



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 100825

St James the Great Catholic Primary School
Peckham Road
Peckham
London SE15 5LP

Inspection date: 21 November 2012

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| Chair of Governors: | Ms A Cutting |
| Headteacher: | Mrs J Babb |
| Inspectors: | Mrs A O'Connor |
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EDUCATION COMMISSION

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SECTION 48

Introduction

Description of the school

The school is voluntary aided. It is situated in the Southwark Deanery of the Archdiocese of Southwark. It is maintained by Southwark LA. The principal parish which the school serves is St James the Great Peckham Rye. The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholics is 95%. The average weekly proportion of curriculum time given to Religious Education is 10% in Foundation Stage, 10% in Key Stage 1 and 10% in Key Stage 2.

The school takes pupils from 3 to 11 years, which includes the Nursery. The number of pupils currently on roll is 235. The attainment of pupils on entering the school is well below average. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average. Around 20% of the pupils receive extra support in class. The largest group of children are of Black African heritage and there is a diverse ethnic mix in the school. The proportion of pupils from homes where English is an additional language is well above average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness as a Catholic school

GRADE
3

Following their recent Ofsted Inspection, the school has been through a challenging time, with a change of leadership. However the current leadership of the school, which includes the Executive Headteacher, the senior leadership team and the governors, are all now working together to ensure the school makes rapid progress and provide the best opportunities possible for all the pupils. They are all committed to ensuring the Catholic life of the school is nurtured and this is evidenced by the relevant religious artefacts and displays around the school. The pupils are friendly and welcoming. They enjoy coming to school and are very proud of their school. They enjoy the family atmosphere and are very caring of each other. They have a positive attitude to school and enthusiastically talked about all the activities available to them. Behaviour on the whole is good and is well managed. The environment is calm and orderly. Parents are supportive of the school and feel their children are happy, cared about and safe in school. As one parent commented "I strongly support the school and all the staff for the work they are doing".

The issues from the previous inspection have only been partly addressed, but this has been identified as an area to develop. Under the current leadership the school has good capacity to improve.

What steps need to be taken to improve further?

Governors, headteacher and staff should:

- Improve the quality of teaching to at least Good or better in line with best practice seen. The best practice should be modelled and shared across the school.
- Ensure the role of co-ordinator is fully developed to include a systematic schedule of observations and feedback of Religious Education lessons, continued development of a shared portfolio of moderated work, and planned regular meetings with a named governor.
- To ensure that prayer corners in all classes are prominent and interactive and reflect the school community.

The Catholic life of the school

Leadership and management

GRADE 3

The recently appointed and experienced Executive Headteacher is very effectively leading and managing the school through a challenging period. She provides strong and committed leadership, which is focussed on securing the necessary improvements to the school. The Senior Leadership team and the governors, under her leadership and direction, are now developing a good understanding of the steps needed to move the school forward and raise standards. They are supporting the Executive Headteacher well, and quickly working towards being strong and good leaders for the school.

There is a clear vision for Catholic education which is shared throughout the school community. The mission statement is displayed around the school in classrooms and communal areas and is on the parent's newsletters, and is well known by all the pupils. Relationships are good and care, guidance and support for pupils is good. The relatively new Parish Priest is a regular visitor to school providing support and attending events.

Positive relationships exist between home school and parish and this is further enhanced through regular newsletters and information on the school website. On the whole Parents are supportive of the school and regularly attend events and activities.

Quality of provision for personal and collective worship

GRADE 2

The quality of provision for personal and collective worship is good and there is evidence in class displays and books to support this. The school more than fulfils its statutory obligations. The importance of prayer is emphasised and pupils begin and end the day with prayers. They know the traditional prayers of the Church. There are opportunities for private prayer and reflection and pupils are encouraged to write their own prayers. There is a school prayer which was known and valued by the pupils and they were able to recite this. Every class had their own individual prayers for the beginning and end of the day. Although there were prayer corners in every classroom, these need to be a central focus in the room, with more varied artefacts and books to reflect the heritage and diversity of the school community.

There is good provision for collective worship and Mass is said either in the Church or school on a regular basis. The liturgy for the Sunday Mass in the parish church is led by the school every third Sunday of the month.

The Mass attended was held in the parish church for Years 2 to 6. It was led by Year 4, who were actively involved in planning the readings and music. The singing was lively and joyful and the pupils who led the singing of the psalm sang beautifully and with enjoyment. The pupils were respectful and responded and listened attentively. The readers were clear and read with expression. There is a well planned and varied programme of assemblies, which take place on a daily basis. These include a Gospel assembly, class led assembly, achievement assembly and Here I Am assembly.

There are examples of Religious Education and PSE displays in evidence in the Hall and corridors. Some of these are interactive for example, the 'Star of the Week' display where pupils make positive comments about their class friends.

Community cohesion

GRADE 2

This is a welcoming, inclusive and supportive school and it is committed to giving the pupils respect and understanding of each other. The pupils come from a range of ethnic backgrounds and all are welcomed and included into the ethos of the school so that they form a strong and supportive community. The cultural heritage of the pupils is celebrated through a variety of events and the pupils have first hand opportunities to experience the customs of other cultures. For example an annual International evening was held. This year's focus was on Latin America with singing and dancing and everyone bringing food to share. Black History Month is a highlight of the school year.

Local community links are good and support for families is very good. For example there is a community learning area network which supports parents and includes helping them in making application for schools in the locality. There is a Parent Support worker who is based in the school one day each week and is able to provide support, help and information. Courses are held for parents from the school community as well as other neighbouring schools.

The breakfast club and an externally provided after-school club is of great benefit to working parents and also provide extra physical and sporting activities for the pupils. Pupils make good use of school clubs and the local area for outside visits. They regularly participate in Borough and London events.

The pupils are encouraged to help others locally and in the wider world. For example at the Harvest celebration they collect foodstuffs for the Manna Society and they fundraise for the International Refugee Trust.

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Religious Education

Achievement and standards in Religious Education

GRADE 3

Attainment on entry is well below average. The children settle into school well and make good progress in the Foundation Stage.

Although by the end of Year 6 standards are in line with national expectations, there is inconsistency in progress and achievement across the school.

There are no significant differences in achievement between various groups of pupils. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported so that they can take a full and active role in Religious Education lessons.

While workbooks show adequate coverage and variety of activities, there was little evidence of differentiation. Workbooks would benefit from a whole school agreement on presentation to reflect the importance of the Religious Education curriculum. Pupils enjoy their Religious Education lessons. Behaviour was good and any challenging behaviour was generally well managed.

Teaching assistants played an active part in supporting the pupils so that they were all able to participate fully.

Teaching and learning in Religious Education

GRADE 3

In lessons observed the quality of Teaching was variable across the school, and ranged from Inadequate to Outstanding. Where teaching was good or better, lessons were well paced, questioning was good, pupils were engaged and on task, and learning intentions and success criteria were displayed and shared with the pupils. Activities were varied and interesting and pupils were given the opportunity to apply their learning. For example in an upper Key Stage 2 class the lesson included storytelling, talk partners and independent work. The pupils then moved into the hall to work on freeze frames. The different activities and the pace of the lesson kept the pupils engaged and interested. When questioned their enjoyment and interest was evident. In a lower Key Stage 2 class in a lesson on Advent and the symbolism of the Advent candles, discussion, talk partners, questioning and independent tasks engaged the pupils' interest. The pupils were animated, positive and enthusiastic. Information and Communications Technology was used as a simple teaching aid but there was little evidence of this to support pupil work.

Work is marked regularly with suggestions for ways to improve and there is evidence that pupils are beginning to respond and reflect on their work. Formal assessment is undertaken according to Diocesan guidelines, but there is little evidence of its impact on teaching and learning. A portfolio of moderated pupils work is still in the early stages and this should be tackled with renewed enthusiasm.

Teaching assistants were deployed so that all pupils accessed the lessons. The quality of teaching now needs to be raised as a matter of urgency so that all teaching is at least Good or better. Some Good and Outstanding teaching was observed and this excellent practice should be modelled and shared across the school.

The Religious Education curriculum

GRADE 2

The Religious Education curriculum meets the requirements of The Bishops' Conference and sufficient time is allocated to the teaching of Religious Education. The school follows the 'Here I Am' programme, although they are planning to move to 'Come and See' by next September. The School Improvement Plan shows planned Inset during the year to introduce the new programme. Activities to support the Religious Education curriculum include role play, talking partners and freeze frames. The Religious Education policy and Education in Human Love policy are in line with Diocesan requirements.

Other faiths are taught as part of the Religious Education curriculum and a display of Judaism was situated in the communal area. Each class is allocated a different world Faith to study during the year. Although there are some resources to support the Religious Education curriculum, the school would benefit from purchasing some good quality books and artefacts that reflect the school community.

Leadership and management of Religious Education

GRADE 3

The Senior Leadership team, the parish priest and the long established Religious Education co-ordinator all work together to ensure that Religious Education is central to the life of the school. The co-ordinators role includes managing the Religious Education budget, producing an action plan, scrutinising the pupils' books, liaising on the assembly programme and supporting newly qualified teachers. She regularly attends courses and working parties and has an input into staff meetings on a regular basis. Although she monitors teaching and learning and pupil progress on an informal basis, this needs to become far more rigorous in order to raise standards. Governors are now more aware of their role and this is a good opportunity for them to become involved in the monitoring of the Religious Education curriculum by having a named Religious Education governor. Planned regular meetings with the co-ordinator to include updates on the monitoring of teaching and learning, the curriculum and information on pupil progress would assist in raising standards.