



## 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 101456

**Our Lady of the Rosary  
Holbeach Gardens  
Blackfen, Sidcup  
DA15 8QW**

**Inspection date: 7<sup>th</sup> March 2017**

Chair of Governors: Heather Mash  
Headteacher: Denise Edwards  
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### EDUCATION COMMISSION

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# SECTION 48

**Publication Date 19th of April 2017**

# Introduction

## Description of the school

Our Lady of the Rosary is an oversubscribed voluntary aided Catholic primary school with nursery provision. It is situated in the Bexley Deanery of the Archdiocese of Southwark and is maintained by Bexley Local Authority. The principal parishes which the school serves are Our Lady of the Rosary in Blackfen, St John Fisher in Bexley, Christ Church in Eltham and St Lawrence in Sidcup. The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholics is 90%, with several year groups having a 100% Catholic cohort. The average weekly proportion of curriculum time given to Religious Education is at least 10% in Key Stage 1, and in Key Stage 2.

The school takes pupils from 3 to 11 years. The number of pupils currently on roll is 445 and the school is larger than average. The attainment of pupils on entering the school is broadly above average. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. Around 9% of the pupils receive extra support in class. The Early Years Foundation Stage is made up of Nursery and Reception class provision. The proportion of pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds is below average as is the proportion of pupils from homes where English is an additional language.

### Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding	Grade 3	Requires improvement
Grade 2	Good	Grade 4	Inadequate

# Overall effectiveness of the school in providing Catholic Education

GRADE  
1

Our Lady of the Rosary school provides an outstanding Catholic education to all its pupils. The school's simple maxim of 'Faith, Love and Learning,' is inspired by the mission statement, and influences every aspect of school life. The pupils are nurtured and developed in a loving and caring but distinctly Catholic Ethos. Beautiful statues, art works and artefacts are found throughout the school proclaiming the Catholic Faith and the values of the Gospel. The quality of display around the school is exceptional and contributes to the stimulating and highly effective learning environment.

The Headteacher provides outstanding Catholic leadership to the school community and is an excellent role model to pupils, staff and parents. Her vision to provide a high quality and distinctly Catholic education is shared by a highly committed and hardworking staff, most whom are Catholic. She is very well supported by a highly effective leadership team. Staff morale is excellent and many staff are long serving which provides a very stable environment for both staff and pupils. The school has a clear moral purpose which is to provide the best possible education within a rich and stimulating Catholic environment.

Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. They value the nurturing environment provided for their children. As one parent wrote, "I love everything about this school, our son has always been given wonderful support, guidance and strong moral development." Another parent wrote, "Fantastic moral values taught in a great school." Parents are kept well informed through a monthly newsletter and through a developing school website. Parents are also provided with a weekly copy of the Wednesday Word. They very much appreciated the opportunity to attend school functions, assemblies and Masses and a few parents asked whether there could be more of these opportunities in future. The school benefits greatly from a very active PTA, which has raised significant sums to enhance facilities at the school including funds for developing the prayer garden.

Pupils greatly benefit from being part of this loving Catholic community. They spoke openly and enthusiastically of being very happy at the school and the excellent relationships they have with their teachers and with one another. Their high standards of behaviour and respect for one another contributes significantly to the positive learning environment, which allows everyone to flourish. Throughout the inspection, the pupils were wonderful ambassadors for the school of which they are clearly proud to be a part of.

The school has worked hard since the last inspection to build further links with the local parish community. The relatively new parish priest is highly supportive and is a regular visitor at the school to say Mass, participate in liturgical services and to be part of Religious Education lessons.

The school has addressed the four key recommendations made in the previous Section 48 report and has excellent capacity to improve further especially with its thriving links with other schools in the Corpus Christi partnership. The school is also well supported by advisors from the Education Commission.

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

Governors, Headteacher and staff should:

- Continue to develop the school's tracking and assessment systems to ensure all pupils are able to achieve their full potential in Religious Education.
- Provide retreat opportunities for pupils at Key Stages 1 and 2.

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## **The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life of the school**

Prayer and worship are at the heart of daily life at the school. Pupils are encouraged to reflect and pray throughout lessons as well as other times during the school day. The use of singing and music as well as liturgical dance enhances the spiritual life and development of the pupils. The high expectations and clear daily routines encourage pupils to take responsibility for themselves and others and this creates a powerful and safe learning environment in which they flourish. Features such as the Tree of Hope, the Kindness Tree and the Lenten Promise Tree encourage the pupils to pray and reflect on an individual basis allowing pupils to attach prayers and intentions to the trees.

Pupils have a wide range of opportunities to take on responsibility during their time at the school. The school has three Councils to promote pupil voice. These include a general School Council, the Green Council and the Faith Council, The Faith Council took great pride in showing inspectors their beautiful prayer garden which they have actively helped develop and which plays a very important part in supporting the prayer life of the school. The prayer garden has at its heart, a statue of Our Lady of the Rosary as well as the Stations of the Cross placed around the perimeter of the garden. It also has a Remembrance Corner decorated with poppies made by the site staff and members of the Faith Council.

Pupils are encouraged in many ways to support those who are less fortunate, locally, nationally and internationally. They have raised significant sums of money and provided resources for several charities including the Bexley Food Bank during Harvest Festival. They have also raised funds for CAFOD, Cancer Research and Water Aid. The school has also adopted St Mary's Balamorie School in Sierra Leone. This year the pupils are funding the education of four pupils of this school and have provided both funds and classroom equipment for the school in past years. Pupils receive regular photographs and updates from St Mary's showing the difference they are making to the deprived pupils attending the school.

Our Lady of the Rosary has developed strong links with local Catholic secondary schools thus ensuring pupils a smooth transfer to secondary education.

## **How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education**

Pupils make good progress in their Religious Education lessons and they achieve levels, which are similar to English and Maths, which are above the local and national standards. Pupils made clear to inspectors they very much enjoyed their Religious Education lessons. They said their teachers made lessons fun by ensuring they involved highly creative activities and a variety of approaches including paired work, class discussions and role-play.

## **How well pupils respond to and participate in Collective Worship**

The pupils' response to the many varied opportunities to participate and respond to Collective Worship is outstanding. In an excellent Key Stage 2 assembly seen during the inspection, the pupils led from the start. The pupils joyously sang two hymns without any direction from staff. The pupils skilfully linked the reading from the Gospel to Ash Wednesday and the need for giving to others during Lent. The assembly then focussed on Water Aid and how each pupil could support this charity before moving onto the charitable work the school is involved in at St Mary's School in Sierra Leone. Pupils were then encouraged to reflect on the messages from the assembly. Throughout the assembly, the behaviour of the pupils was exceptional.

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## **How well leaders, governors and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life of the school and plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils**

Leadership and governance at the school is outstanding. The Catholic life at the school is at the heart of the work of the school. Leaders and governors know their school well as demonstrated by an accurate self-assessment provided to inspectors as part of the inspection. They have clear plans to enhance the Catholic life of the school further as reflected by the on going development of the prayer garden.

Leaders also ensure that all staff are fully supported in developing the Catholic life of the school through regular INSET and through links with the Catholic schools in the Corpus Christi Partnership.

## **How well leaders, governors and managers monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education and plan and implement for improvement to outcomes for pupils**

Leaders and governors carefully monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education and have clear plans to improve the outcomes for pupils further. The Chair of Governors is also the Religious Education Link Governor and makes regular visits to Religious Education lessons. She ensures Religious Education is a regular agenda item at Governors' meetings and that the progress of pupils is reported to governors.

The recently appointed Religious Education coordinator is a long serving member of staff and works closely with the previous coordinator who is now part of the senior leadership team of the school. This teamwork mirrors the excellent way all teachers work together to share resources, evaluate lessons and plan for the future.

As a result of action taken by the school since the last Section 48 inspection, assessment and planning in Religious Education is now strength of the school and pupils' progress is carefully tracked to ensure no pupil falls behind. However, better use could be made of the data available to assist in the planning of lessons to stretch the pupils further to raise outcomes which would be regarded as outstanding. The school should continue to refine its assessment and tracking system considering the national changes being made to assessment and taking into account any recommendations made by the Education Commission

## **The quality of teaching and how purposeful learning is in Religious Education**

Overall, the quality of teaching at the school is outstanding. This is a result of well-planned lessons, which have clear learning objectives. Teachers have excellent subject knowledge and have access to high quality resources. The school has actively developed and encouraged creativity in Religious Education lessons and this has clearly impacted on pupils' learning in Religious Education. This can be clearly seen in the main hall where a display entitled 'Who is God' containing highly creative and thought provoking artwork produced by the pupils.

In an outstanding Year 2 lesson based on the Good Shepherd, the teacher skilfully told the story using a variety of props to capture the imagination of the pupils. By the end of the lesson, pupils were able to explain the importance of making the right choice and that making the wrong choice always had negative consequences. A range of creative activities were then undertaken by the pupils, differentiated to meet the needs of all abilities.

In an outstanding Year 6 lesson, pupils studied the Last Supper. The lesson started in the Chapel with a focus on the Lenten journey using the Stations of the Cross. The beautiful artistic Stations of the Cross had been created by the pupils. Pupils' behaviour was excellent and great maturity was displayed as they listened to each other's thoughts and ideas. The use of a clip from the Lion King stimulated further discussion and pupils were able to draw parallels with the Resurrection and the importance of trust between friends. Music was used during their time in the Chapel as well as the classroom when the pupils were working on tasks. At the end of the lesson, the pupils went to the prayer garden and released balloons with their intentions and prayers attached.

The quality of teaching is monitored carefully and leaders know accurately the many strengths and few weaknesses there are. Monitoring is done in a supportive way, which encourages the professional development of teachers in an open and supportive manner.

Teachers assess the work of the pupils regularly as evidenced by marking of the work of the pupils. Pupils generally take pride in the presentation of their work although this was not consistent across all year groups. Assessments are moderated within the school and externally using the excellent links the school has developed through the Corpus Christi partnership.

Teaching Assistants are used effectively in Religious Education lessons to support the growing number of pupils with special educational needs as well as helping to record pupil progress particularly noting the verbal responses of pupils, which are often stronger than their written responses.

## **The extent to which the Religious Education curriculum promotes pupils' learning**

The school follows the 'Come and See' Religious Education programme which is well resourced. The school ensures at least 10% of curriculum time is allocated to the teaching of Religious Education in line with expectations of the Bishops' Conference. The programme also meets the requirements of the Religious Education Curriculum Directory.

Pupils have an opportunity to study other World faiths in lessons supported by some excellent displays located around the school covering Judaism, Hinduism, Sikhism and

Islam. The school also has plans to provide pupils with more opportunities to visit other local places of worship.

### **The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school**

The quality of Collective Worship is outstanding. Pupils are offered a wide range of opportunities to participate in Collective Worship both in school and through links with the local parish church. A notable feature of the school is that it has a dedicated Chapel, which greatly enhances the quality of Collective Worship at the school. The Chapel is used throughout the day and during Religious Education lessons. Each morning pupils can attend the Chapel to say a decade of the Rosary. This act of worship is always well attended and often there is only standing room available. During the daily service, pupils are invited to pray for special intentions which they are keen to do so in this safe and welcoming experience.

Provision for Collective Worship is further enhanced through the support of 'Christian Resources in Bexley' (CRIBS) and the provision for teaching liturgical dance to all pupils during the day as well as an after-school club each week.

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