



Diocese of Arundel and Brighton

INSPECTION REPORT

St Augustine's Catholic Primary School

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D/E Number: 131071

Headteacher: Mrs Carmel Smith

Chair of Governors: Mr Mirek Gliniecki

Canonical Inspection under Canon 806 on behalf of the Bishop of Arundel & Brighton
and inspection of Denominational Education under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

Date of inspection: 6 March 2012
Date of previous inspection: 14 November 2007

Lead Inspector: Mr Michael Sheridan
Associate Inspector: Mr Stephen Beck

Description of School

The school is voluntary aided. It is situated in the Woking Deanery of the Diocese of Arundel and Brighton. It is maintained by Surrey LA. The principal parishes which the school serves are Our Lady Queen of Heaven, Frimley, now officially known as The Parish of Camberley and Bagshot comprising the following communities: Christ the King, Bagshot, St Peter and St John, Camberley North, St Tarcisius, Camberley, The Immaculate Conception, Sandhurst and Holy Ghost Crowthorne, and St Swithin's, Yatley. The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholics is 92.6% which represents a slight decrease since the last inspection. The average weekly proportion of curriculum time given to Religious Education is 10.2% in Key Stage 1, and 10.3% in Key Stage 2.

The school takes pupils from 4 to 11 years. The number of pupils currently on roll is 421. The attainment of pupils on entering the school ranges from average to above average. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well below average. Around 7.8% of the pupils receive extra support in class and around 1.2% of pupils have Statements of Special Educational Need which are both below average. Most pupils are of a White British heritage (around 75%), although there is a growing proportion of pupils (around 22%) who are from minority heritages, the Filipino community representing the largest share of these. The proportion of pupils from homes where English is an additional language (around 33%) is above average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of this Catholic school

Grade 2

St Augustine's is a good school with many outstanding features such as the leadership of the Catholic life of the school, the provision for collective worship and the promotion and achieving of community cohesion. Within a very strong Catholic ethos, pupils are nurtured in their personal and academic development and encouraged to strive for excellence in all areas of school life. Together with the strong systems of care and support, these promote outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development in the pupils. Attitudes of respect and forgiveness are evident in the relationships between adults and pupils. The school has high expectations of all its pupils and strives to ensure that they are well prepared for the challenges that they may meet when they transfer to secondary school. Pupils are extremely well behaved, friendly and polite. Parents are welcomed into the school at all times. The positive response to the parental questionnaire gives witness to their appreciation of all the care and support their children receive. The governors are very supportive and work closely with the headteacher and senior leaders to sustain the Catholic ethos of the school. Religious Education provision is very good with pupils achieving high standards. Assessment in Religious Education is continuing to develop well and teachers' comments in pupils' Religious Education books are both constructive and affirming. This empowers pupils to develop in their learning. The school has addressed all the issues contained in the last report. Differentiated activities were evident in all lessons observed by the inspectors, although there was a variation in the quality of these in some of the pupils' books sampled. However, with the robust monitoring

which the co-ordinator and senior leaders undertake, support systems, which are already in place, will ensure that consistently challenging tasks which match the abilities of all pupils in Religious Education will be realised within a realistic timescale. The confidence of teachers in using levels of attainment has increased and the Religious Education planning gives notice of the school's drive for even further improvement. The tracking of pupils' individual work in the subject is now in place but, since it is not as well-established as the tracking system employed in the other core subjects, it has as yet to make a significant impact on attainment. However, the school's leadership has both the experience and expertise to ensure that this is successfully addressed. The rigorous planning and the school's self-evaluation demonstrate that governors, the headteacher and staff have a very good understanding of the school's strengths and have identified areas for future development. The school has an excellent capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Further develop the tracking of pupils' progress in Religious Education to match that of the other core subjects so that underachievement is more readily identified
- Continue to develop assessment for learning in Religious Education so that there is greater consistency in its application across the school and, in particular, marking which informs pupils of the next steps in their learning

The Catholic Life of the School

Leadership and Management

Grade 1

The headteacher is an outstanding practitioner and a highly effective leader who has a clear vision of Catholic education. She is strongly supported by the school's governors and the senior leadership team who share the headteacher's high expectations and her drive to promote a strong Catholic ethos. Succession planning is high on the agenda so that, through actively seeking to develop senior and middle leaders, she encourages staff to make a full contribution to the life and leadership of the school. The governors have a clear understanding of their duties, share their expertise and work tirelessly to monitor the Catholic life of the school through regular visits, constructive dialogue, support and challenge. All members of staff work closely and collaboratively together sharing ideas, expertise and information. Religious Education features prominently in school planning. The mission statement, 'Joyfully, we at St Augustine's Catholic School celebrate our love for God, our love for ourselves and our love for each other as we pray, learn and play together', is successfully shared throughout the school community. The pupils know and understand it. The mission statement is prominent in all classrooms and school policies and is lived out in the daily life of the school. Indeed, the staff have worked extremely hard to ensure that the Catholic ethos permeates relationships amongst pupils and between pupils and staff. As a result, pupils' are welcoming to visitors and their behaviour and relationships within the school are exemplary. The attractive displays, both in the classrooms and main areas, mark the school as distinctively Catholic. These reflect both the themes of the 'Here I Am' Religious Education programme and the different seasons of the liturgical year. For example, the eye-catching focal area in the entrance area strongly reflected the Lenten theme with the prominent liturgical purple of Lent framing a display from the

Stations of the Cross. Leaders at all levels ensure that pupils are aware of the school's patron saint and his substantial contribution to the growth of the Church in England. This awareness is reinforced by the high quality set of banners located in the hall, depicting aspects of St Augustine's mission. In every classroom focal area, an age-appropriate Bible was open at the Gospel reading of the day and interactive displays on the Religious Education programme theme of 'Thanksgiving' supported the spiritual and moral development of the pupils. Pastoral care of pupils is outstanding. Staff know their pupils well and are always available to provide help and advice when requested. Of particular note is the peer mediation scheme where trained Year 5 and Year 6 pupils mentor younger peers. Through this excellent intervention, for example, conflicts in the playground are averted or resolved, leading to pupils feeling both safe and valued.

The Prayer Life of the School

Grade 1

The prayer life of the school is outstanding. The Eucharist and prayer are central to the life of the whole school community. Senior leaders and the Religious Education co-ordinator collaborate with two local parish priests to ensure that there is a comprehensive and extremely well-planned programme of Masses, assemblies, and liturgies linked both to the 'Here I Am' programme and to the Catholic liturgical year. For example, school Mass is celebrated on Holy Days of Obligation, on St Augustine's patronal feast day and for each year group in Key Stage 2. Pupils in this key stage are involved in the preparation of these Masses to which all their families are invited. Year 6 attend a leaver's Mass and are presented with a special prayer book, containing a compilation of their own prayers, as a spiritual memento of their time in the school. On Ash Wednesday, there are two age-appropriate, penitential liturgies, one for Reception and Key Stage 1 pupils and the other for pupils in Key Stage 2. The two parish priests, who take an active part in the preparation and celebrations of these Masses and liturgies, are welcome and regular visitors to the school. They make a significant contribution to the liturgical and pastoral life of the school community. During the inspection, the good Year 4 assembly observed was led by the Religious Education co-ordinator. Pupils and adults took part in Bible readings, leading prayers prepared by an adult and singing. The assembly leader used the Stations of the Cross, reflective music and the opportunity for pupils' own quiet reflection to help them to access the message that hope brings life and that when we die to self we have new life in God. The 'living' prayer sculpture formed by five pupils reinforced this message. An attractive and appropriate focal point, comprising a cross, drapes, stones and candles placed in front of each Station provided a focus for pupils' attention. The singing, with which the assembly began and ended, was of a high standard.

Prayer is incorporated into Religious Education lessons, with high quality religious artefacts and music used to create a prayerful atmosphere, and is a great strength of the school. Pupils know the traditional prayers of the Church and are confident to compose their own. Pupils particularly appreciate the 'prayer box' in each classroom, which they are encouraged to use should they wish to offer prayers to God in the form of thanksgiving or personal intentions. This illustrates the leadership's drive to make a seamless link between Religious Education and Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE), where 'worry boxes' and 'personal thought boxes' are made available for pupils' use, and constitutes very good practice. The school has a prayer garden where children and adults are encouraged to go for a quiet moment of private prayer. Of particular note is the prayer group, which meets on Tuesday mornings during the term. This was formed by a group of parents who expressed a desire to pray for the school community and was greatly encouraged and supported by the school's leadership. As a consequence, the prayer life of the school makes a major impact on the spiritual and moral development of the pupils.

How effectively does the school promote community cohesion?

Grade 1

The school is inclusive and promotes community cohesion to an outstanding level. Leaders at all levels encourage respect for difference, value diversity and ensure equal opportunities for all. Pupils with special educational needs are valued by the school community and make good progress. The home, school and parish partnership is outstanding and nourishes the pupils' personal development. Preparation for the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist takes place in the parish but there is close liaison with the school, with staff attending the pupils' First Communion Masses. The Religious Education curriculum provides opportunities for pupils to study other world religions and this positively impacts on pupils' understanding and respect for other communities.

The school has developed strong links with schools in the Woking Deanery partnership and in the All Hallows cluster of Catholic schools. They meet regularly and aim to further promote their schools' Catholic identity through greater collaboration and mutual support. As a result, opportunities for the schools to take part in joint ventures have developed. For example, schools in the All Hallows cluster are holding a common question and answer INSET session open to all staff but particularly aimed at supporting those who are not Catholic. This excellent initiative will enable the school to build capacity for even further improvement in its Catholic life. The school also collaborates with schools which are not Catholic through the local authority cluster of schools.

Parents are fully involved in the life of the school. The Friends of St Augustine's are a strength of the school and are actively involved in running events such as Summer barbecues and the biennial 'Friends Ball' which builds an even greater sense of community amongst parents, staff and pupils. The Friends association raises funds to support and enrich the spiritual and learning experience of all pupils in the school. For example the prayer garden and improved ICT have resulted out of their generosity. A recent survey indicated that the overwhelming majority of parents and guardians have positive attitudes towards the school. Some of their comments included: 'I have nothing but praise for the way St Augustine's includes all Christians and non-Christians in their school Catholic activities. You are made to feel most welcome'; 'I am delighted that my children attend a school where it is 'normal' to believe in Jesus, to pray and to worship God. I love the thought the children put into their Lenten promises'. The school reaches out to the wider community by forming links with schools abroad. There are established links with schools in Singapore, South Africa and Sierra Leone to enrich pupils' understanding of children who live in other cultures. Pupils from the School Council recounted how, following a visit by one of their Key Stage 2 teachers to Africa, they had been made aware of the needs of a school community in Sierra Leone. This galvanised the School Council into adopting this as a whole school project, resulting in money being raised to help with the refurbishment of the school's buildings in Sierra Leone. In addition, the school community generously supports a wide range of charities, including Frimley Park Hospital Children's Emergency Department, Cabrini and CAFOD. As a result of the above activities, pupils are made aware of the important role they play in society, praying and caring for the well-being of others in communities locally, nationally and worldwide.

Religious Education

Achievement and Standards in Religious Education

Grade 2

Given pupils' starting points, attainment in the Foundation Stage and in both key stages is high. Pupils settle quickly into learning in Reception and make good progress in Religious Education. Throughout Key Stage 1 pupils consolidate their learning and, given their initial capability, achieve good standards. This good progress continues throughout Key Stage 2 and, by Year 6, most pupils reach levels of attainment which match national expectations and, moreover, a significantly high proportion surpasses them. Levels attained in Religious Education are broadly similar to those achieved in English and exceed the national expectation. However, attainment at the highest level in Key Stage 2 does not yet match those of English. Work in pupils' books is generally well-presented and show a good coverage. However, not all pupils are aware of the steps needed to move to the next level, which hinders their progress. Given time, the feedback from the rigorous system already in place of scrutinising pupils' books will ensure that pupil progress will improve consistently across the school. Pupils are confident and articulate in discussions and respond to teachers' questioning, demonstrating good understanding. Pupils display a developing use of religious literacy. For example, during a Reception class lesson, pupils were able to articulate candlelight as representing 'The light of Jesus' and 'The light of the world'. There is a very good work ethic in the school, pupils stay on task and make good progress in the subject during their lessons. As a result of the above, Religious Education makes a significant contribution to the moral, spiritual and social development of pupils.

Teaching and learning in Religious Education

Grade 2

Teaching and learning in Religious Education is good with some outstanding features. During the inspection, the vast majority of pupils who were asked said that they enjoy Religious Education. This, together with the effective and skilled application of the behaviour management policy by the staff, leads to little or no disruption in Religious Education lessons. In lessons judged by the inspectors to be good or better, the pace was brisk with an effective balance between teacher and pupil input. Teachers acted as facilitators for learning by using skilful questioning techniques and productively employed well-briefed, learning support assistants. For example, in an outstanding Year 2 lesson, the teacher led pupils, through skilled questioning, to understand the significance of the Last Supper. Pupils were asked to decide which part of the Last Supper they would like to 'freeze frame' and used role play in 'hot seating' with Jesus. One pupil asked, 'How did you feel at the Last Supper,' whereupon the reply came back, 'It was quite scary.' As the lesson progressed, challenging activities which matched pupils' abilities, such as partner work to offer their opinions on how the disciples felt, were productively employed to provide them with appropriate deep learning opportunities such as learning to empathise with others. Teaching assistants are gainfully employed in supporting pupils with additional needs. In a good Year 3 lesson observed, the support staff participated in the lesson, reading parts of the Eucharistic prayer in turn with the pupils joining in. Teachers display confidence in their teaching styles due to their good subject knowledge and effective support from the co-ordinator and senior leaders. Lessons are based on the 'Here I Am' Religious Education programme. In one classroom, there was a reflective question book in which pupils had written their own questions. One pupil wrote, 'Was Jesus the first person to be

baptised?' whilst another asked 'Why can't women be priests?' Consideration should be given to extending this good practice to other classrooms so that pupils further develop their higher order thinking skills.

Since the last inspection, a pupil tracking system for Religious Education is in place. At present it is not as well developed as pupil tracking in the other core curriculum areas but, when it is embedded, it will enable individual progress to be more readily identified and have an impact on standards. Further development of moderation will enhance teachers' confidence in their judgements when assessing pupils' work. The existing links with the Catholic school partnerships provide a potential source for even greater consistency in moderating pupils' work. The school is introducing 'I can' statements to facilitate opportunities for pupils to engage in self-evaluation and target setting. Evidence of these statements was seen in some books during the inspection and this new initiative can only enrich pupils learning experience as time progresses. Parents and guardians are kept well informed of their children's progress in Religious Education. They receive helpful information through meetings, newsletters and the informative school website to enable them to offer their children support at home. The recently introduced parent email system will have a positive impact on communicating with parents.

Quality of the Curriculum

Grade 2

The quality of the Religious Education curriculum is good. The school follows the 'Here I Am' Religious Education programme and fully complies with the Bishops' Conference Curriculum Directory guidelines. This is well embedded in the school. Investigation and reflection are key components of the Religious Education curriculum, which equip pupils with the tools to respond to God's call in everyday life. The curriculum is carefully coordinated with PSHE and the school's Education in Personal Relationships (EPR) programme, which are set in the context of Catholic teaching. Full advantage is taken of opportunities to develop pupils' skills in reading, writing, speaking and listening. The curriculum time allocated to Religious Education comfortably meets the Bishops' Conference and Diocesan requirements of 10% at 10.2% for Key Stage 1 and 10.3% for Key Stage 2. Good use is made of interactive whiteboards and of creative cross curricular links to enrich Religious Education. For example, music, geography, drama and art were all evident in lessons observed and used to good effect to stimulate pupils' learning. The Religious Education curriculum is further enriched by extended curriculum time for prayer and worship opportunities, assemblies, liturgical and special celebrations. As a result, the curriculum makes a significant contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils in the school.

Leadership and management of Religious Education

Grade 2

A strong team approach makes the leadership of Religious Education very effective. The headteacher, Religious Education co-ordinator, assistant headteacher and PSHE co-ordinator work collectively to ensure that their creative energy and drive is focused on the school's Catholic mission, on raising standards in the subject and on the faith formation of the pupils in their care. The inclusion of all pupils is central to the vision of the governors and the Religious Education leadership. Development needs within the subject are accurately identified through their rigorous monitoring and evaluation procedures and tackled energetically by means of the school's robust planning. The Religious Education co-ordinator is a skilled practitioner and role model who works tirelessly to support teachers through INSET, regular staff meetings and one-to-one professional dialogues. As a result, teachers have grown more confident in their lesson planning and in assessing pupils' levels of attainment. The co-ordinator liaises with the link governor for Religious Education. Together, they keep governors well informed about

developments and standards through regular reports, presentations and attendance at curriculum committee meetings. Resources are well used and the subject is funded in line with the other core subjects. Good links exist with parents, parishes and the Diocese to support work in Religious Education. For example, the school provides an online version of the 'Wednesday Word' for all parents and guardians to access and to encourage them to read the Sunday Gospel with their families. This online resource also provides them with reflections and activities to share with their children. In addition, the local parish priests support the school through their regular visits, whilst the co-ordinator regularly attends relevant courses at the Diocese and works closely with other co-ordinators within the Catholic schools partnerships in order to gain support and share good practice. The impact of these links is seen in the good progress made by pupils in Religious Education.