a shortfall in the allocation of time throughout the school for teaching Religious Education and this needs to be brought into line with the Bishops' Conference regulations. This shortfall has an impact on the output of pupils' attainment levels. Scrutiny of books from the past year reflected this and also there was too much emphasis on the PSHE aspect of topics and insufficient attention paid to Religious Education.

A very good method of assessing individual attainment was instigated so that each pupil had a book that followed his/her progress. However, this has been neglected over

the past year so that now there are gaps in the tracking process. When this process is back on track it will benefit the efficient moderation of assessment levels. Plans are in place to work with Sacred Heart School to instigate the same tracking and moderation system across the Federation.

A recent beneficial development has been facilitating the teachers to access the planning of each unit of the curriculum from the shared network with Sacred Heart.

The curriculum at St. Mary's is greatly enhanced by a variety of seamless activities relating to its Catholic Life, amongst which is scheduled weekly visit by the Deacon to support teachers in the development of prayer and religious instruction across the school.

Learning about the major world faiths is introduced in part but is not systematically taught throughout. This needs to be reviewed in line with Diocesan guidelines.

Resources to augment the delivery of the curriculum are of good quality.

The curriculum is responsive to the local context in the school population with the multi-cultural dimension given due consideration.

The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school

The quality of Collective Worship is good. Pupils view acts of prayer and worship as special and state how much they enjoy participating in class led assemblies where they are involved in their preparation. The behaviour of pupils during the Year 6 assembly, which related to 'God's Family', was excellent as they were attentive and when called to pray, they did so in a reverential manner. The assembly was thoughtfully planned and engaged the interest of the pupils. Staff and parents joined in the celebration. The incorporation of vibrant music and hymn singing had a significant impact on the pupils' engagement.

The programme for Collective Worship incorporates key aspects of the Liturgical Year, celebration of the feast days of Our Lady, class Masses and liturgies and attendance at Mass in church.

Planning guidelines for acts of Collective Worship lean more towards performance and PSHE rather than the spiritual dimension and this needs to be addressed.

There is a shortfall in time-tabled provision for planned acts of Collective Worship as they are only scheduled for three days a week and this needs to be brought into line with statutory guidelines.