

**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 101456

Our Lady of the Rosary Catholic Primary School
Holbeach Gardens
Blackfen
Sidcup DA15 8QW

Chair of Governors
Headteacher
Inspectors

Mrs H Mash
Mr J E Murphy
Mrs J Lenahan
Ms C Edwards

Inspection dates

09 November 2011

**ARCHDIOCESE OF SOUTHWARK
COMMISSION FOR SCHOOLS & COLLEGES
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Introduction

Description of the school

Our Lady of the Rosary School is voluntary aided. It is situated in the Bexley Deanery of the Archdiocese of Southwark. It is maintained by Bexley LA. The principal parishes which the school serves are Our Lady of the Rosary, Blackfen and St John Fisher, Bexley. The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholics is 85%. The average weekly proportion of curriculum time given to religious education is 10% in Key Stage 1, and 10% in Key Stage 2.

The school takes pupils from 3 to 11 years. The number of pupils currently on roll is 462. 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 school is a larger than average size. The Early Years Foundation Stage is made up of Nursery and Reception class provision. The proportion of pupils from ethnic majority 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	Satisfactory
Grade 2	Good	Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness as a Catholic school

Overall, Our Lady of the Rosary is an outstanding school. Committed leadership from the headteacher, governors and leadership team is strong in ensuring the distinctiveness of the school in its mission to develop the “whole child within the love of a Catholic community”. There is a very positive atmosphere in the school, with relationships explicitly based on Gospel values. Outstanding care, support and guidance contribute substantially to pupils’ well being and achievement. The behaviour of pupils is excellent as they show respect for staff and each other and take great pride in their school. One child cited that the pupils “feel surrounded by love, with teachers, parents and children always seeking to help one another”. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive and concur that “the dedication of staff to pupil welfare is a strength of the school”. The management of religious education is outstanding and standards are high in relation to pupils’ capabilities. The support which the school receive from the clergy is much appreciated by staff. The school has an accurate view of its own strengths and development needs. Leaders are constantly striving to foster closer working partnership with the local parish in order to further support families in the faith development of their children. Issues raised in the previous inspection have been addressed with assessment procedures having an impact on raising pupil attainment but more attention is still required to challenge the more able pupils in lessons. The school has a very good capacity to continue to improve.

Grade 1

What steps need to be taken to improve further?

Governors, headteacher and staff should:

- Continue to seek opportunities to strengthen the home/ school/parish partnership as a means to further support families in the faith development of their children.
- Establish a religious education link governor in order to further enlighten and celebrate the good work of the school with parents and parishioners.
- Continue to develop the moderation of religious education with the collation of a portfolio of pupils’ assessed work levelled against national standards.
- Further develop individual tracking of pupil progress in line with assessment procedures for the core subjects.

The Catholic life of the school

Leadership and management

Grade 1

The headteacher and members of the management team give outstanding leadership to the Catholic life of the school. They communicate a strong sense of spiritual purpose with a focus on promoting high standards and the fullest possible development of the pupils. The headteacher is an excellent role model in his committed leadership and clear direction that ensures the Catholic character of the school is embedded in its daily life. This vision is shared by all the staff resulting in a strong element of teamwork, where everyone is mutually supportive. Morale is high. The mission statement has a direct impact on the life and work of the school. For example, the very best use is made of the environment with exceptionally creative displays depicting its Catholic life, high quality resources and the effective use of staff expertise. Inclusiveness is a major strength with governors and staff promoting it unceasingly. Discrimination of any kind is attacked with vigour. Very good links exist with parents, outside agencies and the diocese. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school and appreciate the care and support their children receive. Parents state that "pupil welfare is a strength due to the strong leadership, caring teachers and support staff". This means that pupils flourish and commit themselves to the school's mission. The school values the support it receives from the clergy, an example being the guidance given recently by the parish priest to teach the new Mass responses to the pupils. Parents and staff share the view that stronger child-centred links with the parish should be further developed in order to enhance the pupils' faith journey.

Quality of provision for personal and collective worship

Grade 1

Prayer and worship are integral to the life of the school. Pupils are provided with a wide range of opportunities to develop an understanding of the meaning and purpose of prayer. The centrality of the prayer room for daily use by parents, staff and pupils enhances provision for collective worship and personal devotion. Class prayer books, child-centred focal prayer areas in classrooms together with the use of formal prayer books in Key Stage 2 serve to raise the significance of worship. The programme for collective worship is linked to the liturgical year and the lives of the saints and staff work hard to ensure that provision is appropriate to the age of pupils. The school has identified the need for pupils to become more actively involved in liturgies and the celebration of the Mass with the introduction of drama and dance to enrich the pupils' experience of participation. Whole school and class Masses are celebrated in school at appropriate times with pupils involved in their preparation. Pupils also have the opportunity to attend Mass in the parish where they have the opportunity to engage in a celebration of the Eucharist with the local community. A programme to teach the pupils the new Mass responses has been introduced by the religious education co-ordinator using a child-friendly PowerPoint display. This will serve to further enhance the pupils' engagement at Mass. Religious education lessons include time for

quiet reflection and pupils respond with sincerity, empathy and reverence. Dedication to Our Lady is celebrated in displays, singing the 'Hail Mary' and praying the Rosary at appropriate times in the year, all of which enhance collective worship provision. Assemblies, hymn singing and music add a powerful dimension to the prayer life of the school, an excellent example being the Key Stage 1 assembly on the theme of 'Remembrance', where pupils engaged in singing and prayer with laudable maturity and enthusiasm. The programme for collective worship makes a valuable contribution to spiritual and moral development.

Community Cohesion

Grade 1

The school is outstanding in its approach to community cohesion as it gives due emphasis to inclusion in its curriculum provision, engages pupils in charity commitments and provides a model of community from within. The Catholic dimension and religious education in personal, moral and social development programmes teaches pupils to be aware of and value their own identity and to treasure the gifts and talents of others. The school introduces pupils to the idea of social harmony, justice and diversity within the school. The programme to teach pupils about the major world faiths is very well developed as pupils are given first hand opportunities to learn from practitioners this could be further enhanced by offering pupils the opportunity to engage with pupils of other faiths. The commitment of the leadership team to the school's mission means that the school offers a vibrant and distinctly Catholic identity that models a community based on Gospel values. Every member of staff is valued, listened to and invited to contribute to nurturing the well being and development of every pupil regardless of social class or academic ability. Leaders are excellent role models as they reach out to the wider community at local educational and deanery levels to share and develop their own practice and enrich the curriculum. Examples of this being the newly formed 'Bexley Cluster Partnership' and the recent meeting at the school of over 100 teachers from Catholic schools in the deanery. Pupils are given the opportunity to reach out to pupils on the margins of society through their engagements in charitable fund raising exercises such as the Harvest Collection and the Good Shepherd Lenten appeal. Events such as 'Grandparents Morning' gives pupils an insight into valuing the contribution older people give to society. Pupils have a voice through the school council and appreciate the opportunities this gives them to be involved in the ongoing development of their school. The exceptionally supportive 'Parents Association' is testament to the strong sense of community cohesion within the school.

Religious education

Achievement and standards in religious education

Grade 2

Attainment on entry to the school is below average. As a result of the good teaching at the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, pupils make rapid progress, so that by the end of Key Stage 2 attainment is high. Throughout both key stages, pupils have well developed oral skills and are confident to express their ideas in contextual language, as seen in lessons observed when pupils referred to aspects of the rite of the sacrament of Baptism. Pupils have good listening skills, are interested in lessons, settle well to given tasks and can relate learning to their lives. Targeted assistance by well deployed support staff ensures that pupils with special educational needs make good progress.

Teaching and learning in religious education

Grade 2

Teaching is good overall with some outstanding elements. Teachers have good subject knowledge and are committed to teaching Catholic belief. A level of challenge is introduced into lessons through effective questioning and differentiated tasks. This element of challenge now needs to allow for more independent learning, especially for the more able. The work of pupils across the school shows continuity and progression but there needs to be more depth in quality and quantity in written assignments at the upper end of Key Stage 2. The use of interactive marking is good with pupils making appropriate responses. A strength of lessons is the way teachers recap on previous learning and relate teaching to the practice of the Catholic faith. Assessment procedures are developing well and now need to be tracked in line with the established procedures for the core subjects. The development of a portfolio of pupils' work which is assessed against national standards to replace the school's 'best fit' model will serve to raise pupil achievement further. In the Nursery, teaching reflected an excellent understanding of how children learn, as seen in the innovative use of a puppet to teach stories from the Bible. An engrossed class responded to a stimulating lesson by a member of an outside agency (CRIBS), leading them skilfully to learn that God wants us to share and care for one another.

The religious education curriculum

Grade 1

The curriculum fulfils the requirements of the diocese and the Religious Education Curriculum Directory. 10% of curriculum time is used for religious education which follows the 'Here I Am' religious education programme. This is complemented by a comprehensive PSHE programme which is embedded in the Catholic life of the school. Leaders ensure that aspects of the liturgical year, lives of the saints and visits to places of worship are incorporated into planning. Cross curricular links are incorporated effectively using ICT, music, art, history and geography. Enrichment experiences are a strong feature of provision, such as the Year 2 visit to Aylesford, Years 3 and 4 Easter pageant, Nativity celebration, theatre visits from 'Ten Ten' company and the CRIBS

prayer tent experience. The school plans celebration opportunities through daily led collective worship in the 'prayer room', assemblies and class Masses. Support from the clergy offers pupils opportunities to participate in the Sacrament of Reconciliation each term. Further enrichment is given by a member of the clergy who visits weekly to support the pastoral care programme. The subject is very well resourced with a wide range of high quality artefacts and books which are used effectively to make the curriculum vibrant and interesting.

Leadership and management of religious education

Grade 1

The head teacher and leaders ensure that religious education is given due status, and explore ways to include creativity and opportunities for links that make the curriculum relevant to the lives of the pupils, yet adhering to the doctrine of the Catholic faith. The outgoing coordinator has put exceptionally well planned procedures in place that guide the delivery of the curriculum. An outstanding feature of this planning is that it is seamlessly entwined with the Catholic life of the school, with the pupils' spiritual and moral development at its core. The newly appointed coordinator is committed to continue to maintain and build on current good practice. She is already at the forefront of leading the subject with vision within the school with her innovative approach to teaching pupils the new Mass responses, which she is equally happy to share with colleagues in the deanery. The school benefits from its involvement with the diocese and other schools because knowledge gained is disseminated effectively by the coordinator into the ongoing staff training programme. Evaluation of teaching and regular scrutiny of pupils' work by the coordinator and headteacher ensure the maintenance of high standards. Governors are active in monitoring developments and supporting the school. The appointment of a link governor with a specific role to liaise with parents, parish and school would serve to support and celebrate the achievements and quality of religious education provision.