



Diocese of Westminster

INSPECTION REPORT

Sion-Manning Catholic Girls' School

75 St Charles Square, Ladbroke Grove, London W10 6EL

Telephone: 020 8969 7111

e-mail address: info@sion-manning.com

DfE Number: 207/4801

URN Number: 100503

Headteacher: Mrs Christina M Leach

Chair of Governors: Mr John M O'Donnell

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

Date of inspection: 24th June 2010
Date of previous inspection: 6 – 7th March 2007
Reporting Inspector: Mrs J Goring

Description of School

Sion-Manning Catholic School for Girls is an inner city, 11-16 Catholic comprehensive school, with approximately 579 students on roll. It is situated in the Diocese of Westminster in the London Borough of Kensington and Chelsea. 52% of the students are Catholic, 16% of other Christian denominations and 32% other faiths. There are 45 teachers of whom 68% are Catholic. 2 teachers have the CCRS qualification, and all members of the religious education staff are registered on the CCRS course. The college was granted Specialist Status for Visual Arts in 2002 and is and has been an Extended School hub since 2003. It was awarded Arts Mark Gold Award in 2008 and has International School Status, awarded in 2009. The percentage of students known to be eligible for free school meals (39.82%) is well above the national average. The school is ethnically very diverse; the largest group is students of White British origin (19%); other groups include Black or Black British Caribbean (13%) and Black or Black British-African (14%). Many pupils speak a language other than English at home with Portuguese being the predominant other language, followed by Arabic. 12.4% of the students are identified as having Special Educational Needs, including 5 statements. Students come from a wide range of social and economic backgrounds. Students come from many feeder schools and they often travel long distances to school.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of this Catholic school

Sion-Manning is an outstanding Catholic School. The Catholic life of the school benefits from the strong leadership of the Headteacher, the Senior Leadership Team and the Governing Body; they share a vision for the development of the school and are totally committed to its work. This has resulted in an effective Catholic community which serves pupils, parents and staff well. Leadership at all levels is ambitious. There is a passion for inclusion and the Headteacher wants every girl to be a 'star' and to fulfil her potential. This leads to a clear strategy for improving teaching and learning, coherence within the departments and excellent pastoral care. Pupils enjoy being at the school and have a real love of being part of this community – they feel they will succeed academically and recognise the efforts the school goes to help them to grow spiritually and be prepared for adult life. There is a strong sense of mutual respect across the whole community. Behaviour is good and pupils are given every opportunity to exercise self-discipline. Pupils are enthusiastic in their enjoyment of religious education lessons and in playing their part in the wider world – both in the local and international communities. Prayer and liturgy are central to the school ethos and pupils are happy to participate in and lead prayer. They are comfortable with their own faith and are happy to share information about their faiths with each other. The religious education department benefits from outstanding leadership, a collegiate approach and a desire to do the best for their pupils

Grade 1

Improvement since the last inspection

The issues raised in the last inspection were to continue to develop the monitoring of teaching and learning in religious education to maintain the good practice across the department and to continue to track progress at Key Stage 3, particularly with the use of levels of attainment. Good progress has been made in these areas. There has also been improved attainment at both Key Stage 3 and 4 and a greater stability within the religious education department which will enhance this further.

Grade 1

The capacity of the school community to improve and develop

There is outstanding capacity for the school to improve and develop further. There is strong leadership with a clear vision, both at whole school and departmental level. School self evaluation reveals an accurate picture of the strengths of the school and strategies to further develop the school are fully articulated in development planning. There is openness amongst the leadership team leading to a marked lack of complacency and drive for school improvement.

Grade 1

What the school should do to improve further

- Maintain the drive to improve attainment at Key Stage 3 and 4.
- Continue to develop teaching and learning within the religious education department, sharing good practice and continuing to work collaboratively.
- Embed a wider variety of prayer experiences, including those in lessons, and use the enthusiasm of the new lay chaplain to encourage further pupil participation in liturgy and student leadership in chaplaincy.

The Catholic Life of the School

Leadership and Management

The sense of common purpose in the school stems from the clear vision of leadership at all levels. The strong leadership of the headteacher and the leadership team ensures that the school's Catholic ethos is evident. Governors have a clear understanding of their roles in strategy, accountability and as a critical friend. They are deeply involved in the life of the school; they have a clear idea of what a Catholic school should look like and ensure the leadership team make it happen. The leadership of the school has been strongly focussed on raising standards and promoting the personal development of all learners. All the staff at the school promote high quality pastoral care and effective discipline; they encourage an aspirational ethos and a strong feeling of respect for others and for their environment. The pupils value the caring attitude of the staff, who support them with their difficulties and challenges. Resources are well managed. There is continuous striving to improve further. The pupils feel safe at Sion-Manning and enjoy their learning – so they flourish.

Grade 1

The Prayer Life of the School

Prayer life and collective worship are clearly at the heart of the school. There are regular acts of worship, including morning prayer, and regular whole school Masses where pupils' participation is encouraged and they respond with appreciation and respect. They take the varied opportunities offered to develop their own spirituality. Opportunities for more imaginative prayer and for pupil participation in tutor times and lessons are sometimes missed, and this should be an area for development. The new lay chaplain is enthusiastic with many ideas for how the school might move forward in its collective faith journey. There are retreats for the pupils and other opportunities for reflection are encouraged. Approximately half the pupils are

Catholic and the majority of the rest are of other faiths. However, this is an inclusive community and those of other faiths play a significant part in the prayer life of the school; all pupils feel comfortable talking about their faith and this is a very powerful message.

Grade 1

How effectively does the school /college promote community cohesion?

Sion-Manning is an inclusive school. All who work there share the vision that everyone is equal whatever their background and the pupils enjoy celebrating the richness and diversity of the community. They comment favourably on the ethnic diversity of the staff as well as the pupil population. The school works very hard to ensure that there is a common sense of belonging. Pupils from multicultural backgrounds are recognised and valued and every opportunity is taken to encourage mutual respect. Friendships develop across ethnic and cultural groups. Pupils express interest and enjoyment in sharing their differences, knowing that this will lead to tolerance and greater empathy with others, which will be of great value in their later lives. The school works closely with its near neighbours and is involved in the local community as the parties for senior citizens demonstrate. There are also significant wider partnerships, for instance with Brunel University Urban Scholars Scheme, and with schools in Kenya, South Africa and India. This leads to the feeling of 'one worldness' which permeates the school; the pupils have an appreciation of how fortunate they are and a desire to help others less fortunate, leading to a focus on charity work. They are keen and responsive to both local and global situations and want to put their faith into action.

Grade 1

Religious Education

Achievement and Standards in Religious Education

There is improving attainment at both Key Stage 3 and 4 and pupils generally make good progress. At Key Stage 3, attainment is closing the gap on national averages. At Key Stage 4 there is a three year trend of improvement which tracking indicates will continue; the results in religious education make a significant contribution to whole school attainment. Pupil tracking is well developed and enables underachievement to be identified early and intervention to be put in place so these improvements are set to continue. Learners make good progress, gaining knowledge and understanding at both Key Stages; positive attitudes to learning were seen across the school. Many pupils welcome opportunities to extend and deepen their religious learning, are confident in their use of specialist vocabulary, and demonstrate good religious literacy. Pupils enjoy religious education lessons and take pride in their work. They are happy to engage in whatever is being asked of them – whole class discussion, group and independent work. Religious education takes the lead in spiritual, moral, social and cultural education at Sion-Manning School; pupils are encouraged to think about the practical applications of what they are learning and take it to other lessons in school.

Grade 2

Teaching and learning in Religious Education

Learners make good progress and demonstrate positive attitudes to their work. Specialist teachers have a secure knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith, and high expectations of pupils. The non-specialist teachers are supported effectively with well-structured schemes of work and especially by their colleagues in the department. There is good use of praise and affirmation of students. Behaviour is generally well managed and allows effective learning to take place. There is evidence of challenge and of opportunities for independent learning which are grasped by the pupils. Good use is made of ICT and of a range of learning activities with many opportunities for reflection on what has been learnt. There is some evidence of differentiation seen in the lessons and in the schemes of work. Assessment is good, with 'what went well' comments and indication of what pupils had to do next to improve further. However, in conversations with pupils some were not always able to articulate what they needed to do to move on to the next stage. In the best lessons, pace and challenge were good, pupils were motivated and are happy to participate fully in lessons. Year 10 pupils said 'Religious Education lessons are fun and enjoyable and we learn a lot'. They spoke of the teamwork between the teachers and the pupils to help them achieve. There was mutual respect and the high quality relationships mean that the pupils were happy to say what they really felt, they were secure in discussion.

Grade 2

Quality of the Curriculum

The curriculum fulfils the Diocese recommendation of 10% curriculum time. It reflects the needs and aspirations of the pupils, specialist teachers have a good understanding of and a passion for the subject. The department is well organised, well resourced and there is a feeling of coherence across the department. The curriculum reflects a variety of styles of learning and so creates opportunities for pupils to succeed. There is a good tracking system to identify underachievement. Pupils appreciate the extensive system of rewards and praise which they find motivational. Pupils are encouraged to question, discuss and present arguments in the knowledge that their ideas will be accepted and supportively challenged. Girls have a good understanding of the moral issues and are happy to think about ways of engaging with their communities; they can see the links with spiritual, moral, social and cultural elements across the curriculum. There is progression between the Key Stages; the well thought out reduced Key Stage 3 means that pupils are being taken through Key Stage 3 at a challenging pace, a good preparation for Key Stage 4.

Grade 1

Leadership and management of Religious Education

The Subject Leader has a clear vision for the department and has developed a coherent team who share her vision, a team who are clear about their role and purpose. Relationships between members of the department are strong and supportive. Resources are well deployed and the subject leader is effective in making the resource needs for departmental development clear. There is a strong focus on improving standards and they will take every opportunity to increase attainment, as evidenced by the change of examination specification. The monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning is embedded. There is a culture of sharing ideas and practices which ensures consistency across the department and a collegiate approach which pupils recognise to be strength of the department. Expectations of both staff and pupils are high and there is a strong drive to further improve progress and achievement. Accommodation is bright, cheerful and adequate for purpose; the learning environment is good with lively displays and an excellent use of ICT.

Grade 1