

**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 101798

St Mary's Catholic Primary School  
Sydenham Road  
Croydon  
CR0 2EW

Chair of Governors	Mr J Graham
Headteacher	Mrs A Pendry
Inspectors	Mrs J Lenahan Mrs C Mayhew

Inspection dates      24<sup>th</sup> May 2012

**ARCHDIOCESE OF SOUTHWARK  
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# Introduction

## Description of the school

St Mary's Junior School is voluntary aided. It is situated in the Croydon Deanery of the Archdiocese of Southwark. It is maintained by Croydon LA. The principal parish which the school serves is Our Lady of Reparation, West Croydon. The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholics is 90%. The average weekly proportion of curriculum time given to religious education is 10% in Key Stage 2.

The school takes pupils from 7 to 11 years. The number of pupils currently on roll is 269. The attainment of pupils on entering the school is broadly average. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average. Around 23% of the pupils receive extra support in class with 5 pupils having statements of special educational need. The main intake is from the adjacent infant school. The majority of pupils are from minority ethnic communities. The proportion of pupils from homes where English is an additional language is well above average with 173 pupils requiring varying levels of support. The proportion of pupils who leave and join the school other than at the start of the school the school year is well above the national average.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## **Overall effectiveness as a Catholic school**

St Mary's Junior is a good school with many outstanding features. The life and work of the school are based on the aims and values of the mission statement. A sense of teamwork and clear direction permeates. Under the strong leadership of the headteacher and management team, the focus is on developing the full potential of every pupil. High priority is given to pastoral care and personal development, offering pupils a welcoming, well resourced, safe and secure learning environment. School and parish links are a model of Catholic community, with emphasis placed on shared commitment, support and co-operation. The governing body is well informed, aware of the school's strengths and areas for development and make an important contribution to the Catholic life of the school. As regular visitors, they are able to monitor the work of the school as a faith community. Community cohesion is outstanding, as the school is fully inclusive. Dedicated staff are committed to nurturing the talents of each pupil by fostering a sense of love and care. In response, the pupils' behaviour is excellent as they are respectful, polite and proud of their school. The issues raised in the previous inspection in 2009 have been successfully addressed. Standards and achievements in religious education are good. Policies and procedures for teaching religious education are well planned and documented and, when their application is consistently implemented across the key stage, they will impact on raising standards even further.

**Grade 2**

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

To improve and build upon the good practice that already exists in the teaching of religious education, the school should:

Ensure consistency of curriculum planning across year groups

Develop and embed current assessment systems so that monitoring is rigorous and raises pupil' achievement even further.

# The Catholic life of the school

## **Leadership and management**

## **Grade 1**

The school is very well managed. The headteacher is passionate about the school and its Catholic mission. Through her dedication and vision, the school is a flourishing Catholic community, emanating a sense of warmth, welcome, friendship and respect in a sanctuary of educational purpose. Aply supported by members of the management team, she has created a shared mission amongst the staff. A sense of teamwork pervades. Morale is high. Outstanding displays throughout the school portray its distinctive Catholic ethos, add a sense of awe and wonder and celebrate the multi-cultural diversity of the pupil body. Learning resources are of a very high standard, and the ambiance is one of calm and order, thus making the school a secure haven of learning in a challenging urban environment. The inclusion of all is a central goal based on the school's mission that all are created equal in the image of God. Harmonious links exist with parents, school and external agencies, with a focus on offering pupils high quality care, guidance and support, thus ensuring their safety and well being. Curriculum systems and policies are well established. Partnership with parents is give high priority through newsletters, parent evenings, sharing in Masses, assemblies and liturgies as well as celebrating and valuing cultural diversity. Scrutiny of questionnaires from parents revealed their overwhelming support for the school. The school plays a supportive role in assisting the parish to prepare pupils for the First Eucharist.

## **Quality of provision for personal and collective worship**

## **Grade 2**

Provision for collective worship in the school is good. The prayer and worship programme is carefully planned, linked to the liturgical year and the religious education programme. Clergy from the local parish make a strong contribution to prayer and worship and this ensures that meaningful liturgies are an integral aspect of school life. Learners show a good awareness of the relevance of prayer as seen in their individual written petitions. Pupils engage with reverence and humility when praying. This was evident in their interest and response during the vibrant act of collective worship which the inspectors attended. Mass is celebrated at appropriate times in the school year and pupils are involved in preparing readings, prayers and serving on the altar. Hymn singing is given due attention and incorporated into Masses and school liturgies. 'James' Prayer Garden' is an inspiring area and pupils cite how much they appreciate spending quiet time there in thoughtful reflection and meditation. Devotion to Our Lady is given a high profile with pupils knowing the significant aspects of Mary's life, as seen in the Year 3 booklets, and learning about the rosary in Year 6. A commendable aspect of the school is the 'prayer buddy system', whereby Year 6 pupils partner pupils in Year 3 and support them through their preparation programme for the First Eucharist. Exemplary prayer focal areas are a feature in most classes. Collective worship makes a significant contribution to the pupils' spiritual and moral development.

Community cohesion is a strength of the school. A strong sense of respect and trust fosters a true Christian community. Governors have agreed a comprehensive policy which is enshrined in gospel values. Leaders promote respect for difference, value cultural diversity and ensure equal opportunities for all. Excellent links exist with the Infant School from which most pupils transfer at the end of Key Stage 1. Pupils are encouraged to show concern for the weak and vulnerable within and beyond their own community through fundraising activities for a range of charities including CAFOD, 'Pudsy Bear Children in Need' and Action for Medical Research into Children's Diseases. Opportunities for pupils to show leadership through 'The School Council' are highly valued with pupils proud of the contribution they make, as can be viewed on 'Fronter', which is the school's online managed learning environment. Partnership with the local parish is excellent with newsletters, support for each other's work, sharing of resources and personnel all working for the common good of pupils, parents and parishioners. Staff at the school are excellent role models in the local community with leaders involved on The Safer School's Panel and Schools Cluster Group, catechists in the parish and fostering close links with other Catholic schools in the deanery. The programme to teach pupils about the major world faiths is very well developed. Pupils are taught the importance of respecting and valuing the beliefs of others through first hand experience by practitioners of these faiths. A further enhancement to this programme is the curriculum links the school has fostered with the local Al-Khair Islamic School. Pupils' cultural diversity is honoured in October through Black History celebrations with Storyteller Grandmothers being an added feature. Opportunities for pupils to engage with their peers within the locality are highly valued with learners participating in events such as Carol singing at the Whitgift Centre, Catholic inter-schools sports, swimming gala, netball & football tournaments and music concerts at the Fairfields Hall. Governors are keen to share the school's resources with local groups. All of these endeavours serve to give the pupils the experience of belonging to, sharing and serving in the Christian spirit of community.

## Religious education

Given their capabilities and starting points, pupils achieve high standards. Learners are gaining knowledge, skills and understanding at a good rate across the key stage. Few pupils under perform. In the lessons observed relating to 'Building Bridges' pupils were able to understand the relevance of religious education as it pertains to their lives. Year 4 pupils could make the link between the message of the parable of the Good Shepherd and the need for reconciliation when friendships break down. Pupils take pride in their work as seen in work on display and in their written presentations. The pupils' behaviour in lessons is exemplary as they are focused, interested and readily use appropriate vocabulary to express their responses. Teaching assistants

are very well deployed and give very good support to pupils who are at the early stage of acquiring English and those with special educational needs. By the end of Year 6, pupils are able to use self-reflection to evaluate their work, an example being the pupils' 'Dear Diary' extracts which demonstrate empathy and understanding of their religious education topics.

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

**Grade 2**

Overall, teaching is good with some outstanding elements. Teachers challenge pupils to think spiritually, morally and ethically and become aware of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life. The lesson in Year 5 relating to how God wants us to build and repair relationships was outstanding because a well planned role play activity enabled pupils to grasp the concept. Learning is greatly enhanced by the wide range of tasks the teachers employ to engage the pupils' interest and extend their understanding. This is reflected in pupils' workbooks and in work on display. As the majority of pupils are acquiring English as a second language, due consideration is given to key words in lessons, the result of which is that pupils' are skilful in using religious education vocabulary. Marking has been a focus area for the school and good practice is now becoming embedded. A systematic approach to curriculum planning, following the 'Here I Am' programme, is in place. However, workbooks reveal lack of consistency in some year groups. There is scope for improvement for teachers in parallel classes to plan together and share best practice. Issues raised in the previous inspection relating to assessment have been successfully addressed. The school now has a very good portfolio of assessed work which is levelled against national criteria. A tracking system has been established to monitor individual progress. To raise standards even further the school needs to be more rigorous in monitoring performance using the established assessment procedures to best advantage.

## **The religious education curriculum**

**Grade 2**

The quality of the religious education curriculum meets the requirements of the Curriculum Directory. 10% of curriculum time is designated to the teaching of religious education, in line with guidelines. The curriculum responds well to the diversity of the pupils. It is inclusive and follows the planning and scheme of work in 'Here I Am', with Education in Personal Relationships and Education in Human Love integrated into the programme. The range of cross-curricular links are extensive and include art, music, dance, use of ICT and inviting people in to speak to the pupils, such as an Olympic athlete who is a former pupil. These initiatives serve to enhance provision and learning across the school. The linking of weekly assemblies to the religious education programme and the liturgical year compliments provision. The school is to be commended on its commitment to developing the pupils' understanding of social harmony. An example being the adaptation of the curriculum topic:- 'Homes and Families' to embrace 'Neighbourhood and Community', with an emphasis on healing and reconciliation following the social unrest in August 2011. The curriculum is enriched by aspects such as the Year 4 Nativity, Stations of the Cross pageant, input of the parish priest

when learning about the sacraments and special devotion to Our Lady. This contributes strongly to the pupils personal, spiritual, moral and cultural development.

### **Leadership and management of religious education**

### **Grade 2**

Leadership of the subject is strongly focused on the school's Catholic mission, on raising standards and guiding the faith development of the pupils. Through the strong leadership of the headteacher and management team, there is a shared sense of mission. The co-ordinator has established good systems of assessment, including an exemplary portfolio of pupils' assessed work. A programme for ongoing training is in place, and staff, including those new to teaching religious education, feel supported. To raise achievement even further, the school needs to consider ways of enhancing its monitoring system. Governors are well informed of learners' progress and subject developments. They are actively involved in supporting the school and are regular visitors to liturgies and assemblies. Resources for teaching religious education are of a very high quality, well ordered and readily accessible for teaching and learning.