

**ARCHDIOCESE OF SOUTHWARK  
COMMISSION FOR SCHOOLS & COLLEGES**



***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 100628

St Bernadette's Catholic Junior School  
4 Atkins Road  
London  
SW12 0AB

Chair of Governors  
Headteacher  
Inspectors

Fr Chris Basden  
Ms Deborah Hogan  
Mrs Helen Thompson  
Mrs Berndadette Dowswell

Inspection dates                      1<sup>st</sup> June 2012

**ARCHDIOCESE OF SOUTHWARK  
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# Introduction

## Description of the school

St Bernadette's Catholic Primary is voluntary aided. It is situated in the Lambeth Deanery of the Archdiocese of Southwark. It is maintained by Lambeth LA. 41% of pupils come from the principal parish which is St Bede's, Clapham Park but pupils also come from 6 other parishes. The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholic is 74%. The average weekly proportion of curriculum time given to religious education is 8% in Key Stage 1, 8% in Key Stage 2.

The school takes pupils from 7 to 11 years. The number of pupils currently on roll is 237. The attainment of pupils on entering the school is broadly average. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average. Around 25% of the pupils receive extra support in class. The proportion of pupils with special needs is larger than average.

Approximately 62% of pupils have English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils from homes where English is an additional language is above average, 56% are from Afro-Caribbean backgrounds and 30% from European and South American backgrounds. There are also a few Asian pupils. 10% of pupils are at an early stage of English. In January 2011 the school formed a soft federation with St Bede's Catholic Infant school their main feeder school.

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding	Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 2	Good	Grade 4	Inadequate

# Overall effectiveness as a Catholic school

St Bernadette's is a good school with some outstanding features. The Headteacher is a strong dedicated and effective leader and, together with the senior leadership team and staff, has created a caring, nurturing Catholic community. Relationships between pupils, staff and parish are excellent and reflect the Gospel values. Links with parishes are good and the parish priest is a frequent welcome visitor who knows the pupils and staff well. Parents are very supportive of the school and of the care and education their children receive. Parents said; "They are very good at welcoming ethnic minorities, my children feel happy and safe at school". Governors are committed to fostering the Catholic ethos of the school. Pupils learn in a caring Catholic environment based on Gospel Values of love, care, cooperation and forgiveness. Standards are good and the majority of pupils make good progress. The school needs to look at the time devoted to the teaching of religious education to comply with Bishops' Conference. A more robust system of monitoring to ensure standards continue to rise has been identified in the religious education plan. The teaching of other faiths is developing and would benefit from a more structured approach. Most issues from the last inspection have been addressed. There is a commitment to improvement which ensures the school has a good capacity to develop further.

**Grade 2**

## What steps need to be taken to improve further?

- The school needs to ensure that religious education is taught explicitly for 10% of the curriculum time.
- Develop a programme and structured approach to the teaching of other faiths.
- Develop a more robust system of monitoring which is focussed on raising standards in religious education.
- Reinforce consistency of good practice across all classes.

# The Catholic life of the school

## Leadership and management

## Grade 2

The Headteacher and Deputy Head have a clear vision of Catholic education and, together with the senior leadership team, governors and all staff, ensure that the Catholic life of the school has the highest priority. The governors are knowledgeable about the curriculum but need to be better informed on standards in religious education in order to challenge when appropriate. The school is aware of the need to update the religious education policy so it reflects current good practice and includes more details on the teaching of other faiths. The soft federation with the feeder Infant School whose motto is: "Two schools, one parish one community." has led to more consistent practice across the key stages creating a greater sense of continuity and community. Education for personal relationships is effectively taught in the majority of classes. This good practice needs to be evident in all year groups. Parish links are very strong and links are made with the other main parishes. There are good Deanery and Diocesan links, including representation by pupils at the youth conference. Whole school circles enable all pupils to have a voice within their school community and feel valued. Parents are very supportive and value the Catholic ethos of the school. Pastoral care is excellent and the part-time counsellor has worked very closely with pupils and their families to support them in difficult times. Pupils' spiritual and moral development is very good.

## Quality of provision for personal and collective worship

## Grade 2

The Eucharist, prayer and worship are central to the life of the school. Pupils know the formal prayers of the church and have opportunities for meditation and reflection in class liturgies, lessons and assemblies. The focal areas are prominent in the classroom environment and used to enhance pupils' experiences. Pupils are offered a variety of opportunities for worship including Mass, Benediction, assemblies linked to the liturgical year, rosary and penitential services. The Stations of the Cross were beautifully and movingly presented to the school by year 5. The Hail Mary was recited in every language known to pupils in the May procession. The shrine to Our Lady and St Bernadette in the playground gives pupils even more opportunities to pray. The Holy Communion and Leavers' Masses celebrated important events in the pupils' lives. The parish priest, also a governor, is fully involved in the life of the school. The quality of opportunities for meditation and reflection are a strength of the school. In a lesson observed pupils responded well to the "true colours" song accompanied by beautiful pictures to think of how to be a disciple of Jesus. Teachers plan assemblies and pupils are involved with this and the school should now review the assessment of assemblies and explore the feasibility of class assemblies which parents and carers may attend. Collective worship makes a good contribution to the spiritual and moral growth of the pupils.

St Bernadette's is a warm, friendly welcoming school. It is very inclusive and pupils at School Council said; "we are like one big family, we are all equal." All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an Additional Language are well integrated into the school community and valued. Diversity is celebrated through Black History Month, international events and links with other parts of the world. Pupils support each other through a buddy system which links pupils from both schools in the federation and by having trained peer mediators. The whole school community is involved with a wide range of charities including CAFOD, Help the Aged, the local Ace of Spades and the Jimmy Mizen Foundation after a visit by Margaret Mizen. The school has strong links with "The Country Children's Holiday Fund". There is a breakfast club, run on site for both schools, a wide range of after school clubs and the initiative of pupils organising lunchtime clubs is to be commended. Year 6 pupils used their entrepreneurial spirit to support IASIS and raise funds for pop-up surgeries. Pupils visit the local retirement home singing at various times of the year and joining the residents for their Jubilee celebrations. Pupils take part in borough activities alongside local schools. Pupils from every year group visit a different place of worship so building up pupils' knowledge of other faiths and other Christian places of worship. The school should continue to develop its work around the teaching about other faiths as a way to support community cohesion. Staff are actively involved in the local parish and monies have been raised to send some of the school pupils to Lourdes at Easter. A young leaders group has been set up between year 5 and the some of the infant pupils. Pupils from both schools joined together to celebrate the Queen's jubilee and created a wonderful display "Landmarks of London" teaching the pupils about London for many their new home. Parents with different backgrounds are involved as fully as possible in the life of the school and the annual gardening day is well supported by all parents.

## Religious education

By the end of Key Stage 2 standards are broadly average and in line with national expectations. Evidence from book sampling shows generally good standards and that pupils are given the opportunity to present their work in a variety of ways. Progression is evident and the school may now like to focus on introducing greater challenge for the more able. Presentation is good. Pupils with special needs and English as an Additional Language make good progress. Pupils are gaining knowledge, skills and understanding of their faith. The teaching of other faiths is evident in displays around the school and a more structured approach to teaching will ensure greater consistency and attainment. To raise achievement and standards the school has already identified the setting of religious education targets, and these will be in place next term. The development of joint planning with the federated Infant feeder

school will lead to greater consistency of learning. Behaviour is good and pupils are responsive and enthusiastic. They enjoy their lessons.

## **Teaching and learning in religious education**

## **Grade 2**

The teaching observed during the inspection ranged from good to outstanding. In the best lessons observed clear learning objectives and success criteria, pace, challenge and interesting activities were seen. Lessons built on prior knowledge with good use of resources and progress of pupils was evident. Pupils had a variety of thought provoking tasks such as; to think of a time God has come to them and write it on footprints, sort out the various events into the right mystery of the Rosary and be able to freeze frame one of them, to respond to a personal invitation from Jesus to be His disciple and to produce a news report and rap. All these caught the imagination of pupils and all were highly focussed on tasks. Behaviour is well managed. Assessment is developing well across the school. Differentiation is mainly by outcome. In most lessons observed, a prayer and reflection time helped the pupils focus and created a spiritual atmosphere for learning. Marking with responses from pupils is excellent in some classes but this is not consistent and this good practice needs to be shared through out the whole school. Parents are informed through regular newsletters about the religious education curriculum and ways to support their child.

## **The religious education curriculum**

## **Grade 2**

The school follows "The Way, The Truth and The Life" programme of study. Timetables show that the school allocates specific lesson time for liturgies and meditation, which are often linked to the religious education curriculum. While the inspection team acknowledge this link and the strong contribution made to pupils' spiritual and moral development the school needs to ensure that sufficient time is allocated in all classes for the explicit teaching of the subject. Work scrutiny and discussions with pupils show a good coverage of the religious education curriculum. All pupils irrespective of ability are able to make progress in their knowledge skills and understanding. Visits to places of worship of other faiths are planned throughout the year and each year group visits a different faith with pupils learning to respect other faiths and cultures. In addition to this, there is a need for a more structured approach to the teaching of other faiths. Cross curricular links, especially ICT, literacy, drama, music and art were evident. The curriculum is enriched by visits from charities and to the local church for Mass and liturgies. Education in Personal Relationships is continuing to be developed. The curriculum contributes very well to pupils' spiritual and moral development. The closer links with St Bede's, by federation, is improving key stage links leading to greater continuity and progression. The school is developing resources as funds allow. The 50 Years Mosaic celebrating the school in the entrance hall is stunning and good quality statues enhance the school environment. The high standard of displays and focal areas around the school actively support the religious education curriculum in addition to enhancing the whole school community.

All senior managers, governors and the religious education coordinator are strongly committed to ensuring the subject has a high profile in the school. The coordinator has good subject knowledge and is dedicated and conscientious. Her monitoring role includes book scrutinies, interviews with pupils and some lesson observations. This needs to be more rigorous in order to impact on raising standards. The coordinator files provide a range of evidence. A moderated portfolio of work is well under way and will enable all to have a clear understanding of the levels of achievement and attainment expected. The governors' role in monitoring standards is developing. The governors have recently appointed a link governor who is working closely with the coordinator. The coordinator attends Diocesan training to keep abreast of new initiatives and disseminates this information to staff. To enable the school to continue to move forward the religious education plan would benefit from having clearer measurable objectives. All staff are committed to the Catholic ethos of the school and succeed in making it a happy and stimulating place to be.